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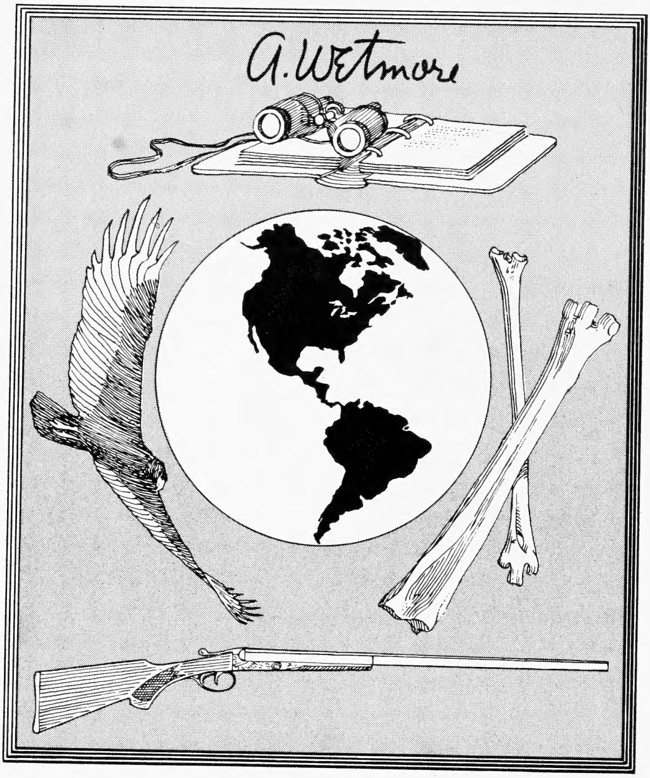

Alexander Wetmore
1946 *Sixth Secretary* 1953

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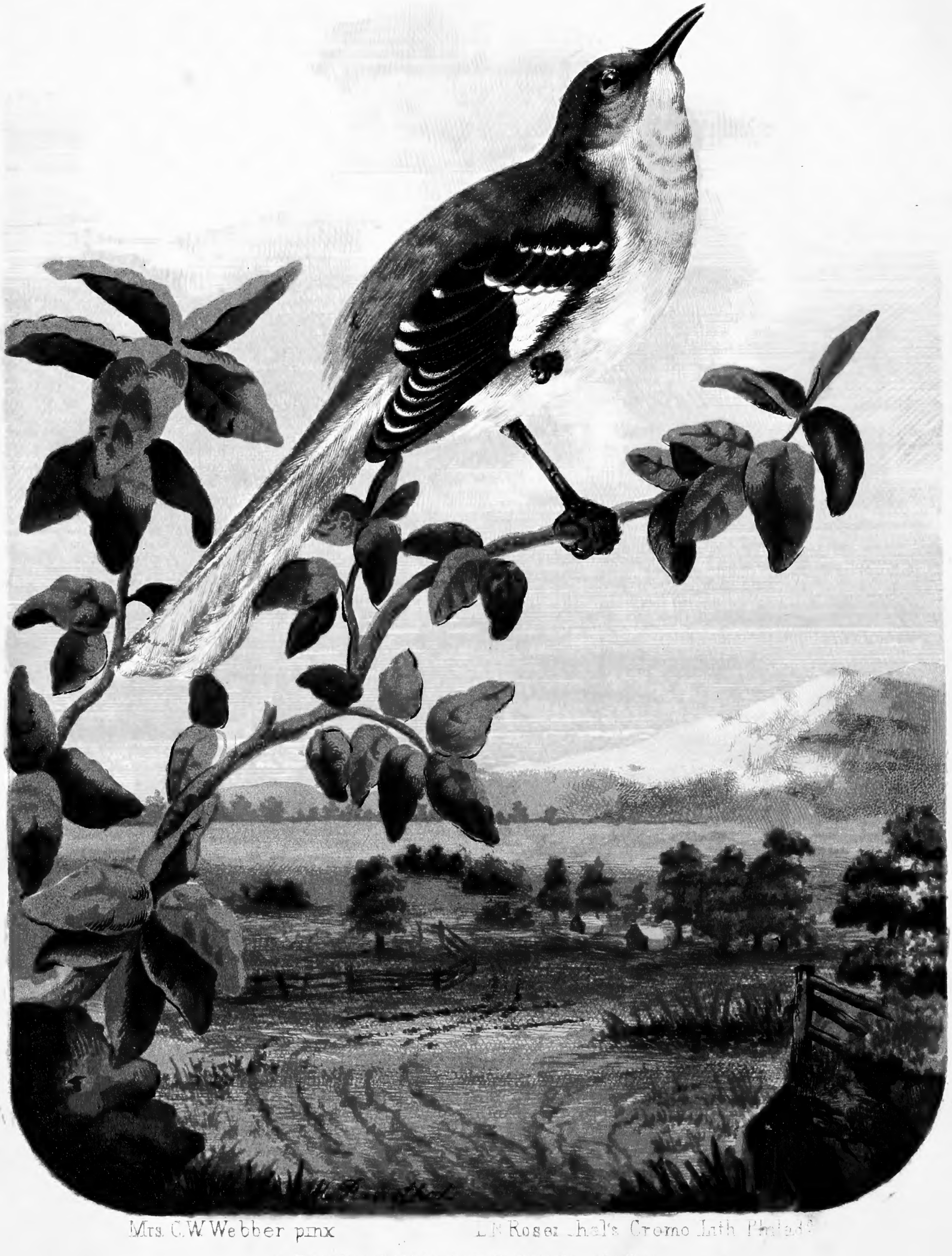

Mrs. C.W. Webber pinx L.N. Rosenthal's Cromo Lith Philada

KENTUCKY MOCKING BIRD.

WILD SCENES

AND

SONG-BIRDS.

BY C. W. WEBBER,

AUTHOR OF "HUNTER-NATURALIST—WILD SCENES AND WILD HUNTERS,"
ETC. ETC.

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS, PRINTED IN COLORS,

FROM DRAWINGS BY

MRS. C. W. WEBBER AND ALFRED J. MILLER.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

My Mother,

WHOSE BEAUTIFUL GENIUS IN ART,

HER NEW DAUGHTER

HAS STRIVEN WORTHILY TO PERPETUATE,

This Book,

THE FIRST FLOWER OF OUR LIVES,

IS INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

WILD SCENES AND SONG-BIRDS can fairly be considered but as another step towards that assimilation between the formalities of the mere technical natural history, and the diversified graces and uses of general literature, for which the author, in his proper character of Hunter-Naturalist, has labored for so many years.

Little more need therefore be said concerning the method of this volume, than that all method, such as is of a purely technical character, has been purposely avoided in the text.

The Hunter-Naturalist claims a method of his own, and whether it be for better or for worse, he has chosen to impress the seal and stamp thereof upon this series. Whether in his bear-skin cap and rough-furred hunting-cloak, he lead the way, rifle in hand, to fastnesses, and exhibit to you the rude and bloody exigencies of the strife of man with the savage occupants of a primeval wilderness—or with such ungainly appliances thrown aside, and heart attuned to harmonies, he discourses to you Nature's gayest, gentlest themes, while loitering in her sunshine, he still claims to be real in his own individuality—the Hunter-Naturalist and nothing more!

The living man dealing with living nature is not likely to treat of her as he would of a Pre-Adamite Golgotha, and attempt to make such music out of her as the rattling of dry bones! The Hunter-Naturalist must therefore be excused if he prefer to convey something of the songs of free-winged birds, rather than the sounds of such dreary castanets! If in his mellow gayety he should presume to transcend all limits of "rule and precedent," let the old leather-winged Chiroptera of dusky cabinets blink their round eyes and stare away—who cares?—not the Hunter-Naturalist—for sure—since he is happy in his singing—hopeful that others may be made happy too!

If in this dreary year, when earth is filled with wars and rumors of wars, and the air with portents and with pestilence, if the Hunter-Naturalist shall have won a single stricken heart and hopeless soul back to more cheerful views of life, it will be ample compensation for him to reflect that the dull Demon of Despair had been conquered—as the old Prussian general, when beaten out of Italy, complained, "contrary to all military precedent!"

But let the book tell its own story. This is certainly what I have left the five elegant plates, by Alfred J. Miller, of Baltimore, to do for themselves. It is sufficient for me to state, that the four in which Indians appear, are scenes in a camp of Delawares. They are so full of a character in keeping with the prominent topics of the present volume, as to render any text explanation of them useless at present. This is of the less importance now, as I propose to furnish among the Wild Scenes of a future and independent volume of this series, a full history of this noblest of the remaining Indian tribes of the continent.

In the fifteen plates of birds and flowers, by my wife, she has simply endeavored to illustrate her own views of "Woman's Rights" in the earnest effort to achieve something individually in the two departments of art, which seem most congenial and proper to feminine ambition, namely, bird and flower painting, with their cognate associations of the ornate, the graceful and the beautiful!

For the execution of my plates, in so short a time as has been allowed, I must express my gratitude to the Brothers Rosenthall, Philadelphia. The younger brother, M. Rosenthall, has distinguished himself by his zeal and skill as a young artist, under the accomplished supervision of M. Martin Thurwanger, one of the brothers of that name, distinguished as cromo lithographers in Paris. Young Rosenthall has achieved an honorable place for himself in this new art.

My wife is also much indebted to Mr. Galbraith, Taxidermist, of Camden, N. J., for obliging and skilful assistance in his department; also to Mr. Krider, of Philadelphia, author of a pieasant and useful little volume, called "Sporting Anecdotes," for similar obligations.

To our kind and ever to be remembered friend, George C. Ware, Esq., of Salem, N. J., we are chiefly indebted, not alone for genial and valued companionship, endeared by his goodness of heart and wonderful genius in music, but also for the liberality with which he afforded us constant access to, and the free use of his charming aviary of living song-birds. This curious collection, frequently numbering over sixty individuals at a time, was of great assistance to my wife.

For the benefit of those who may desire to see the scientific names of all the Birds and other natural objects mentioned in this volume, I have prepared carefully a Technical Index, which is presented at the end of the work.

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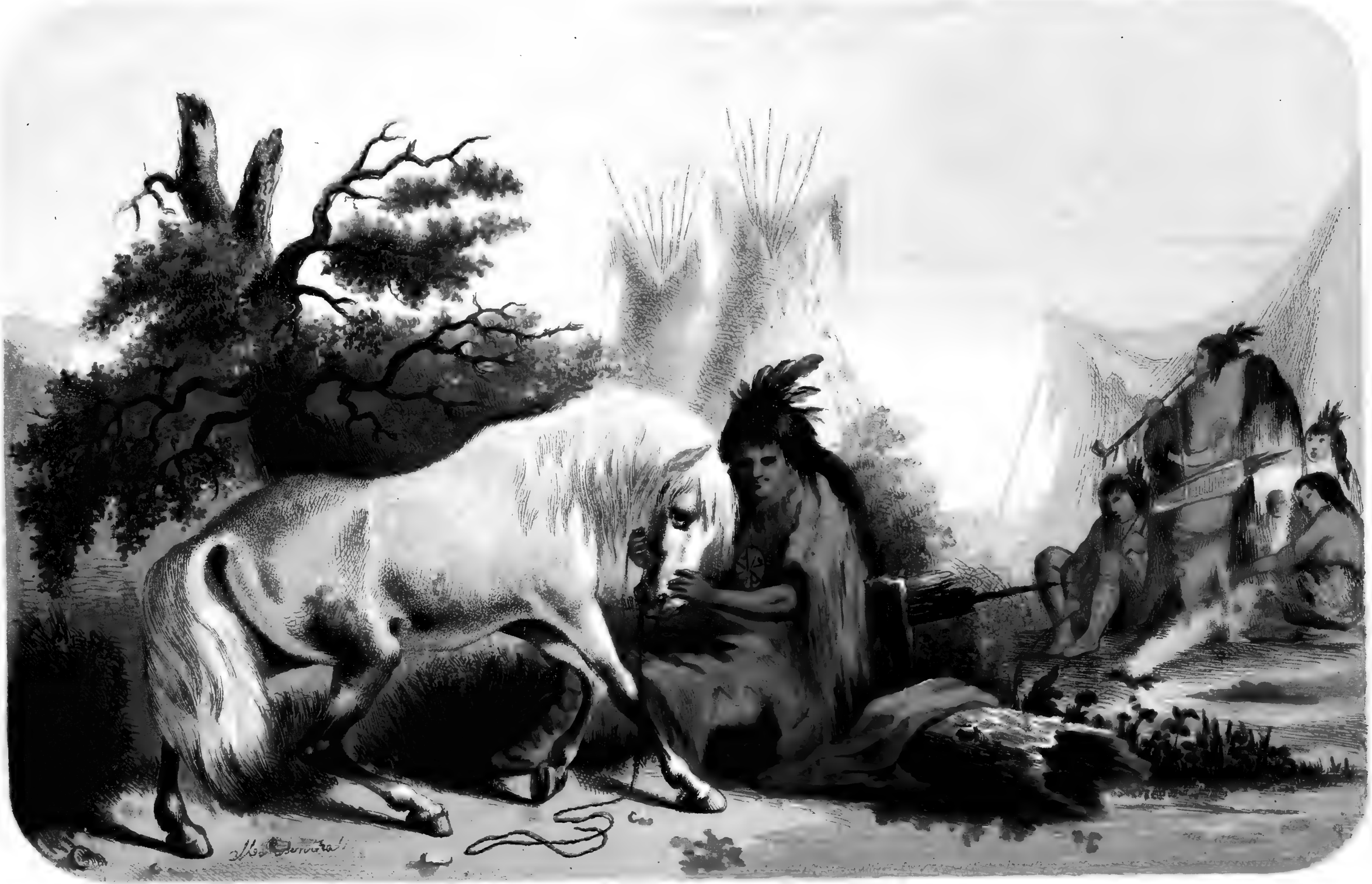

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Lith. Phil^a

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WILD SCENES AND SONG-BIRDS.

CHAPTER I.

NATURE AND HER HARMONIES.

I LOVE song-birds with a singular affection. Out of the bottom of my heart I love them—for of all God's creatures, except a clear-eyed, innocent child, they have been to me a wonder and a miracle.

I never could get done wondering to hear them sing. It sounds so strange to me that anything could be happy enough to sing but angels and young girls!

Singing, when we come to think of it, seems properly to be the language of a deathless being—the right form in which the exultings of an Immortal should be poured among the waves of shoreless sound.

That a sweet sound should ever cease to be, appears to me unnatural—at least unpoetical—for, let its vibrations once begin, though they may soon die to our gross sense, must they not go widening, circling on, stinging the sense of myriad other lives with a mysterious pleasantness (such as will overcome us in a wood upon an April day), until the uttermost bound of our poor space be past, and yet the large circumference go spread and spreading tremulous among the girdling stars?

It may be so for all we can tell! *If* it be so, how quaint it is to hear these little feathered creatures, from some frail sprig—with such unconscious earnestness—gushing out strains that are to chime the solemn dance of systems! Mystery is all around us. Who knows but that these things be?

Whether or no, it is a marvellous reality to hear birds singing. If you look at them while they do it, with their upturned bills, their rapt, softened, half-closed eyes, their bodies quivering in the ecstatic travail—you cannot but feel in reverential mood, and hear your own rebuked heart whispering "let us pray!"

What! When their shrill, melodious clamorings go up with the mists before the sun, and make his coming over earth to be with light in music, are they not chaunting *matins* to the God of all?

When he hastens to decline, and from the spires of tree-tops everywhere the Thrush and Robin sing a low-voiced hymn—is it not a *vesper*-symphonie of thanks?

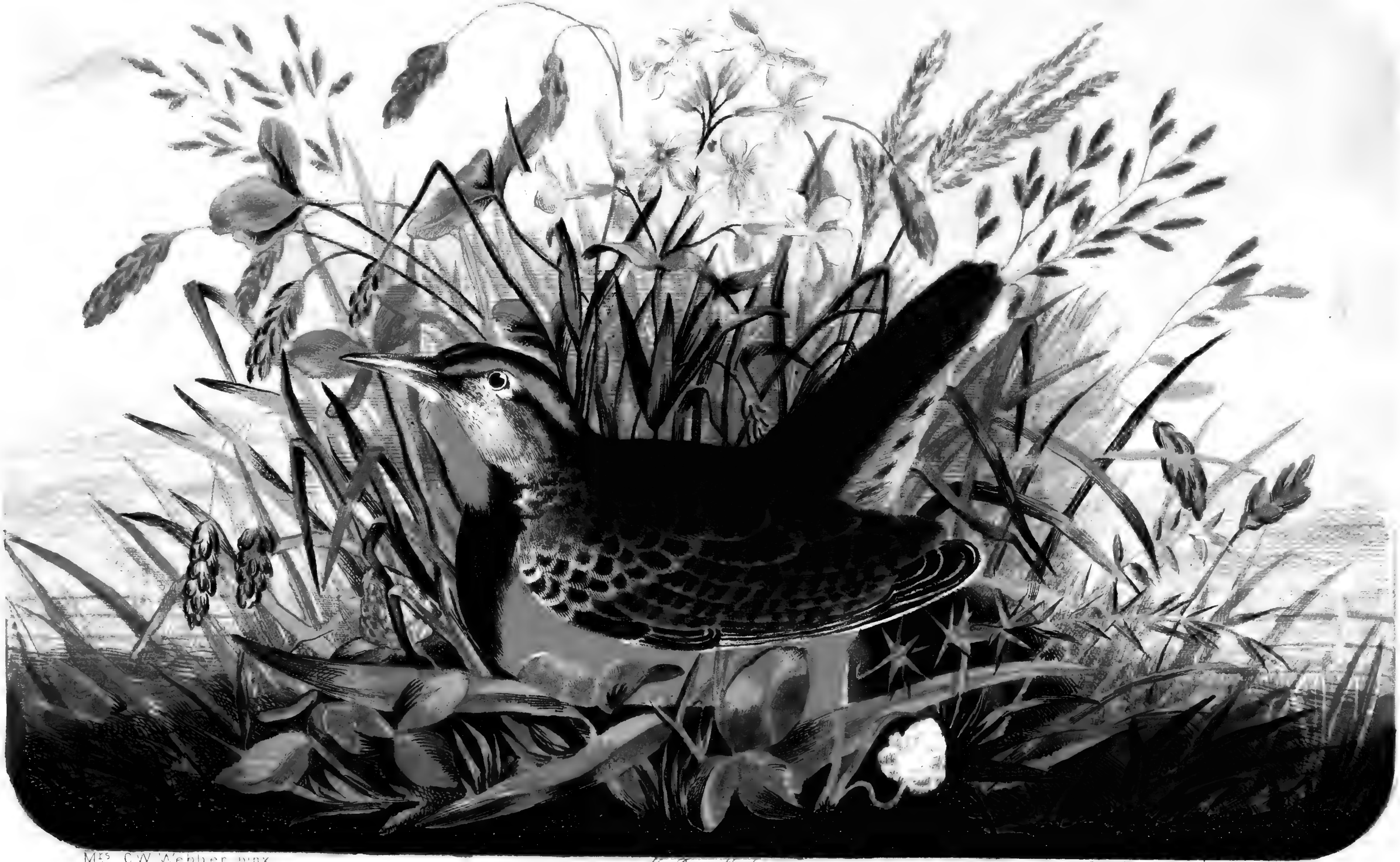
And when, in the deep night, the Oriole, in dreamy twitterings, and the Mocking-bird, in clear, triumphing notes, stir the dark shadows of the cold, gray moon to the wild pulsing of unmeasured chords—is it not a worship fitting to that mystic time?

Verily, they symbol to us a spiritual and a holier life! The purpose of their being is in prayer and praise, just as they say it is with Angels.

They do not taste the fruits of earth, and revel in the warm kisses of the day unthankfully; but when their little hearts—forever drinking love—fill up to the brim, they let their cadent fulness go towards heaven.

They sing when they have eaten—they sing when they have drunk—while they are waking, music always trembles at their breasts—they pay back the caressing sun in sweetness—and when they sleep, and the shining beams are showered silently and pale, down from the bosom of the darkness over them, their dreams break out in momentary song.

They take the berry, flushing underneath green leaves,



Mrs C. W. Webber pinx. M. Rosenthal. L. N. Rosenthal's Chromo-Lith.

MEADOW LARK

and the sense of hunger is relieved. So when they snatch the earth-worm—stirring unusually the grass blades of the sward beneath them—from its slimy hole, the bare appetite is soothed.

Theirs is no sodden gormandie, such as we human brutes indulge, that would doze and snooze away the precious hours. No; this food with them is but the "provender of praise;" and for every mite and fragment of the manna of the "great Dispenser" they do obeisance in thanksgiving.

Beautiful lesson, is it not, to us a stiff-necked and ungrateful generation? We eat to live, that we may eat again. They eat that they may make merry before the Lord, and fill his outer temple with the sounds of love!

One of the most touching—and what certainly *should* be one of the most significant objects known to us, is afforded in the habitual gesture of these little creatures while they drink.

Think of a thin rivulet by the meadow-side playing at bo-peep with the sun beneath the thickets—and so clear withal, that every stem, jagged limb, or crooked, leaf-weighed bough, lies boldly shadowed on its pale sand, or over its white pebbles, like moon-shades on the snow—except that these are tremulous.

Then think of the singing throng who have been anticking and carrolling all the morning upon the weed and clover-tops, out under the sun—coming into that shady place about "the sweltering time o' day," to cool their pipes.

How eagerly they come flitting in, with panting, open throats! How quietly, through those cool, chequered glooms, they drop beside that sliding crystal.

Here a scarlet Grosbeak flames partly in the sunlight, while his ebony-set eyes gleam sharper in the shade; the Jay sits yonder behind a plumb-tree shadow, with lowered crest and gaping bill—the Meadow Lark wades in and stoops until the wavelets curl up against its yellow breast and kiss the dark blotch on its throat; the Wren comes creeping down with wagging tail among the mossy roots; the Orchard Oriole, reckless to the last, comes garrulous, chattering down, and dips upon an island pebble; and Bobby Linkum, with his amorous song shivered into silvery quavers, comes eagerly hurrying after, and dashes up the spray, like as not, amidstream; the Indigo Bird darts in, and the Sparrows skip chirpingly over the curled last-winter leaves; the yellow-eyed Thrush, with long bounds and drooping wings, splashes plump into the water; the Cat Bird, with faint purr, glides meekly down; the Elfin Mocker, even, silent now and panting, half-spreading its white-barred wings with every hop, follows the rest; with low chirrup and quick pattering feet, the dusky-dotted Partridge hurries in; now see them one and all dip their thirsty bills into the cool ripples—a single drop, then each is upturned towards heaven, and softest eyes look the mute eloquence of thanks.

Down they all go again—another drop—up they rise together, pointing toward the home of God, gesticulating praises while they take his gifts.

Beautiful worshippers! Lovely and fitting temple of the Most High! your shady places have been hallowed by those simple prayers. That inarticulate incense, like the invisible aroma of hill-side violets, has ascended gratefully to heaven!

Ye human Formalists, who, to the alarm of chimes, go on your knees to mumble the set forms of praise! what is your faith compared to these?

Would that ye would read this Elder Bible more—its wide, miraculous pages have many a sentient chapter such as this, where all the breathing is of love! Turn aside to look upon them with a calm regard; who knows but that the light abiding with these gentle things, may find its way through the hard crust of cant, and wake to flowering some genial place beside thy heart.

Ye are not all ossified—brain, sense and heart—even down to that altar of the belly gods within you! Be of good cheer, and not affrighted because of great black-letter Tomes, God's Commentary on his written Revelation was given first

—was handed down from a thousand Sinais, and strewed in green and golden shadowy lines through all the plains. It yet lives, and is, from under his own hand, above, around, beneath thee; and by it too ye may understand that holy mystery—how God is Love, and Love is God-like.

These are not all the mysteries symbolized by Birds.

How came old Genius to give wings to its embodied visions of the Spirit-Land? but that it had looked upon some plumed and beamy singers of the clouds,

> "With wings that might have had a soul within them,
> They bore their owners by such sweet enchantment."

Can you not know that never again to it, from out the umbrage, could "ministers of grace" or glad ideals come other than "by such sweet enchantment?"

"The wings! the wings!" Ah! ever they must grow upon The Beautiful, ere it can rise to Heaven!

To us on wings The Beautiful must come down from thence! It is with longing for these wings, this "Immortality" doth struggle in us! To the music of their mellow whirr we feel exultings, and our bare arms beat vainly, reaching toward the stars. Ah! "whence this longing?"—we poor unfledged earth-prone things!

Is it not a memory dimly recalled of some mysterious whilome when our free vans made sudden melody, cleaving past the worlds, through space, where now our thoughts go haunting ghost-like?—or is it that "the shadow of the coming time" falls over us in wings?

"The wings!"—no fair Ideal can come to us but with their light aërial movement—no dream of Love but with the low murmur of their softest beat—no gleam of Joy but as they glance the sunlight off in gambolling—no Hope but as they climb the dark craigs of the piled-up storm and reach the serene sky above—no Ambition

> "But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on!"—

no Freedom but wheels and rushes tameless through the unbounded fields of air—no ecstasy of Faith, but like

> " The lark whose notes do beat
> The vaulty heaven, so high above our heads,'

—"singeth at Heaven's gate!"—no spiritual Warning but comes and goes, inexplicably, quick as the shadow of some "full-winged bird," glides across our path upon a summer's day—no Visitation but comes like a fierce swooper of the sky, the moan of arrowy wings and stroke at once—no Shudder from the charnel but the frowsy flap of owlet and of bat, "chasing the lagging night-shades," or the cloud-dropped croak of "sad presaging Raven" going by must bring it—no dash of "mirthful Phantasie" but that sparkles from the jewelled wings of restless Hummers, light it amidst the flowers.

All the mysteries of hope, of joy, of hate, of love, are winged, and to the tameless pulsing of this winnowed air our life must beat!

Winging and singing through the spring-time with the birds our Childhood goes—and ever, while that

> ———" Infantine
> Familiar clasp of things divine,"

lingers in freshness with the years—keeping the wise youth of our hearts unhackneyed—shall living be a joyful thing, and the cycling moons wheel blithely with us!

Ah, those times!—with the yellow-haired, blue-eyed, blooming maidens, in their white pinafores and pantalettes!—

> "Lightsome, then, as April shadows,
> With bees and merry birds at play,
> Chasing sunlight o'er the meadows,"

were we!

Bounding and carrolling through the flower-starred, odorous grass—scaring the fire-flies back to the moon, whence their bright showers fell—driving the sad, plaining, ill-omened whippoorwill farther away—what cared we on summer evenings?

> "Rigor now is gone to bed—
> Strict Age and sour Severity
> With their grave saws in slumber lie!"

Go listen, we may, to the Mocking-Bird down in the valley, on the lone thorn tree—singing gleefully—singing quaintly—singing mournfully now and wildly:

> "And gushing then such a melodie
> As harp-strings make when a Sprite goes by!"

Ha! ha! what a hotch-potch of minstrelsy he is pouring!—while the stars glint on the green leaves, and they are seeming to glint back those silver points earthwise, barbing his bright notes more keenly—what a dividing asunder of the joints and marrow the sharp delight of those loud quaverings doth bring?

Many a time have we kissed the white innocence of an upturned forehead, and felt the light pressure of a "flower-soft hand" return the questioning of our gaze into the "fringed windows" of the soul—large, open, dewy, tremulous with ecstasy beneath that song.

How could the earth-walking angel fail to think of Heaven when those rare snatches of her natal roundelays went by? Would that our kiss might be as pure and our spirit as appreciative now of these "better symphonies!"

The years! the years! what changes do they bring! The heated walls, the din of wheels, the dust and smoke of the great city are around us, and we are toiling wearily with the weary toiling crowd—while away by the scented woods this Mocking-Bird—*our* Philomel

> ————"singing in summer's front!
> Now when her mournful hymns do hush the night,
> And that wild music burdens every bough!"

that wild music is in vain for us. We can only dream of it as the thirsty Arab dreameth of the palm-trees and the fountain—and as to

> "How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night!"

we can only tell when these memories babble to our sleep!

To be sure we sometime since *did* steal an hour from our duties, and run away like a truant school-boy to the country, emulous of the odors of new-mown hay upon our garments!

We caught this infection of sweetness while "loafing" on the shady side of the ricks out in the shorn meadows, with eyes half closed, listening to Bobby Linkum chirruping his saucy thoughts about the despoliation of his forage-grounds.

He is a very chatty, gay, abusive fellow, Robert Linkum is. The *utile et dulci* he has no respect for. What matter is it to him that grass smells sweeter for being cut, and that it makes the heavy wains go creaking to the barns, and the farmer's canvas pocket heavier too, when all this curtails his lineal prerogative of bugs and butterflies—puts him to shifts for "findings" to keep that wide-mouthed crew of little brawlers quiet he has hid yonder in the shrubs?

One can see plainly he does not like it. He comes fluttering sideways, chattering, raving and scolding, just above our heads, his eye cocked downwards, with a connoisseuring look, at our proceeding.

He evidently thinks we are an awkward set of fellows, besides being mischief-doers.

It does gladden one's eyes to see these waving lakes of green—heavy and deep—the rich promise of a golden prime. And then the fruits! The pregnant winds from the dew-dropping south, since Lang Syne, have hardly been so prodigal; the ruddy flushing from under the green leaves of shiny clusters, deepens all the air, and clothes the trees right royally.

We came back half mourning at our lot being cast amidst the stifling streets of Gotham, and more than half envying the "country folk" this prodigality of "the benedictions of the covering heavens" and teeming earth.

But, thanks to our stars, we were not always thus "cribbed, cabined, and confined!" That we have a heart still, and some few tears left, to be spilt on occasion, we attribute solely to the fact that we have lived much abroad in the freedom of God's own woods and plains and rivers—that our voice has

> "Awaked the courteous Echo
> To give us answer from her mossy couch,"

in some strange, far places.

We have met this same master Bobby Linkum masquerading in another dress through the savannahs of the pleasant south, and such tricks before high Heaven as the gad-about doth play, must make the angels *smile*—not "weep"—to witness!

But be comforted, thou of little locomotion! thou shalt know, even at thine own fire-side, this fantastical, as well in his remoter wanderings toward the tropics, as in his love-making time in thine own meadows—for

> "Audubon!
> Thou Raphael of great Nature's woods and seas!"

has been upon his track. He with the

> ——"Power to bear the untravelled soul
> Through farthest wilds—o'er ocean's stormy roll—
> And to the prisoner of disease bring home
> The homeless bird of ocean's roaring foam!"

Hear what he caught master Bobby at:

"During their sojourn in Louisiana, in spring, their song, which is extremely interesting, and emitted with a volubility bordering on the burlesque, is heard from a whole party at the same time; when, as each individual is, of course, possessed of the same musical power as his neighbors, it becomes amusing to listen to thirty or forty of them beginning one after another, as if ordered to follow in quick succession, after the first notes given by a leader, and producing such a medley as it is impossible to describe, although it is extremely pleasant to hear it. While you are listening, the whole flock simultaneously ceases, which appears equally extraordinary. This curious exhibition takes place every time that the flock has alighted on a tree, after feeding for awhile on the ground, and is renewed at intervals during the day."

But these are not all the curious ways Robert has.

He is very fashionable, and like the other "absentee" gentry of the south, follows the spring toward the north to do his courting. Now this is very sagacious of master Rob—for he is aware that "spruce and jocund" maiden has a way of making up for her shorter stay in these boreal regions, by the displaying a greater profusion of "beck and nod, and wreathed smiles!"

Sometimes the gallant is in too great a hurry to get the benefit of these sweet dispensations, and he reaches the amorous vicinage before his "sparking suit" has come out—(the change usually occurs during his transit).

Robert is so evidently mortified at the want of his "Sunday-go-to-meetins" at such a time, that Mr. Audubon puts forth the insinuation that the feathered "Mercutio" appears rather mopish for awhile;—such a volcanic heart has he, though, that in spite of this, "no sooner does a flock of females (who follow from a week to ten days after) make its appearance, than these dull-looking gentlemen immediately pay them such particular attention, and sing so vehemently, that the fact of their being of a different sex becomes undeniable."

Rob gets his fine clothes on at last, and, while the love-season lasts, becomes more sprightly than ever.

"Their song is mostly performed in the air, while they are rising and falling in successive jerks, which are as amusing as the jingling of their vocal essays. The variety of their colors is at this juncture very remarkable. It is equally so, when, on rising among from the grass and flying away from the observer, they display the pure black and white of their wings and body."

That love-song of Rob's has been greatly admired, and several efforts have been made by distinguished amateurs to set its music to words.

Nobody has made much of it, except our Irving, and as we cannot quote him here, we shall not attempt to do it ourself!—for the truth is, Rob is such a rattling, voluble, reckless, mad, melodious ranter, that an attempt to translate him is almost out of the question—indeed, it would take a folio of MS. to give all the little cataract of tender epithets that pours in liquid gushes from his blithe throat, as he goes fluttering and wagging up and down from one tall mullien top to another!

But Robert is in love, and sober people should not judge him hardly—if they loved any one heartily as he loves Mrs. Mary Linkum—hid away yonder in the grass, brooding over those five speckled eggs—and their hearts were as light as his, they would be garrulous too—that is all! Ah, Bobby! Bobby! we fear you are but a graceless scamp at last—to think! that after such a mirthful life of musical lunacy, you should turn freebooter before the year is out, and get yourself shot at. Mr. Audubon tells a sad tale of your after doings. We have misgivings you're a dissipated, rollicking bird, at best, Rob!

"No sooner have the young left the nest, than they and their parents associate with other families, so that by the end of July large flocks begin to appear. They seem to come from every portion of the Eastern States, and already resort to the borders of the rivers and estuaries to roost. Their songs have ceased, their males have lost their gay livery, and have assumed the yellow hue of the females and young, although the latter are more firm in their tints than the old males, and the whole begin to return southward, slowly and with a single *clink*, sufficient, however, to give intimation of their passage, as they fly in high files during the whole day.

"Now begin their devastations. They plunder every field, but are shot in immense numbers. As they pass along the sea-shores, and follow the muddy edges of the rivers, covered at that season with full-grown reeds, whose tops are bent down with the weight of the ripe seeds, they alight amongst them in countless multitudes, and afford abundant practice to every gunner.

"It is particularly towards sunset, and when the weather is fine, that the sport of shooting *Reed Birds* is most profitable. They have then fully satiated their appetite, and have collected together for the purpose of roosting. At the discharge of a gun, a flock sufficient to cover several acres rises *en masse*, and performing various evolutions, densely packed, and resembling a sultry cloud, passes over and near the sportsman, when he lets fly, and finds occupation for some time in picking up the dozens which he has brought down at a single shot. One would think that every gun in the country has been put in requisition. Millions of these birds are destroyed, and yet millions remain, for after all the havoc that has been made among them in the Middle Districts, they follow the coast, and reach the rice plantations of the Carolinas in such astonishing numbers, that no one could conceive their flocks to have been already thinned. Their flesh is extremely tender and juicy. The markets are amply supplied, and the epicures have a glorious time of it."

We have a charming counterpart of Robert in the South and West, among the Orioles. He is called the Orchard or *Parson* Oriole, from the soberness of his garments; but O! commend us to such Parsons as he—the merry "clerk of Copenhurst" would be demure beside him!—The gleeful, thoughtless, sinner! he can't go from one tree-top to another, (for he is more ambitious than Rob, and swings his grass-wove hammock from pinnacle orchard boughs,) without ranting in such a glad, rattle-pate, glorious fashion about his happiness, keeping time with his wings as he flutters and dives along, that one cannot help feeling he is about to go all to pieces in his ecstasy; be verily fragmented into sweet sounds!

But no such thing; he's a tough little preacher of cheerfulness, and holds together with all that riotous, jolly rantipole. Ah, how we have laughed on a spring morning, to witness his delirious bliss, as he went exhorting by, to his soberer neighbors, about love and sunshine, the dew and flowers; bugs and caterpillars too, no doubt!

"Hail to thee, blithe spirit!"—thou embodied joy! winged laughter!—pleasant indeed is thy faith of mirth, and wiser far than that of canting! Mr. Audubon gives a felicitous account of the funny, ingenious ways of this jollificating Reverend.

"No sooner have they reached the portion of the country in which they intend to remain during the time of raising their young, than these birds exhibit all the liveliness and vivacity belonging to their nature. The male is seen rising in the air from ten to twenty yards in an indirect manner, jerking his tail and body, flapping his wings, and singing with remarkable impetuosity, as if under the influence of haste, and anxious to return to the tree from which he has departed. He accordingly descends with the same motions of the body and tail, repeating his pleasing song as he alights. These gambols and carollings are performed frequently during the day, the intervals being employed in ascending or descending along the branches and twigs of different trees, in search of insects or larvæ. In doing this, they rise on their legs, seldom without jetting the tail, stretch the neck, seize the prey, and emit a single note, which is sweet and mellow, although in power much inferior to that of the Baltimore. At other times, it is seen bending its body downwards, in a curved posture, with the head gently inclined upwards, to peep at the under parts of the leaves, so as not to suffer any grub to escape its vigilance. It now alights on the ground, where it has spied a crawling insect, and again flies towards the blossoms, in which many are lurking, and devours hundreds of them each day; thus contributing to secure to the farmer the hopes which he has of the productiveness of his orchard.

"The arrival of the females is marked with all due regard, and the males immediately use every effort in their power to procure from them a return of attention. Their singings and tricks are performed with redoubled ardor, until they are paired, when nidification is attended to with the utmost activity. They resort to the meadows, or search along the fences for the finest, longest, and toughest grasses they can find, and having previously fixed on a spot, either on an apple-tree, or amidst the drooping branches of the weeping-willow, they begin by attaching the grass firmly and neatly to the twigs more immediately around the chosen place. The filaments are twisted, passed over and under, and interwoven in such a manner as to defy the eye of a man to follow their windings. All this is done by the bill of the bird, in the manner used by the Baltimore Oriole. The nest is of a hemispherical form, and is supported by the margin only. It seldom exceeds three or four inches in depth, is open almost to the full extent of its largest diameter at the top or entrance, and finished on all sides, as well as within, with the long slender grasses already mentioned. Some of these go round the nest several times, as if coarsely woven together. This is the manner in which the nest is constructed in Louisiana: in the Middle Districts it is usually lined with soft and warm materials."

On the whole, in this instance, we like the Southern Parson best; for, in addition to being quite as facetious and loving as Master Rob, he proves to be a much better citizen; for his admirers, instead of having their sense of propriety shocked, in seeing him turn wholesale plunderer, are told of his "contributing to secure to the farmer his hopes of the productiveness of his orchard."

We would advise all ironside philosophers, catechism in hand, to go to the Sunday school, (for all days are *Sun*days to him) where this little Parson teaches:—it is possible such may learn of more things there than they have dreamed of yet.

In addition to the healthful tonic of his laughing ethics, through which their lank sides may grow to shake with fat, perhaps the Parson, in exhibiting the process by which that woven domicil of his is constructed, may enlighten them as to the absurdity of certain dogmatisms concerning instinct.

Beside the consummate and delicate skill with which he plies the long, fibrous thread, with small feet and needle-like bill, weaving, plaiting, sewing—there is something in that facility of adaptation, which, in Louisiana, exhibits the nest "coarsely woven," that the air may pass through, and in the middle States "lined with soft and warm materials," that so curiously resembles "reasoning;" that is amazingly like an independent volition, guided by the familiar and simple process of "Induction!" Who knows? "*A little bird told me so!*"

The Parson is indignantly eloquent upon these points sometimes. He says that he displays quite as much judgment and more foresight, in selecting the locality and material of his house, than we "animals on two legs, without feathers" ever do; that he is bred to be a better artist than one in a thousand of us; that Orioles are no more compelled, by a resistless impulse, to build their houses in a particular way, without understanding the reason why, than the Hindoos are, to build Pagodas; that he *does* understand the reason perfectly, and it is the plainest imaginable one.

This particular form is chosen, because it suits his habits, tastes, and mode of life best, and that, the Chinaman, who has built his house in the same way (so far as we know) for three thousand years, can give no better reason.

That though a particular outline suits him best, and suited his forefathers the best, yet they have been in the habit of altering the construction and material; and he knows why, clearly enough, that in a hot climate it would not do to make them close and warm, or in a cold climate, open.

It stands to reason, in the one case, that the young would be suffocated, in the other, frozen.

Furthermore, continues the orator, it is all fal lal! the assertion that my young are taught by any such thing as ininstinct when to pierce the shell; the principle of life has germinated, as it does in a grain of corn, in a certain number of days, under the warmth of my breast, and when the little fellows begin to get strong, they kick and scuffle in their prison, and a small sharp cone, on the top of the beak, (which was put there for the purpose, and drops off in a few days,) soon cracks the shell, while they are struggling, and then we help them out.

And furthermore, my younglings are just as innocently silly as your younglings, or any other young geese, and will run into the water, or into the fire just as soon as others, until they have burnt their toes, or got themselves half-drowned for their curiosity, and then, as this is not pleasant, they are satisfied to keep themselves out of such scrapes.

Do I not go with them all the summer, keeping them out of difficulties, coaxing and scolding, learning them how to fly, how to catch bugs, chase butterflies, find caterpillars, to hide from their enemies, plume themselves, and sing; and can't you understand, that yet, though I cannot speak Hebrew or English, I speak the Oriole tongue, and learn them to speak and comprehend it, that I may teach them the morals and religion of the Orioles!

Faugh! instinct indeed! Don't you perceive they are regularly *educated?* If you great, stupid, clumsy animals, only had feathers on, there might be a faint hope of your learning something!

We think this will be recognized as a very unctuous and edifying discourse of our Parson's; such are his more didatic teachings; of the others you have heard.

But we must confess that the Parson, with all our respect for him, has certainly some very mysterious ways. Mr. Audubon plainly intimates, that in common with all spirited young "bloods," he is frequently "disguised," and that it requires several years for him to take upon himself the "sober, outward seeming" of his tribe or profession.

The whole extent of the curious and interesting charge the Naturalist brings against him, may be gathered from the passage we give below; premising that *he* speaks of him as the "Orchard," while *we* know him as the "Parson Oriole."

"The plumage of many species of our birds undergoes at times very extraordinary changes. Some, such as the male Tanagers, which during the summer months exhibit the most vivid scarlet and velvety black, assume a dingy green before they leave the country, on their way southward. The Goldfinch nearly changes to the same color, after having been seen in the gay apparel of yellow and black. The Rice Bird loses its lively brightness until the return of spring. Others take several years before they complete their plumage, so as to show the true place which they hold among the other species, as is the case with the Ibis, the Flamingo, and many other Waders, as well as with several of our land birds, among which, kind reader, the species now under your consideration is probably that in which these gradual improvements are most observable by such persons as reside in the country inhabited by them.

"The plumage of the young birds of this species, when they leave the nest, resembles that of the female parent, although rather less decided in point of coloring, and both males and females retain this color until the approach of the following spring, when the former exhibit a portion of black on the chin, the females never altering. In birds kept in cages, this portion of black remains without farther augmentation for two years; but in those which are at liberty, a curious mixture of dull orange or deep chesnut peeps out through a considerable increase of black-colored feathers over the body and wings, intermixed with the yellowish-green hue which the bird had when it left the nest. The third spring brings him nearer towards perfection, as at that time the deep chesnut color has taken possession of the lower parts, the black has deepened on the upper parts, and over the whole head, as well as on the wings and tail-feathers. Yet the garb with which it is ultimately to be covered requires another return of spring before it is completed, after which it remains as exhibited in the adult male represented in the plate.

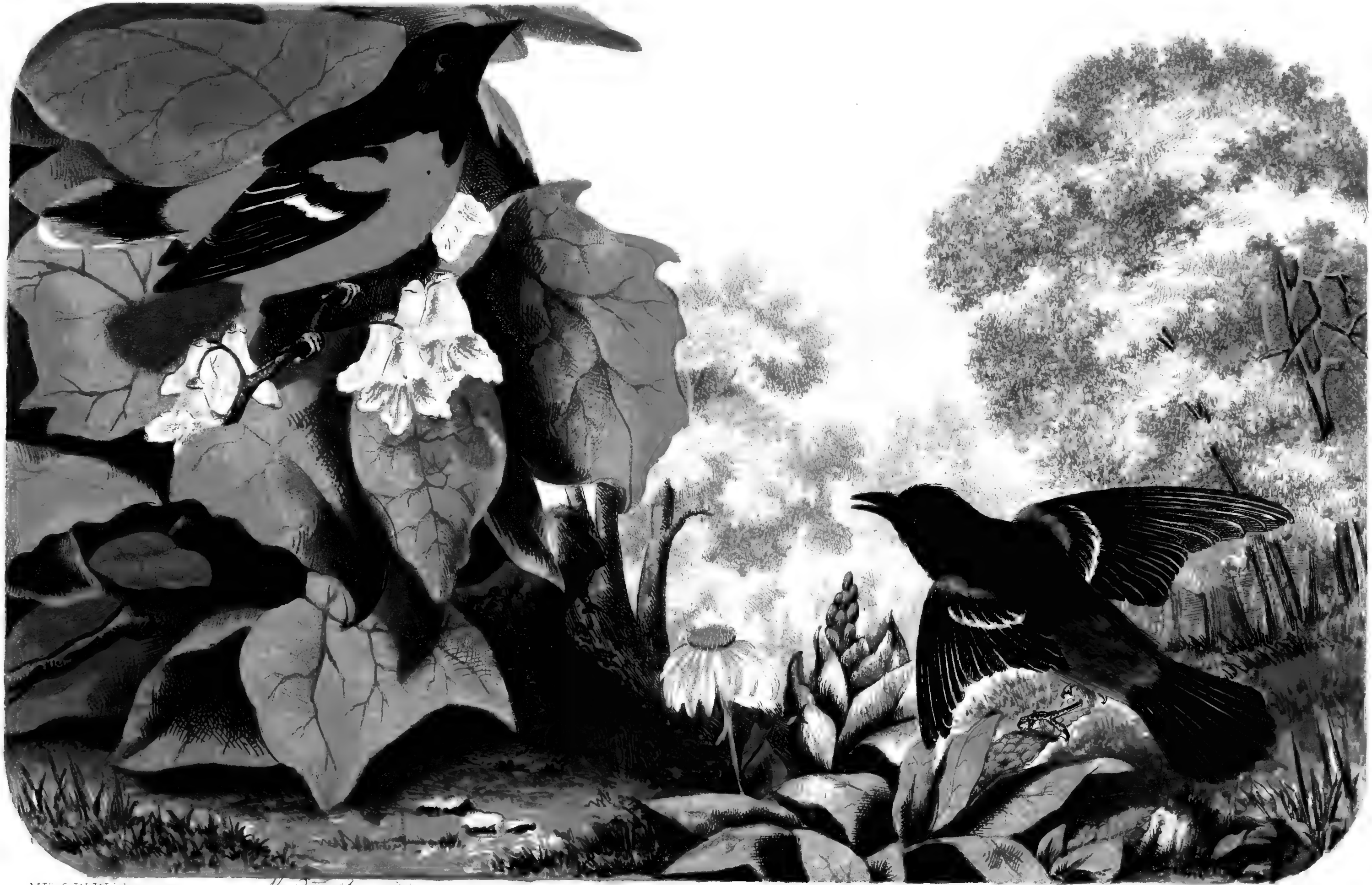
"These extraordinary changes are quite sufficient of themselves to lead naturalists abroad into error, as they give rise to singular arguments even with some persons in America, who maintain that the differences of color are indicative of different species. But, since the *habits* of these birds under all these singular changes of plumage, are ascertained to be precisely the same, the argument no longer holds good."

Of whatever impositions upon "the sex," "the Parson" may have been guilty, during the years of his various disguises, we profess to be innocently ignorant, and are "happy in our ignorance."

But of *one* thing we are soberly assured: that Mr. Audu bon is the first of *Naturalists*, (not Ornithologist, simply,) who has eliminated this distinction of age, sex and color, with their corresponding transitions, into anything bordering upon scientific accuracy. He first thoroughly roused science to the fact that it had often recognized male as female, young as old, and proved that many of its genera and species might come from the same nest or lair!

No classification can be called scientific, or recognized as worth anything, in which this point has not been most carefully guarded; and it involves difficulties, which, in some instances, the untiring zeal and watchfulness of his long life has been insufficient to solve.

What a singular ordination these alterations of plumage appears! The metamorphoses of Fashion are here clearly legitimatized by nature. Our Parson, with the addition of



Mrs C W Webber pinx   M. Rosenthal Del   L. Rosenthal's Chromo Lith. Phila

BALTIMORE ORIOLE.   ORCHARD ORIOLE.

Rev. may be called the D'Orsay of Birds, and the tribe of the Tanagers, the Patriarchs of "Turn-coats." Let not the worshippers of Fashion be longer stigmatized as nose-led by a Parisian Dandy, or old Federalists, or new light Locofocos, as nasally guided by the savor of "flesh-pots." Here they have far more respectable precedents: their respective orders were no doubt instituted by Nature herself. Should they but consult this candid and ancient Dame, she would, no doubt, recommend to the "Count" the figure of our "Parson," as proper to be introduced into his coat-of-arms, and to the Tory Demagogues that of the Tanagers as proper to the coat-of-arms they see in "yearning dreams."

Audubon uses a charming phrase in characterizing the enthusiasm which he found himself giving way to in the description of his feeling on the unexpected consummation of what he considered the triumphant achievement of his life—the discovery of the Bird of Washington. He suddenly fears that he may be considered as "prattling out of fashion!" Well, that is just the thing! I consider it peculiarly felicitous and to the point.

Though the story may not be particularly savory in some of its associations, I shall even venture, at the risk of such an imputation, to relate one from the reminiscences of my early boyhood concerning those sharp denizens of air, known as "*Corvus Americanus*"—the gentleman in black.

I once saw some crows feeding on the offal of a late slaughtering of domestic animals not far from my father's house. There had been a very deep snow on the ground for some weeks, and the crows had become very ravenous. The place where they fed, was within gun-shot of a cedar-hedge. After firing amongst them once or twice, they all took the alarm, and to my knowledge, never came back again, except one very large, and, I should think, gray-muzzled bird. I noticed that he uniformly seemed to have his eye or nose, it is difficult to tell which, upon me; for when I would reach my hiding-place, I could see the gentleman make a desperate tear at some liver hanging on the fence rails, and down he would dip as quick as lightning, behind the wood-pile next the fence, and when I would fire impatiently with the hope to secure him, he would fly, cawing, off, rising in triumph to the tops of the highest trees, with his prey in his mouth.

This was repeated day after day, for nearly a week, with about the same results, he still returning in unyielding audacity for his prey, in the teeth of all my threatening efforts. I had sworn vengeance against this particular crow, and at last hit upon what I conceived to be an admirable expedient. I put up a little board house near the corner where he fed, and having formed it large enough to conceal my body, made a small esquimaux ambuscade, or hunting-lodge of it, by covering it above, and on all sides, with snow, leaving a little loop-hole, chinked with snow, that could easily be pushed out with my gun-barrel, and a small window, through which I could barely see the place where I expected the crow to alight, and where I had placed a most tempting great piece of liver for a bait.

I had studiously accomplished this work between sundown and dusk, the time when the crows had all gone to roost. In the morning, about 10 o'clock, I crawled into my hunting-lodge, thinking I should have him now for sure; I had to sit not more than an hour, when, with palpitating heart, I heard above me his noisy caw. I had concealed my body carefully, because I knew he inspected, while on the wing, all the premises. He approached my old hiding-place very cautiously, mounting high in the air; when seeming to be satisfied, he poised himself for a moment, and came down in a slanting direction towards the liver, with something of the quick movement of a hawk's swoop—I clutched my gun, preparing to fire the moment he should alight. He had to pass, of course, near my little lodge, that I thought had been so dexterously concealed, in imitation of a pile of wood and snow, but, while yet on the swoop, the crow seeing, I suppose, that there was something suspicious in that corner of the wood, almost brushed, with his wing, the delicious breakfast as he went by, darted upward more swiftly than he descended, and flew off to his own woods, squalling defiance to his indefatigable enemy as he went.

I never saw that crow again, that I know of. He never came back, and the best proof of it was, that the liver still lay on the fence corner, where it had been placed, until the winter broke.

I can conceive no other solution to this curious incident, than that our friend with the black coat was willing to meet myself, or any other puissant champion, in fair field and on fair terms, for a taste of those esculent morsels which were so necessary to him during the winter, and though not particularly partial to gunpowder, his experience had rendered him sufficiently confident to be willing to run the risks—when he knew my hiding-place.

While he knew what to fear, he knew how to deport himself accordingly; but when it came to treachery to all the laws of war; a change of the place, a well-disguised snow-trap buried in the white, unsuspected bosom of old Mother Earth, the thing was horrible! It frightened him out of his propriety! Paugh! or rather, caw! such a traitor! It was indecent, it was savage, it was unmannerly! Caw! caw!

But what is all this shrewdness to be called? a mere blind Instinct? or has it some processes apparent, closely resembling those of Reason? Is it a pair of sharp eyes and keen nostrils, guiding the safety of a mere machine with black feathers and black wings through the air? Has it passions, affections, power of adaptation, hope, memory, &c.? These are interesting questions.

This is, no doubt, "prattling out of fashion" sure enough —but what of it? The Good Book sayeth out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ye shall rebuke them, and the above phrase precisely expresses that peculiar and excited vernacular which belongs equally to children and philosophers, as contrasted with the dull lasping see-saw of common place. Take a "minnion of the mud" who has set up for worldly wisdom, and he will dole you, measured by the foot-rule, putrescing fragments of stale conventionalities, until the mortal stench, rank in your complaining nostrils, offends your very life; but your singing birds prattle out of fashion, to lull the dewy eye-lids of the eve; so do blithe young girls and angels, if we may judge—as for the morning stars that "sang together" long ago, no doubt they did it out of all "rule and precedence." Would that there were more of this prattling out of fashion, to battle with the monster "monotone of Boredom." But hear what Mr. Audubon himself writes concerning this quaint citizen of whom we were speaking, while he pleads like an old Priest of Brahma for mercy to all God's creatures. He says—

"The Crow is an extremely shy bird, having found familiarity with man no way to his advantage. He is also cunning—at least he is so called, because he takes care of himself and his brood. The state of anxiety, I may say of terror, in which he is constantly kept, would be enough to spoil the temper of any creature. Almost every person has an antipathy to him, and scarcely one of his race would be left in the land, did he not employ all his ingenuity, and take advantage of all his experience, in counteracting the evil machinations of his enemies. I think I see him perched on the highest branch of a tree, watching every object around. He observes a man on horseback travelling towards him; he marks his movements in silence. No gun does the rider carry—no, that is clear; but perhaps he has pistols in the holsters of his saddle! of that the crow is not quite sure, as he cannot either see them or 'smell powder.' He beats the points of his wings, jerks his tail once or twice, bows his head, and merrily sounds the joy which he feels at the moment. Another man he spies walking across the field towards his stand, but he has only a stick. Yonder comes a boy, shouldering a musket, loaded with large shot, for the express purpose of shooting crows! The bird immediately sounds the alarm; he repeats his cries. increasing their vehemence the nearer his enemy advances—all the crows, within half a mile round, are seen flying off, each repeating the well known notes of the trusty watchman, who, just as the young gunner is about to take aim, betakes himself to flight. But, alas! he chances, unwittingly, to pass over a sportsman, whose dexterity is greater; the mischievous prowler aims his piece, fires; down towards the earth, broken-winged, falls the luckless bird in an instant. 'It is nothing but a crow!' quoth the sportsman, who proceeds in search of game, and leaves the poor creature to die in the most excruciating agonies."

Sharp fellows they are, and hard to be fooled—those crows! We have often thought, that with his dark plumes and ready wit, he must be on the other side of "Styx" the Plutonian Mercury. Some of the funniest things we have seen him do, that would have made the frosty, antique Zeno laugh like a Bacchante. He is "exclusively up to snuff," in all the wiles and ways of this wicked world. Catch a crow napping, or lure him within "point blank" if you can, unless you meanly take advantage of his passions or of his social feelings.

As we are fully launched in the discursive direction, we may as well give an anecdote of this trait:

We saw a vile, but comical trick, practiced upon him once "out West."

A fellow had caught a large owl in a hollow tree. He took him out into an open field much frequented by crows, and tied him on the top of a low stake within gun-shot of a stack, where he concealed himself. In a little while the crows, who are inveterate in their hatred of such twilight enemies, came thronging clamorously from all quarters about the owl, and commenced buffetting him heartily. The fellow shot and killed several of them before they took warning in the blindness of their wrath, but just as they were commencing to shear off, an accidental shot brought down one merely winged.

He came out from his hiding-place and caught it, while the brawling flock scattered to a respectful distance. He then, in a singular whim, took the owl, and pinned it with a piece of twine and pegs firmly to the earth, on its back, and held the struggling crow within reach of its claws, when it was instantly griped with a death-hold. Such a rueful squalling as the poor wretch set up, may be conceived by those who know the power of their lungs.

The genius did not think it necessary to hide himself this time, but coolly stood off some thirty or forty paces to wait the result. The cries of their suffering brother brought not only every crow in the field around him at once to the rescue, but the deafening hurrah of their united voices spread the alarm far and wide, till the whole district was aroused, and in a little while the very sky was darkened with their black wings, and ringing with their clamors. All the terrors of gunpowder were forgotten, and they were almost piled over the owl and his victim, screaming and battling for his release, regardless, in their valorous sympathy, of the deadly hail which was crashing amongst them.

With a relentless gusto, the fellow continued to ply ramrod and trigger, until the ground was strewed like a battle-field with the dead or fluttering wounded. That "practical humorist" deserved to have been hung with his head down, till the buzzards picked his eyes out! This was worse than what Mr. Audubon indignantly terms "the base artifice of laying poisoned grain along the fields to tempt the poor birds!" Hear his merciful eloquence reason with bigoted ignorance in behalf of this sadly persecuted, but interesting and useful bird:

"The crow devours myriads of grubs every day of the year, that might lay waste the farmer's fields; it destroys quadrupeds innumerable, every one of which is an enemy to his poultry and his flocks. Why then should the farmer be so ungrateful when he sees such services rendered to him by his providential friend, as to persecute that friend to death?

Unless he plead ignorance, surely he ought to be found guilty at the bar of common sense. Were the soil of the United States like that of some other countries, nearly exhausted by long-continued cultivation, human selfishness in such a matter might be excused, and our people might look on our crows as other people look on theirs; but every individual in the land is aware of the superabundance of food that exists among us, and of which a portion may well be spared for the feathered beings that tend to enhance our pleasures—by the sweetness of their song—the innocence of their lives—or their curious habits. Did not every American open his door and his heart to the wearied traveller, and afford him food, comfort and rest, I would at once give up the argument; but when I know by experience, the generosity of the people, I cannot but wish that they would reflect a little, and become more indulgent towards our poor, humble, harmless, and ever most serviceable bird—the crow!"

A crow-roost is one of the most singular places that ever mortal found himself in. Mr. Audubon speaks of their roosting by the "margins of ponds, lakes and rivers, upon the rank weeds and cat-tails," but I met them while hunting among the hills of the Green River country, Kentucky, roosting in a very different manner. I saw them streaming over my head, in great numbers, one evening, and hearing a most unusual noise in the direction they all seemed to pursue, my curiosity induced me to follow on, and see what it meant. As I advanced, the sound grew in volume, until at last, as I rounded the abrupt angle of a hill side, covered with a tall growth of young black oaks, it burst upon me with a commingled roar of barking notes and beating wings, that was positively stunning. All around for the space of half an acre, the cracking trees were bent beneath multiplied thousands of crows, shifting and flapping, with unceasing movement; every one screaming his vociferous caw in boisterous emulation. It resembled a pigeon-roost very closely, except that it was not so extensive or grand; and it differed, furthermore, in the fact, that by the time dark had set in, they were all quiet—sitting, black and still, in heaped cones, as they were defined against the dim sky; while in a pigeon roost, the heavy thundering of restless wings continues to roll on, without interval, until just before day.

This interesting fact in relation to the habitudes of the crow, and which I have observed to occur only in the winter, when they need the animal heat arising from the mutual contact of their many bodies as a protection from the extremities of cold, is an extraordinary example of that reasoning adaptation of the means to the end upon which I insist.

This same incident, of the departure upon so large a scale of every creature from its usual habits, under the force of circumstances, is only paralleled by another fact which, though not mentioned either in any of the books of Natural History, I know to be strictly true. It refers to an occasional mode of Hybernating resorted to by the Prairie Hen, or Pinnated Grouse.

The most extraordinary phenomenon produced by the necessities of the climate, and as a protection against the terrible winds which sweep over these apparently illimitable levels, at the approach of winter, consists, in the assembling of these birds, from a distance of many miles around, to roost on the same spot, something after the manner of the Wild Pigeon. This fact seems also to have escaped Mr. Audubon's notice.

At the opening of winter, a spot is selected, on the open prairies, in the upper part of the Missouri country, which is more sheltered than the surrounding region, by the character of the ground, from the biting force of the north-west winds. Here the Prairie Hens begin to assemble early in the evening, and by the time dusk comes on immense numbers are collected. They approach the scene in small flocks, in a leisurely manner, by short flights. They approach the place of gathering silently, with nothing of that whirr of wings, for which they are noted when they are suddenly put up, but they make ample amends when they arrive; as in the Pigeon roost, there is a continual roar, caused by the restless shifting of the birds, and sounds of impatient struggle emitted by them, which can be heard distinctly for several miles. The numbers collected are incalculably immense, since the space covered sometimes extends for over a mile in length, with a breadth determined by the character of the ground.

This is a most astonishing scene. When approached in the early part of the night on horseback, the hubbub is strangely discordant, and overwhelmingly deafening. They will permit themselves to be killed in great numbers with sticks, or any convenient weapon, without the necessity of using guns. They, however, when frequently disturbed in the first of the season, will easily change their roosting-place, but when the heavy snows have fallen, by melting which by the heat of their bodies, and by trampling it down, they have formed a sort of sheltered yard, the outside walls of which defend them against the winds, they are not easily driven away by any degree of persecution. Indeed, at this time, they become so emaciated as to afford but little inducement to any human persecutors, by whom they are seldom troubled, indeed, on account of the remoteness of these locations; from foxes, wolves, hawks, and owls, &c., their natural enemies, they have, of course, to expect no mercy at any time.

The noise of their restless cluckings, flutterings and shiftings, begins to subside a few hours after dark. The birds have now arranged themselves for the night, nestled as close as they can be wedged—every bird with his breast turned to the quarter in which the wind may be prevailing. This scene is one of the most curious that can be imagined, especially when they have the moonlight on the snow to contrast with their dark backs. At this time, they may be killed by cart-loads, as only those in the immediate neighborhood of the aggressor are disturbed, apparently. They rise to the height of a few feet, with a stupefied and aimless fluttering, and plunge into the snow, within a short distance, where they are easily taken by the hand. In these helpless conditions, such immense numbers are destroyed that the family would be in danger of rapid extermination, but that the fecundity of the survivors nearly keeps pace with the many fatalities to which they are liable.

These birds are distributed over an immense northern territory, and though they are, everywhere in the more sheltered regions, found to exhibit the propensity to collect in numbers greater or smaller during the extreme cold weather in low spots where they will have some shelter from the accidental peculiarities of the locality, yet nowhere else except upon just these wide plains are they to be found in such astonishing congregations as we have here described. The universal habit of all this family of Gallinaciæ is rather to run and roost in little squads or flocks. Whence this difference in the habits of the same bird. Who knows? Ah, whence the difference? This is the question!

Now your metaphysical philosophers are as thick as blackbirds in cherry-time among us—and quite as fussy. Every village pot-house has a genius in ragged breeches and with a long score of "chalks" against him, who will prove to you that Christianity is a delusion, and the doctrine of immortality all nonsense, by such imposing logic as that "you can neither see a soul, hear a soul, taste a soul, smell a soul, nor—" an astounding climax which we would think of doubting to be true in his case—"feel a soul!" But, let them alone. It is all right. This is an age of progression and discovery.

> "How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
> His energies, no longer tameless then,
> To mould a pin or fabricate a nail!
> How many a Newton, to whose passive ken," &c.

Let them alone, we say. There is no telling what these "vulgar" Catos and Newtons may not accomplish. The chronicles of olden times are filled with wondrous tales, showing how they, once in awhile, shake off the crust, and step forth suddenly before the world's eye, cap-a-pie, in shining armor, becoming men of renown in the fight of faith, or the weary marches of science. We have a strong inclination to set up for one of these vulgar Newtons ourselves, with the permission of the benevolent reader, as we are about to be guilty of an audacious speculation—and if we were not perhaps as much in joke as in earnest, we might be glad to deprecate responsibility, on the plea of "unsophisticated genius," &c.; but though one sense of "unsophisticated" may suit us well enough, yet we hardly dare to claim shelter under any other sense of a name so sacred in the mythos of human hope.

It may be only one of those dreams which, like the poet's ideal, haunts men from and in boyhood. We were then, as is usual, much fonder of the great wide pages, shadowy, waving, glittering and green, of nature's writing, than all the black-letter tomes that ever wearied eye of scholar. And while a scape-grace and hopeless truant, we paddled, bare-foot, through the pebbly brook, tore our juvenile trousers climbing for young squirrels, or winning a freckled necklace of birds' eggs for our blue-eyed sweetheart. We had a faint conception that the language we read there should be translated! Not that which we read in the blue eyes, specially, do we mean; but on the general page of the *living* revelation; for as we said our incorrigible visuals would not even then permit us to see that Reason and Instinct were altogether unlike.

We took in our hands a definition of Reason, accepted by the sages, and went out among these sentient, breathing forms of life, condemned by them to the blind guidance and fatality of Instinct, that we might compare the theory of one with the reality of the other.

The song-bird twittered at us; the wild deer turned to stare; the squirrel sputtered from his nut-crammed jaws, and the insects buzzed curiously around us—for the story got out that there was "a chiel amang 'em takin' notes," and they did not understand but that we meant them some impertinence; but they soon found out that we were harmless, at least, and grew reconciled.

Many a calm hour we spent among the cool, dim aisles of the mighty forests, still as the dark trunks around us, watching now the Baltimore oriole with coy taste, select a twig to hang her cradle from, and when her motherly care was satisfied that a particular one hung clear beyond the reach of the dreaded snake, or mischievous climbers, one and all,—that there was a tuft of leaves above it, which would precisely shield it from the noontide sun—then commences her airy fabric.

How ingeniously she avails herself of the forks and notches to twist the first important thread around! How housewife-like she plaits and weaves the grassy fibres! The unmanageable horse-hair, too, is used; how soberly she plies her long, sharp bill and delicate feet! Now she drops that thread as too rotten to be trusted, and reprovingly sends off her careless, chattering mate to get another. He is proud of his fine coat, and dissipates his time in carolling; but in her prudent creed, sweet songs won't build a home for the little folk, and so she very properly makes the idle fellow work.

At last, after a deal of sewing, webbing, roofing,—and scolding, too, the while—the house is finished, thatch, door, and all. The softest velvet from the mullen stalk must line it now; and then elate upon the topmost bough, she silently upturns her bill toward heaven, while her mate pours forth their joy for labors done, in thrilling gushes!

In those old times, sitting upon a gnarled root, I would bend for hours over some thronged city of the ants. Why, how is this? Here from the great entrance—roads branch off on every side. How clean, and smooth, and regular, they are! See, yonder is a dead limb fallen across the course. Amazement! A tunnel! A tunnel! they have sunk it beneath the obstruction too heavy for the power of their mechanics! Follow the winding track. See, that thick turf of grass! It is easier to go round it than to cut through it. And there, behold a mountain pebble in the way; see how the road is made to sweep in a free curve round the base.

Lay now that small stone across the narrow way! See! The common herd—the stream of dull-eyed laborers—how they are confounded by the interruption. They fall back upon each other—all is confusion. The precious burdens they bore with so much care, are dropped—to and fro they run—all is consternation and alarm.

But look! That portly, lazy fellow, who seemed to have nothing to do but to strut back and forth in the sun, now wakes up. He rushes to the scene. All give way from his path, and close crowdingly in his wake. He is one evidently having authority. He climbs upon the stone; runs over it rapidly; measures it with his antennæ; and down he glides among the still, expectant crowd. Here, there, yonder, everywhere, in a moment—he selects among the multitude those best fitted for the purpose with which his sagacious head is full—touches them with the antennæ of command, and each one, obedient, hurries to the stone.

No more confusion—every one is in his place awaiting orders, not daring to begin yet. He is back now to the stone. The signal is given! Each of the selected workers lay hold of it. See, how they tug and strain!

What? Not strength enough. An additional number are chosen. They seize hold. Now they move it! My lord, the overseer does not put a hand to it himself, or a pincer either,—but, see how he plays round, keeps the crowd out of the way, and directs the whole.

It is done! The stone is rolled out from the highway, and we will not put another one on it; it is cruel thus to use our giant's strength like a giant, and we are satisfied. The little laborers resume their burdens; away they go streaming on to the citadel; while the great man relapses suddenly into the old air of sluggish dignity.

But follow that road; it leads an hundred yards—clearly traceable through, above, under, around, all impediments; here the main road branches off, and is lost, or it ends at the tree with many insects on its bark, or at some great deposit of favorite food that has been found; and all this pains and labor have been expended in digging that road to secure the convenience of transportation!

Talk of your Simplon or your Erie Canal, or your hundreds of miles of human railroads! Wonderful *Instinct*, indeed!

Dig away the earth carefully, and look into that subterranean city. Here are streets, galleries, arches and domes, bridges, granaries, nurseries, walls, rooms of state—aye, palaces—cells for laborers, all the features and fixtures, diverse and infinite of a peopled city of humanity!

But see, a war has broken out with a neighboring city! Marvellous sight! The eager legions pour in a black flood from the gates. The chief men and captains of the people distinguished, not by plumes and stars, and orders, but by their greater size, and the formidable strength of their pincers. They are marshalled into bands—they know the strength of discipline and military science! In one wide, sweeping, unbroken line, they pour upon the enemy's town.

The fight is desperate—hand to hand—pincer to pincer; for it is a battle for dear life—liberty and larvæ! The vanquished are dragged into slavery; the larvæ carried off and tenderly nourished by the conquerors, and when they grow up are made helots of, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Strangely elastic *Instinct* this! If *we* combine, compare, deduce—is not there something like combination, comparison, deduction, here?

The mocking bird is, in many respects, characterized by the most remarkable sagacity. We watched a pair of them once build their nest in a low thorn bush, growing in what is called a "sink-hole," in the West. This had once or twice been filled with water by the heavy rains, but at long intervals.

This year the flood came. The birds had hatched, and four little downy, yellow, gaping mouths could be seen in the nest. The water commenced rising very rapidly in the sink. The birds became uneasy; they fluttered and screamed, and made a wonderful to-do. At last one of them flew down to the last twig above the rising water. He sat there looking closely at it till it rose about his feet, and then, suddenly, with a loud chirp, flew away, followed by the mate.

We thought they had deserted their young. "Unnatural creatures!" I exclaimed. And if a gun had been convenient, I think I should have had no scruple in shooting them.

In about half-an-hour the water had risen to the bottom of the nest! when, suddenly to my joy and penitent shame, the birds were back, flew down into the nest and off again! each bearing a young one. They were not gone a minute, when, straight as the flight of an arrow, and as swift, they were back, the other two little ones were carried off, and in a minute the nest was afloat.

Close calculation, that! I followed in the direction they went, and, after some search, found the callow family safe and snug in an old nest, which they had prepared for their reception, as soon as they became convinced the water must reach them. Instinct must have wide play, indeed, to account for this.

I saw a large, heavy cockroach, fully an inch long, fall into the web of a small spider. The great weight of the insect, with the height from which it fell, was sufficient to tear through the web, and it would have fallen clear, but that the long, sharp claws, which arm the extremities of the hindmost pair of legs, gathered a sufficient quantity of the fibres as they rolled down the net, to sustain the weight of the cockroach, who thus hung dangling by the heels, head downwards, and the body free.

Out rushed the little spider, not so large as a cherry-stone. What could *it* do with such a monster? You shall see.

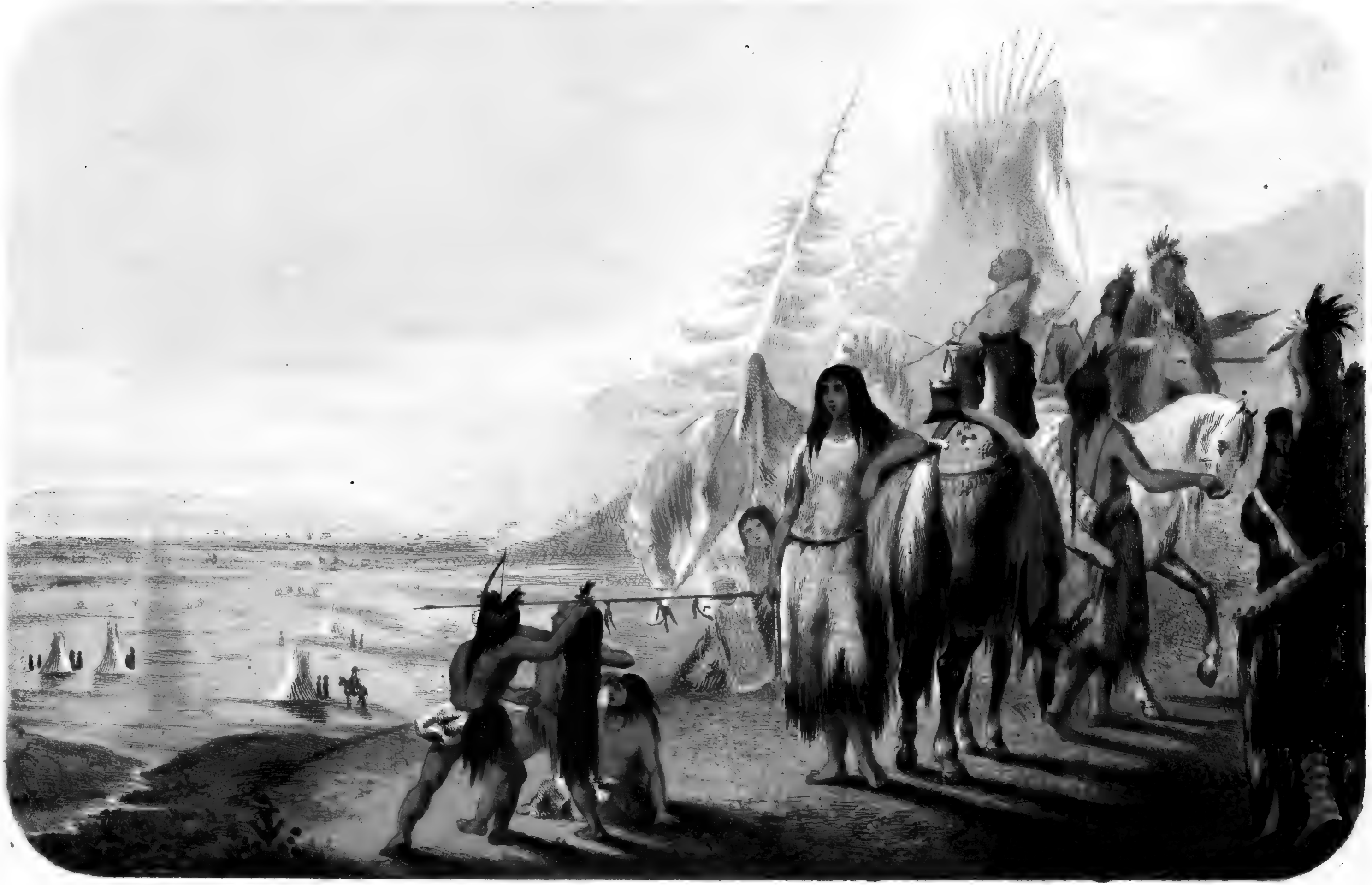
Without an instant's confusion, or hesitation, it commenced rapidly throwing a new web with its hinder legs or spinners, over the two claws that were entangled, so that the hold there might first be strengthened. The cockroach struggled desperately—his weight began to tear away the web from the beam.

The spider felt that all was giving way—and faster than the eye could follow him, ran back and forth along the breaking cords, from the beam to the heels of the monster, carrying a new thread from one to the other each time, until the breakage was arrested, and he was satisfied that the whole would bear all its weight and efforts.

He then returned cautiously to the charge, and, after a dozen trials, succeeded in webbing the second pair of legs, and bound them down in spite of the tremendous writhings of the great black beast. The third pair were near the head, and he could not succeed in binding them from the front, so he tried another tack; he crawled along the hard sheath of the back (it hung back downward), and commenced, with inconceivable rapidity, throwing his web over the head. The roach seemed to be greatly frightened by this, and made more furious efforts than ever to get loose.

The cords from above began to give way again. The spider darted along them again as before, till they were strengthened a second time. He now tried another manœuvre. We had noticed him frequently attempting to bite through the sheath armor of the roach, but he seemed to have failed in piercing it. He now seemed determined to catch the two fore legs that were free. After twenty trials at least, he noosed one of them, and soon had it under his control. This pair of legs was much more delicate than the others; he instantly bit through the captured one.

The poison was not sufficient to affect the large mass of the roach a great deal, but the leg seemed to give it much pain, and it bent its head forward to caress the wound with its jaws—and now the object of the cunning spider was ap-



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L. N. Rosenthals Cromo-Lith Phil^a

ENCAMPMENT OF INDIANS.

parent. He ran instantly to the old position he had been routed from on the back of the neck, and while the roach was employed in soothing the smart of the bite, he succeeded in enveloping the head from the back in such a way as to prevent the roach from straightening out again; and in a little while more had him bound in that position, and entirely surrounded by the web.

A few more last agonies and the roach was dead; for the neck, bent forward in this way, exposed a vital part beneath the sheath; and we left the spider quietly luxuriating upon the fruits of his weary contest. This battle between brute force and subtle sagacity lasted one hour and a half, and if the history of Reason in our Race can show a more remarkable conquest of superior mind over animal strength, we hope the wiles of the sagacious victor will not be robbed of their glory by being stigmatized as *instinctive.*

But the books of Natural History are crowded with ten thousand such illustrations; no just details of the habitudes of *any* form of animal life has been, or can be given, which will not furnish such. Though the narrators themselves persist in naming these acts *instinctive*, yet common judgment must teach that no possible sense of instinct can be made satisfactorily to account for them.

Every day my horse or dog—to go no further—forced the conviction, that this must be so; that they shared with me, to a certain point, reason and emotion. The most eager and accurate investigation showed us that the whole argument for instinct was based upon error; that the *facts* upon which its most ingenious defenders formed their strong positions, melted into thin air before a close examination, and proved to be pedantic whims or mistakes of old writers, perpetuated by the careless ignorance of modern bookmakers.

Since such men as Humboldt, Cuvier and Audubon have taught the world how the meaning of the sublime pages of the living revelation was to be arrived at—have forced upon their fellows a realization of the astounding discovery, that each individual of them possessed eyes of his own, and might lawfully use them for himself, and that it was only by the exercise of this primitive and obsolete right that truth was to be known—the universal mind has been restless on this point.

Who has not noticed how common a thing it is, in the modern book of travel, to meet with surmises, doubts, hints, and even broad denials, in regard to the doctrine of instinct. Scarcely a relation of a trait or fact in natural history can be met with now, to which something of this kind is not applied. These men have left Locke, and Brown, and Stewart, upon the mouldy shelves at home, and there is no stern eye of scholastic bigot to rebuke them, out amidst the wilds and freedom of nature; and removed from the immediate terror of the lash, they dare to write what they see, and draw their own conclusions.

Shakspeare has writ the motto of these times—

> " What custom wills, in all things should we do it,
> The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly heaped
> For truth to overpeer !"

Are we not in danger of "mountainous error" here?

Aye! and since by its side the tumulus of Truth, under the slow heaping of atoms through the ages, has grown and grown, until now even a pigmy upon tip-toe may out-peer and shout to the multitude in shadow beneath—shout that pigmy must!

Though the spectacled and lamp-dried book-man may shake his withered sides, and curl his thin lips in scorn, yet will that small voice be made articulate, the voice which has so long been struggling in mankind for utterance. It will pronounce, there are no blind, fatal impulses known to Nature! Reason is the impulse of volition! and whatever animal life exists, whether in the dumb stock or stone, the herb or molecule, brute or man, Reason directs it!

The self-same principle which, through our organization, governs or wields the material forces, acting through the organization of the ant, the atom, and the elephant, produces like results to the full extent of the organic and creative intention in each, and therefore this organization is the law of Reason!

Now that our conscience has been unburdened, and that still small voice had gone forth with this portentous announcement—we shrink upon ourselves abashed and horrified! Fear cometh upon us! What is it we have done? After all this flourish of trumpets, little more than prolong the echoes of dull and stale materialism?

Yes, this is it! If Reason be determined by our organization, then, of course, the dissolution of the one, is the end of the other! Who could fail to recognize the heavy and assinine front of this ancient philosophic bore? Shame! shame! The metaphysician, to get his boat staved against the very rock the light-house stands on?

We writhe like a wounded worm. But one truth is as much as the mind can possess and enter into at a time. Long have we paused, and wrestled on the threshold of the nest.

What! the thick rayless gloom, hopeless and weary, of this sensual creed, to be our abiding place! Fairly and well, by the clear lamp of Truth, have we counted our footsteps heretofore. From link to link, carefully have we traced the interfering grades through all forms, and seen and felt the universe of matter an harmonious whole—the harp of God!—each string accordant with the string last touched, and melting in the tone of that before. No jarring notes—no discord! but order the law, and music, such as seraphim can hear and mortals *feel*, the expression!

Then comes a dim hint of what we seek and yearn for, like a distant ray of daylight to a lost wanderer in a cavern:

> "Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
> To lull the Daughters of Necessity,
> And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
> And the low world in measured motion draw
> After the heavenly tune."

Since Jubal's pipe awakened the young echo, so have the sage poets sung.

The poets! Who were the poets? The kings of mind! Always their white swift feet have led the van of science, and the quick flash of their luminous eyes has startled the darkness of caverns where treasures were, and showed to the gaping crowd the heaps of gems!

It is their mission to discover. They leave to those who follow them now, to drag the riches forth to day, classify, name, arrange, and add to the treasury of general science.

In many a measured legend and guise of graphic allegory, they have said, and sung that harmony,—order—was the supreme law of God's created universe—the highest revelation of himself—the garment that we know him by, woofed of stars and clouds, colored by the many tints of the moon and sun, when they play on these, or on the shining earth, with her waters, mountains, trees, and herbs, and myriad forms that creep, and walk, and run, and fly, and swim—many and divers—a life and will to each, yet all softly and sweetly blending in those mellow hues which make it beautiful when seen from heaven—worthy to robe the limbs of Infinite might.

Well then, if the laws of gradation be necessary to these harmonies, and as applied to organization and form, consistent with them, must not the same law apply to all forms of animal life, when introduced into these grades of organized matter?

One general principle, animal life, must animate them all. Why are they differently organized? Why are they not each after the same structure, size, and shape?

The harmonious diversity of creation requires it should be so. The principle of life, passing into this variety of structure, gives this required diversity of result. Though the principle be the same, the machine acted upon is different —in the higher forms of organization, the principle of life is active: in the lower, passive.

Those which are to be active, must have the means of self-direction; it would be fatal to the harmonies so justly guarded, should they shoot into space, sphereless and aimless, the restless life hurrying them to motion till they were self-destroyed, and confusion carried everywhere.

No, they shall have senses which shall inform the life within of all internal things, through the retina of consciousness. All impressions, then, of outward things, their qualities, etc., shall be retained upon that retina, and shall be called experience of life—memory. This experience shall be to the principle of life for a guide, and it shall have a power given it called *Reason, which is the highest result of the principle of life, acting through organization, educated by the experience of the senses*!

This education will be justly proportionate with the power of the senses to inform: and therefore, in the precise ratio of the sensitiveness, delicacy, and complexity of the senses, will be the corresponding attributes of this educated life, Reason.

It is harmonious that it should be so! animal existence is confined to a material earth. The forms and objects co-existing there, are to it all that necessity demands. Its powers, capabilities, wants, are filled and circumscribed by these. The end and object of its being, first defined byorganization, is carried to the ultimate highest creative aim or end, by Reason. The mite which builds its coral cell—the savage who piles his hut of bark, are equally guided by this principle to the consummation of all their sheer physical necessities, and gregarious or social duties.

The cause why Reason is not progressive in other forms of animal life, as we see it to have been in man, we suppose to be that,—as man is a complex being, so the animal is a simple one.

The organic necessities of the bee led its experience simply and directly to the discovery of a mathematical law, by which the form and arrangement of its cells was perfected: though it knows nothing of mathematics as an aggregate system of facts, yet the wants of its social habitudes, crowding it in great numbers into a small space, soon led to the assertion of the utmost power its experience was capable of furnishing reason with, in regard to those lines and angles by the size of which space might best be economised.

The result was as we see; this was the highest exertion of the mathematical faculty its organization admitted, or its necessities required; and here its display rested, and will continue to rest. Reason has carried it up to the ultimate of its creative intention.

So with the ant, the organization of which is complicated, its necessities more diverse, and the results of its reasoning more varied and curious! So with all forms of animal life!

We arrive at man—the perfection of organized matter. We find reason in him capable of nearly all the bee does or the ant can accomplish, and, as a general average, superior to all other animals—though in particular traits he is inferior to most of them. He has not the eye of the eagle or the vulture; the scent of the hound or the moth; the hearing of the deer; the sense of touch of the mole; the taste of the coy humming-bird.

Therefore, the experience of his senses, or his physical ability, will not enable his reason to accomplish just such feats as characterize these particular animals—but yet, the general superiority of his senses over those of any one of these—their more equal and perfect balance—the higher complexity, susceptibility, and delicacy of his whole organization—give to him the first position as the mere "reasoning animal."

Though the migratory bird, or fish, from the superior acuteness of one sense, and the familiarity its habits, must give it with the currents of the elements in which it dwells, can traverse the world in a straight line, without other guide than this experience of its peculiar senses—yet man can do the same thing by a more roundabout, but quite as wonderful process;

his necessities gradually taught him the qualities of the magnetic needle, and by the aid of this, he can do what the bird or fish accomplish directly, by their superior sense. Here, then, we have man, *so far*, a mere form of animal life,—more perfect, indeed, than any other—but sustained by the same law which sustains them, and, like them, ceasing to be, when his organization is dissolved. For we have said, the office of reason, like that of caution and love of life, is to protect this existence, and carry it up to the consummation of its creative intention; to lead on the vital forces in the battle against decay. And when, in that unceasing war, decay has conquered, reason must die. Its mission has been fulfilled—for all the objects, purposes, and duties of simple animal life in a material universe, it were sufficient—the animal needs it no further. It has been resolved into the original elements, and the principle of life returns, to become again a part of the spirit of Nature.

That reason carried man up to the highest point of physical perfection his organization was capable of attaining, there can be little doubt,—"and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty and nine years, and he died"—is a sufficient comment upon this point.

But we said "man was a complex being, the animal a simple one." We have thus far presented him as a mere form of animal life, and shown the disposal of all that portion of his being we hold in common with it! We have tarried long enough amidst the "flesh pots!" Joy in Heaven and Thanksgiving on Earth! The murky gloom of terrestrial materialism has been pierced and flooded by the keen joyance of a celestial light! Moses, the first Poet—the primeval "King of Mind," has sung of how "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life*—and man *became a living soul!*"

He tells how "God made the beast of the field after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every living thing that creepeth on the earth after its kind," but he does *not* sing that He breathed into the nostrils of the animal the "breath of life," and that it became "a living soul!"

Now, this was the crowning act of the six days' work. And man, the sublimation of material forms, alone was trusted with that awful gift—"the breath of life!" There is no mention of the "breath of life" when he made the beast, cattle, and creeping things. Yet in the common sense of these words, they too were given the breath of life.

No! He before says—"God made man in his own image," that is, in his spiritual image—for there can be no material likeness of spiritual existence, and these majestic words were used in reference to that spiritual resemblance of which the Eternal Life of God was the first feature. The *breath of life* from his own lips was the bestowal of the eternity of his own spiritual being. A distinct, peculiar act! adding another element to the animal framed of the same dust of which the beast was made—interfusing a portion of Himself, of His own ultimate and indivisible essence, into the subtlest, purest organization of compounded matter: *and man became a living soul*, and that soul in the image of its Maker!

Between the atomic reasoner, and the reasoning man, there is a mighty stride. The shadow, though far away, is like, for one and the same principle governs in each. The stride between the attributes of God, so far as he has chosen to reveal them, and the attributes of the Living Soul in man, made after his own image, is vast too; but the shadow, though cast from afar—from out the abyss of Infinity—is yet dim, is still *like!*

We cannot know how much more high those other attributes of which it has not pleased Him to instruct us may be; but we do know from His own words that the *Creative* Power is one of them, and Omnipresence and Foreknowledge are others.

Then has not the Imagination, the Living Soul of man, in its own narrow sphere, the *Creative power*. Out of the chaos of material imagery does it not body forth creations of its own, which had no being else, and with the reflex glories of this atom orb, people a universe? Does not the spread of thought in inappreciable time traverse all space like omnipresence? Has it not whilome cleft the dark-lined horizon of Now, and felt the Future shiver in cold prophetic beamings on its plumes?

Says not the sage Poet—

> "Imagination which from earth to sky,
> And from the depths of human phantasy,
> As from a thousand prisms and mirrors fill
> The universe with golden beams!"

The universe! Aye, there is its peculiar home! Reason may deal with things of earth, cope with her physical laws, and teach the arm of flesh to wrest from their hard grasp shelter and food: but the rarer empyrean will not sustain its heavy plumes; when the

> "Spirit, the Promethean spark,

has passed beneath them—then, possessed of an immortal vigor, the self-same drooping vans bathing in silver-exhalations at far starry fonts, take on the youth and splendor of eternity, and in long, weariless flights traverse infinity, questioning the seraphim, front to front, of God and mysteries.

Here is the mission of Imagination! We are of earth, earthy; and all its grosser essences thrice winnowed through life, through death, and through decay, meet once again in *The I Am*, without extension, weight, or form,—The ultimation of material being—buoyant and strong as angels are, and meet to bow with them before God's throne, and bide the awful Future.

And as Imagination here has wrought His will,—has faithfully tasked the poor wings of Reason lent it but for

Time, and delved and soared in every secret place where they might bear it, searching for knowledge of that will—so shall its wages be.

> " Has she not shown us all
> From the clear breath of ether to the small
> Breath of new buds unfolding! From the meaning
> Of Jove's large eyebrow to the tender greening
> Of April meadows ?"

Everything that we may know of our relations to the eternal cause—duties as citizens of the star-lit extended universe—we must be taught by this imagination, which has been "since mind at first in characters was done," the chiefest theme of poets. In many a guise and strange impersonation, they have sung of it. The Hebrew first named it Job, and in that noble allegory showed how the prone Reason strove to drag it earthward, with tortures and wiles beset in vain its pure allegiance to the Lord of Hosts. Then through a long line of Prophet, Priest and King, these ancient chronicles have traced it down to the day of the Cæsars; and here they showed how the Prince of Spiritual Life might blend himself with matter, and become incarnate through a Virgin!—that the lowlier essence of himself imprisoned here might learn to love, to hope, and to endure!

The less favored nation symboled its lower and fanciful attributes as Dryad, Fawn and Nymph:

> A beautiful, though erring faith, is't not?
> Which populates the brute insensate earth
> With beamy shapes, the ministers of love
> And quaintest humors!

Or, in the sublime myth of the Greek Prometheus, who wrestled defiant with the Gods, and defied them, through torments without name, to quell that spark of their own life he won from heaven for his race.

To overlook the ages, what is the Prometheus of Shelley but an impersonation of the Soul—of Imagination, warring with the great powers of evil, who curse it with a body. The Rock, Animal Life—Reason, the Chain—and fell Disease, the Vulture; and when the Demons drove the Vulture off that they might be refreshed with taunting him, the fearfulest image of fierce torture they could conjure was—

> "Thou thinkest we will live through thee one by one
> *Like Animal Life? And though we can obscure not*
> *The Soul* which burns within—that we will dwell
> Beside thee, like a vain loud multitude,
> Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
> That we will be *dread thought beneath thy brain,*
> *And foul desire round thine astonished heart,*
> *And blood within thy labyrinthine veins,*
> *Crawling like agony!*"

Poets have writ no cumbrous tomes, nor heaped dull dogmatisms mountain high, to awe the world; but they have *felt* all truths, and written them just as they felt, and called them too by universal names in scorn of pedant nomenclature. They leave it to the drudging scholiast to classify; but under one name in every tongue they have synonymed Imagination and the Soul. Without a thought of school-men's terms, they have felt them to be one, and so inscribed them. Aye! and so they are! And our theory is but a gleaning from "the chronicles of wasted Time," of "what their antique pen would have expressed!"

> "Spirit of Nature! thou
> Life of interminable multitudes!
> Soul of those mighty spheres
> Whose changeless paths through Heaven's
> deep silence lie!
> Soul of that smallest being,
> The dwelling of whose life
> Is one faint April gleam!"

If this be true, then have we been right to regard the earth as a living revelation, and the dumb trees, and stocks, and stones, articulate language. But like that other Holy Revelation, the types and symbols here must be devoutly studied, with a pious and earnest zeal.

Though, perhaps, not very strictly pious in the common acceptation, zeal enough has not been wanting. Unconsciously, our translations—occasional glimpses of the sense which visited us—began to assume definiteness and connection; the indigested chaos of rude forms to take on order; and before we were aware, an absorbing idea had possessed us. The result of all our readings might then be summed up under the single head, "Life is one *linked* continuous chain, from, what we can know of God, to the atom;" and patiently we continue to delve among the rocks, the shells, the bugs, all creeping things, the flowers, the birds, the brutes, and arrowy fishes, to see if we may trace these links distinctly to the bounds of sense. We think we can!

Then comes the inquiry—if this linked gradation be a material law, the law of *forms*, may it not apply also to the immaterial essence which in such varied phases constitutes the life—the soul of these? Here we meet with the hoary dogmatisms of the schools, and are rebuffed. Here we veil our eyes in humility before such names as Bacon, Locke, Hume, Beattie, Brown. We reverence these high Priests in the temple of the Most High! But reverence need not be blind. They say Reason and Instinct are altogether unlike; that Imagination is a mere faculty or adjunct of Reason, and Reason is the supremest function of the mind. How dare we think or say otherwise? We do *not* do it daringly, we do it humbly, inquiringly. We say we cannot help it that our eyes will not see as theirs have. Our's are poor, weak visuals at the best, and but that there is something curious in the obstinacy of the hallucinations they have persisted in all our lives long, we should not presume to trouble any one with such opinions. But let us strive as we may to see that these things are so, it is all in vain.

> "For then my thoughts
> Will keep my drooping eye-lids open wide,
> Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
> Save that my soul's imaginary sight
> Presents *this* shadow to my sightless view."

Still the living revelation will be defined to us—"Life in one linked continuous chain from the Godhead to the atom!" We can see that the universe has no abrupt gradations! That *Facilis descensus* is the law so far as we can trace it from inessential spiritual being down to man, and certainly from man down to the atom.

The process of beginning at the atom, and tracing the gradations of life up to man, furnishes the most complete train of analogical argumentation the mind is capable of realizing. The microscopic observation of Physical Philosophy through atomic existences up to sensible ones, has discovered here as well a perfect chain of life, with an individual standing between the extremes of each species, and partaking of the character of both.

When we arrive at the sensible, or visible, no ordinary thinker, who has walked with his eyes open, can have failed likewise of being astonished at the perfect symmetry of this gradation.

Who has not seen in the Sensitive Plant, the first faint stir as in a dream before awakening, of the great active principle of life which slumbers so profoundly passive in the mountain and the forest; and then in the (*diona muscipula*) Fly-catching Plant, the smiling play of an odd conceit across the features of the half-aroused sleeper; and then the full waking in the Hydra Polypus, this strange creature, forming the link between vegetable and animal life, sharing the character of both—capable of dissection into a thousand fragments—yet reproducing from each a living animal, a perfect polypus; and the Humming-bird, the link between Insects and Birds, agreeing with the larger species of moths in the character and manner of taking—(on the wing)—its principal food; though it cannot live long on nectar alone, but, as a bird, must have insects occasionally, or it will die; and then the feather which in the moth has become gradually more perceptible to the naked eye, in this bright creature is splendidly perfected. How beautifully the waves glide into each other in this calm harmony of being!

Then at the other end of the scale of birds, we have the Ostrich and Penguin, with wings incapable of flight; and the Bat, the link between birds and animals; and, what is still more curious, an animal in New Holland, with the horny bill of the duck and body of the hair seal. We have not time for more particular citation. We will go on up to the monkey, the orang-outang, the man; the intermediate grades are filled up in the manner we have shown.

And here we lay it down as a proposition of physics; that through the whole chain of being, whether what is called animate or inanimate, there is yet this connecting link between every change, not only of class, but of order, genus, and species—that the individual intermediate in this change possesses a double nature, embracing in a less degree the characteristics of the class, order, etc., left, and in a greater those of that entered upon—that this chain of progression is unbroken from the atom up to man! Taking for granted, of course, the proposition of spiritual existences, the irresistible inference from all this linked analogy is—that man, being the perfection and last gradation of material existence, forms the link between it and the spiritual; being the individual intermediate, possesses a double nature, embracing in a less degree the characteristics of the class left, and in a greater, those of that entered upon; that the two elements of this double nature are the material or reasoning, which he possesses in common with other forms of animal life; and the spiritual or imaginative which he possesses in common with angelic beings. Why, even a coarse-grained Russian would not resist this conclusion, and, with the vigor of the rude north, finely expresses the idea:

"I hold the middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth.
On the last verge of mortal being stand,
Close to the realms where angels have their birth,
Just on the boundaries of the Spirit-Land;
The chain of being is complete in me,
In me is matter's last gradation lost,
And the next step is spirit—Deity."

This chain of being is the Jacob's ladder of the allegory, the rounds of which, form, "principalities and powers in heavenly places," through all the orders of spiritual intelligences, lead down to man, resting with him, the link between earth and heaven. We have a perfect and just right to the argument, that the next step is pure spirit, unalloyed with matter—angelic being—and that there are grades and orders of this being, swelling sublimely up to the infinite. Before the discovery of the microscope, the world of the dew-drop—the atomic legions 'from the low herb where mites do crawl,' to the myriads of 'far spoomming ocean' and the wide air, were all as far beyond the apprehension of our senses as these spiritual existences now are.

Yet the most patient investigation has gone to show that the analogies of higher existences hold good in these, and science does not hesitate in the application of these analogies to them. Why should they hold good at one end of the scale and not at the other? Is it because we cannot see, taste, smell, or handle thought and spiritual existences? Neither can we do all this with the atom; its very being is only arrived at through imperfect instruments; while the existence of spirit and thought is proven by our consciousness, than which there can be no higher evidence. Yet no man in his senses pretends to deny atomic existences because he cannot see them, nor the application of the laws of life which he can see in sensible existences to them; nor would any such man deny the same application at the other end of the scale to spiritual, especially, since he has higher order of proof, independent of revelation, that they are!

Though each of these two natures in man is a unit capable of separate existence, yet the imagination is only *apparent* through the material, as electricity through the atmosphere, which conveys to us the flash and sound. We do not argue that electricity is a property of atmosphere, because we only hear and see it through this medium; nor do we argue that electricity is not, because it is not always apparent. We know it to be above us and around us, nevertheless, and gentle and familiar as the airs of home; but if we should forget! then, shaken with grandeur through the last quivering fibre, we are reminded that it is.

Though it sleeps now with silence, in its "old couch of space," yet its articulations are all of the sublime, and the awed earth, and the reverberating heavens rock beneath its stunning shout, when it answers the far-spaces in laughter at man's vain presumptuous doubts.

As electricity to nature, so imagination is to man's material or reasoning part. It is not always apparent to his drowsy consciousness; yet it always is subtle and silent, refining his coarse passions or making them more terrible; and its articulations, too, are all of the sublime; and when the gathering nations, with rapture on their multitudinous tongues, swell the huzza to glorious deeds, you may know that it has leaped from its "dumb cradle!"

All that is grand, magnificent, sublime, the Past has to tell—the Future has no hope: Imagination wrought or must create. The Chieftain, the Architect, the Sculptor, the Painter, the Poet, are her slaves—and at her bidding, the world is showered with splendors. In a word, Imagination is the Soul.

The cause of that gradual physical deterioration we notice from the times before the flood to the present, evidently may be traced to the unceasing antagonism of these two opposite elements of man's nature. Each successive generation marks the victorious progress of the spiritual in the declension of mere animal bulk; the more delicate and sensitive texture of nervous tissue, and greater frontal development, a falling off in the actual numerical span of life, but a corresponding accession in that which constitutes its true measurement—the number, variety and intensity of emotions and thoughts—in short, an every-day and increasing recognition of all higher truths.

Men are beginning now to appreciate the true offices of Imagination, and to separate them from the monstrous and unnatural paternity of mere machine rhyming! and to know and feel that

> "A drainless shower
> Of light is Poesy! 'Tis the Supreme Power—
> 'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm.
> The very arching of its eye-lids charm
> A thousand willing agents to obey;
> And still she governs with the mildest sway!"

Now, while we write, in a retired corner of the great city, at a late hour of the night, there is an entire lull of the rumble of dray, hack and omnibus wheels, and the glance of the large-eyed moon reflexes coldly from the white cathedral spire that copples sharp in the distance before our window. It ought to be the hour of profound repose—when the pulsings of this mighty heart should be quiet.

It *ought* to be, but *is* it so? We hear through the open windows of the marble palace opposite the favorite air of "Miss Lucy Long," fashionably parodied—and a cultivated, clear, manly voice accompanies the soft, shrill treble of some fair warbler. In the street beneath, an unwashed, ragged loafer whistles a vehement "third," and thrums the interlude with his bare heels upon a pine box, which will probably be his roosting-place for the night!

Jewels, silks, "the pouncet box," and music! Dirt, vice, tatters, wretchedness, and *music!* Silence—over the jangling roar of trampling, rushing, striving men—lifted up into a Presence Godlike, "walking the clear billows of sweet sound." What contrasts! O thou Omnipotence of Music! Majestic soother!—before whose smile the fiery mane of Storms, careering thunder-hoofed along the mountains of the world, is laid!—whose touch has

> "Smoothed
> The raven down of Darkness till it smiled!

Thou voice of God's Love! how beneficent art thou! All pleasant objects, natures, forms, are tones of thee! Moonlight is the silver tone of thy calm, radiant blessing—and

> ——"Oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
> Feel palpitations when thou lookest in.
> O Moon! old boughs lisp forth a holier din
> The while they feel thine airy fellowship.
> Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip
> Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
> Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine:
> Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
> Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes;
> And yet thy benediction passeth not
> One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
> Where pleasure may be sent: the nested wren
> Has thy fair face within its tranquil den,
> And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
> Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief
> To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
> Within its pearly house."

Ay! and that poor human oyster—the Loafer from out his motley painted shell of filth and rags "takes glimpses of thee! The largess of thy benediction falleth over him! The fellow is happy there, and his whistle is as blithesome as the song of yon more favored twain! Can he be glad with all his misery, his piteous unrecking shame upon him?

Here we reluctantly pause. A voice from the printer—"No more space! all closed!" falls like a sudden shower upon the thin wings of our "Reverie," and damps them back to earth. They will soon dry and grow glossy again, and be rollicking madly on the fitful winds as if the envious clouds had never wept.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD AND BIRDS.

THE Hunter Naturalist is formed in childhood. "The little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump," commenceth its strange ferment in that unconscious time when the sun is yet the golden wonder, and all of earth's apparelings glitter in the splendor of the dew.

Why is it that with our scathed brows relaxed we watch the gambols of the "little ones" with such pleasure? Is it not that the sweet simplicity and natural grace of every impulse and movement of the healthy child recalls our earliest associations of the lovable, the piquant and the pleasing, as exhibited in the life of the Natural World?

We may grow to be paste-board, and painted men and women, to be sure, and learn to admire the antics of bedizened monkeys, which would be even miscalled "Human Brats!" —but such terrific perversions, thanks to the illimitable blue that is universed in the deep eye of one true child of God and Nature!—can do little harm. We pity while we despise—yet, in the other, the chubby insolence of exuberant fun provokes the laughter of deep joy. Ha! ha! we laugh, and let our sides go quaking with the tranquil stir of bliss that God has left us something natural even in the children of our loins as well as in his "unhoused wilds!"

If I feel now that the sanctifying pleasure of renewing the reminiscences of my earlier life in connection with Birds, and Flowers, and wild scenes, can afford to others a proximate gratification to that which they have afforded me in the act of recalling them, I may perhaps be pardoned for making as nearly as is possible "a free breast of it!"

I must therefore be permitted to confess, after my own fashion, one of the first, of the many droll troubles, in which the Hunter-Naturalist in the earlier stages of his experiences and development is liable to be involved.

While yet a boy, I had one, out of a number of sisters, who, being nearest my own age, became naturally my especial playmate. She had dark lustrous eyes, delicate features, and a form lithe, supple and elastic as that of a she wild-cat; and like that creature also, possessed a marvellous facility of ascension—that is, she had a faculty of ascending, by that indefinite process called "climbing," the uttermost boughs of plumb trees, apple trees, cherry trees, pears trees, &c., &c.,—as also the tops of fences, barns, houses and such like!

She was, hence and therefore, quite generally christened "Tom-boy"—but, if ever any vulgar sense of that phase was misapplied, it was in this instance, as characterizing a severe audacity—that, as it was above fear or thought of evil, never dreamed in its pride of the possibility of misconstruction.

She was fearless, because God had gifted her thus in her innocence that she dreaded not his *Justice!*

She was my dainty compeer and companion in many an enthusiastic forage into the wild domains of Nature.

I shall proceed to relate one of the most memorable of these in which she assisted me, as only her sex could have done, in relation to some young "MOCKING BIRDS IN A STRANGE NEST":

It must be premised that, at the settlement of Kentucky, the mocking bird (*Turdus polyglottus*) was not known in the land as a resident; but that, when the war-whoop had ceased to affright the silence, and the ring of the deadly rifle given way to the peaceful clang of scythes, whetted by mowers in the broad, green, smiling meadows, then the king of song-birds made his appearance, and took possession of the fair land, as of a rightful heritage.

To be sure, it had been seen before this, and the hunters knew its white-barred wings from afar off, but not its name; nor had they heard its song. It had always shown itself wild and shy in the extreme—as if it were a mere passenger through an evil country, and feared to rest the soles of its feet upon a soil that was accursed. But, with the blooming orchards, waving grain, and all the pleasant sights and mellow sounds of peace, the scared way-farers tarried for awhile to rest, and then to find a new kingdom and a home.

There is something very curious in the manner in which this creature took possession, first of Northern Kentucky; and then, some twenty years after, of the Southern part, or Green River country, as it is known. The North, beyond doubt, from its physical confomation, suited the habits and tastes of the fastidious monarch best; and besides, it was nearly fifty years after the settlement of the North, and not until the world had commenced to style it the Paradise of the West, that the Green River valley began to emerge from the semi-barbarous condition of a frontier, and to be considered by him as worthy of notice. Then he came more frequently, a fleeting scout "to spy out the land and the richness thereof."

I remember well, a very eccentric, good-natured, and garrulous old gentleman of my native town, a Mr. B.——, who was a good naturalist by the way, and loved birds dearly—telling me about a chase after the first mocking bird he ever saw in the Green River country. He was one of the earliest settlers of our town, and had known the bird well in Virginia, and had frequently seen it in the north of Kentucky. He often, during a residence of twelve or fifteen years, wondered why he had never seen it in the "Barrens"—which was the old name the hunters had given to the Green River Valley.

Mr. B. was one day riding through these black oak Barrens* in a gig, with his wife, when he saw a bird which he instantly recognized as the mocking bird, fluttering along the road-side. His first surprise over, he soon perceived that it was a young one, and, as he delightedly supposed, not fully fledged. He was a very impulsive man, and without considering what might be the consequences, had his horse in a gallop in an instant, in the hope of running down and making a captive of the young stranger.

The startled wife pleaded with him to desist, but he was too intent to heed; and when the bird made a considerable flight towards some gnarled and scrubbly black jacks near, she screamed most lustily, in her now well-grounded alarm, and begged and prayed to be permitted to get out, at least, as he wheeled his gig and dashed after it. The only answer she could get was—

"Be still! Hush dear! I shall have him directly! It's a real mock—."

Crash—went the unlucky gig, into the rough embrace of a Briaerus' armed black jack, which tore the gig top, his wife's bonnet, and his own straw hat, into shreds, besides pitching them both head foremost out, with the shock.

"Catch old Ball, wife!" sputtered B., as he scampered on. Then looking back over his shoulder for an instant, he shouted to her in consolation—

"Don't you be afraid—I'll have that bird yet!" and was soon lost to her sight amidst the black jacks, that were fast stripping his clothes from him.

Old Ball, in the meantime, was showing a clean pair of heels down the road for home. The poor woman, in this melancholy plight, could only set herself to repairing damages as best she might, when in the course of fifteen minutes or so, her madcap lord came panting back, rubbing his limbs with a most rueful countenance, while his tattered clothes hung like streamers about them. He looked at the wreck of the gig, without seeming to notice it, and with a heavy sigh exclaimed—

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* Barrens was the name originally given by the hunters to prairie land. What is now sometimes called the Barrens is composed of some of the richest land in the world—but the growth, except along the streams, is mostly primary and small, and stunted by the constant fires in the long grass.

"O wife! wife! I should have had him—the most beautiful young mocking bird, but for that confounded sink-hole!"*

"But husband, see here. The gig's broken, and old Ball has run—."

"I had my hand 'most on him—not more than two inches; when I pitched head foremost down—."

"Hang the bird! Do look what a fix we are in! How are we to get home?"

"O dear! dear! If I could only have got that bird!"

"Husband! husband!" and she shook him right heartily.

"What! Is the gig broken? Why, my child, how could you be so careless? Old Ball was always a safe and sober horse when I held the reins! Bless the woman! what could have got into you? That poor bird will *never* find its mother now!"

This rich scene was interrupted by the appearance of one of the neighboring farmers, passing down the road on horseback.

The wife summoned him to their assistance, and the scapegrace Ball, who had only gone off a short distance on a frolic—to which he thought himself, no doubt, as well entitled as his master—having been recaptured and brought back, the ready resources of the farmer, aided by withs and vines, soon repaired breakages in a *protem.* fashion, which enabled them to reach home—*after dark*—as the old lady always would have it. She used to avenge herself for her fright and torn bonnet by telling this story upon him with merciless humor before their numerous visitors. He was a good old man, and she the most loving of gentle wives—peace to their souls! I believe the strawberries will grow spontaneously on their graves who nourished them so well, and the mocking birds, drawn by some "sweet compulsion," go there to sing, while flowers that were their chosen loves, will sure creep close, to fill the place with odors.

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* The barrens are covered in many parts with these sudden pits, or "Sink Holes," as they are called. It is a lime-stone region, and they are caused by the fissures in that formation.

I did not hear of this incident till some five or six years after its occurrence, and then it was called up by my recital to the old man of an adventure of my own, a short time before, which was nearly as ridiculous as this, and resembling it in many essential features. It was my first meeting with the mocking bird, too!

I was now a stout youth of sixteen, yet I had never seen the mocking bird; though, of course, I had read and heard with eagerness much about it. I knew all the birds around me so well, that I could detect the presence of a stranger among them as readily as I should have noticed a sixth finger or toe, which had suddenly been added to my worldly gifts.

I was gunning one day, in a rich meadow, on which stood scattered many very tall trees. I observed above the topmost bough of one of these, a strange bird alighting as if he was afraid it would burn his toes. He would just touch a twig, while with wings wide spread, and then bound up again—hovering doubtfully over it, but with a movement so airy that I could scarcely believe it a substantial creature. As it thus fluttered and floated lightly with its front towards me, it seemed all white, a rich, soft, creamy white from throat to tip of the long tail-feathers; but, now, in restless motion it turns its dark back, and I can see across each wide-spread wing the white bar in singular, sudden contrast.

It seemed to me a thing from dream-land—so indescribably *spirituelle* was the grace of every movement! I could only form a remote conjecture as to what the bird really was, for it proved so exceedingly wary and shy, that I found it impossible to approach any nearer. It was not until my patience had been entirely wearied out by its indomitable caution and cunning, that the inhospitable thought of murder came into my mind. The relentless curiosity of the naturalist had been aroused; the passion of the dissecting knife, that is glad among the heart-strings and rejoices with Death. I would have wooed the lovely stranger to let me know it while it lived; but, it would not be won—now it should die, for I must *know!*

I vowed I would have the body of that creature—be it from dream-land or "farthest Ind"—if I had to follow it a week. But the one day proved enough for me. This was a sultry twelfth of June, I recollect well, and I had spent the hours of the forenoon in creeping from tree to tree; from fence-corner to fence-corner; from stump to stump, in the pacific endeavor to get near enough to distinguish the predominating color of the back—for, all that I could yet distinguish was that it was dark—and could not make out the form of the bill, both of which things were necessary for me to know before I would have any substantial data of investigation to commence with in the books. All had been in vain; and sweltering with heat and excitement, I ran back to where I had left my gun—muttering many a direful threat, as I examined the locks carefully.

Now that I might make sure of my victim, I crawled on my hands and knees for nearly two hundred yards, and found myself, at last, within what, it must be confessed, was long range; but, within which, I flattered myself, I had seldom missed. My gun was laid with trembling eagerness upon the top of the old stump which formed my blind. I cannot tell how much I trembled—but I fired! The bird merely fluttered lightly up and then floated down again upon the pinnacle bough where it before sat. It had never left the tops of the trees during the morning; and I gritted my teeth in disappointment while aiming again with iron firmness. The bird rose at the second shot, and with a slow and graceful flight, passed over me high in the air. I watched it until I saw it alight in some high trees on a plantation half a mile distant, when my gun was loaded with great care, and I followed with the same success as before. And so that whole afternoon was passed, crawling up ditches and fence-rows, through the briars; over ploughed ground, rough stones—through marsh and puddle—amidst stumps and weeds, and last year's stubble, until, as night closed and this malicious phantom-bird had disappeared beneath its shadows—

I e'en creep forth, all bruised and torn,
Sore, hungry, weary and forlorn!

I did not soon forget that evening's experience, and the only consolation I had when I came out of the chase in such dismal plight, was, that I had left it convinced of this being the mocking bird.

I had vaguely suspected this when I first saw the white bars across the wings; but then the difficulty in getting near enough to see the general color, combined with the improbability of such a bird being here—for I had as soon expected to have seen a bird of Paradise—had prevented me from realizing it until the accidents of the pursuit enabled me to see the dark blueish gray of the back, and then I was satisfied. This discovery only added to my eagerness; but the result of the day's work left me with no stomach for such another chase.

Taking these two receptions together, it is little to be wondered at that the Pioneer Birds should regard ours as a rather inhospitable region, and for a long time continue to give wide berths to every creature bearing the detestable effigy of their persecutors.

Although the old man B. and myself had undoubtedly the worst of it, yet it was altogether natural and proper that the proud and conscious lords of song should treat us with hauteur as boorish and ignorant beings, who, incapable of appreciating the divine harmonies they were come to bestow upon us, had rudely turned our brutal arms against them to drive them forth from the land.

The next spring, a new wonder filled the air. A melody such as I had never heard before, burst in clear and overwhelming raptures from the meadows where I had first seen the graceful stranger with the white-barred wings last year. I hastened thither, but left my gun behind this time, for I remembered that eventful twelfth of June, and that, too with a feeling not entirely unmingled of awful respect for the marvelous sagacity that could have so cooly baffled while it led me through that wild and crazy race. The fact is, I never have, to this day, got over that affair, and am not sure that, to this moment, I have not a sort of superstition with regard to its events, and the weird creature that caused them.

I saw it now leaping up from its favorite perch on a tree top, much in the manner I had observed before; but now it was in a different mood, and seemed to mount, thus spirit-like, upon the wilder ecstacies, and floating, fall on the subsiding cadence of that passionate song it poured into the listening ear of love—for, I could see his mate, with fainter bars across her wings, where she sat upon a thorn-bush near and listened.

When this magnificent creature commenced to sing, the very air was burdened with a thousand different notes; but his voice rose clear and melodiously loud above them all—as I listened—one song after another ceased suddenly, until, in a few minutes, and before I could realize that it was so, I found myself hearkening to that solitary voice. This is a positive fact! I looked around me in astonishment. What! Are they awed? but his song only now grew more exulting, and, as if feeling his triumph, he bounded yet higher with each new gush, and, in swift and quivering raptures dived, skimmed and floated round, round, then rose to fall again more boldly on the billowy storm of sound.

No wonder the other birds were silent, to listen, for, one after one he hurled the notes of each upon its ear so alchemyzed with splendor, that they knew not their own song.

This curious phenomenon I have witnessed many times since. Even in the morning choir, when every little throat seems strained in emulation, if the mocking bird breathes forth in one of its mad, bewildered and bewildering extravaganzas, the other birds pause almost invariably and remain silent until his song is done. This, I assure you, is no figment of the imagination or illusion of an excited fancy; it is just as substantial a fact as any other one in Natural History. Whether the other birds stop from envy, as has been said, or from awe, cannot be so well ascertained, but I believe it is from the sentiment of awe, for as I certainly have felt it myself in listening to the mocking bird, I do not know why these inferior creatures should not also.

Five or six pairs of them made their appearance in the neighborhood of the town this spring, and though they undoubtedly nested and bred close at hand, all attempts to find their nests proved unavailing to the enterprising youngsters of the town, who had turned mocking-bird-mad all of a sudden—because they had heard somebody say, modestly, that they were "very fine singing birds indeed!"—*because* Jim Snooks—or Snobs—I forget which—had said "he had hearn of their sellin' for *thirty dollars!!!* in New Orleans!" Poor child of song! It is well for thee that thine arch mother-wit stood thee in stead, or else thy glorious progeny might have been ignominiously consigned along with the geese, gigs and chickens of some flat-boat trader's cargo—to be sold to the highest bidder in some northern mart. Sentimental young ladies, too, became *interested*, because some one had heard somebody say that she had heard the foreign-looking young gentleman, who wore a moustache and claimed to be an artist, (*vulgate*—Fiddler!) that "the creature sang divinely by moonlight!"—though it is insinuated to this day, that he meant the tree-frog! So all the ragged little hopefuls, whom these young feminine romanticists delighted in calling their "naughty brothers," were incited by prospective bribes of ginger-bread or candy to join the hue and cry of hunters for the nests of the poor mocking birds.

Though disgusted at all this, and most seriously alarmed lest they should be driven away, I myself continued, nevertheless, steadily and patiently to watch the motions and haunts of the birds, day and night, with the hope of securing a nest for myself. They were something to me—aye, of greater value than a Prince's ransom! they brought to me a world of music—the minstrelsy of earth and air in one full throat! I had a right to draw them near me, that they might fill my soul with gladness! Such was the logic with which I justified myself over the heads of other sinners!

However specious and egotistical my logic may appear, my zeal was by no means impaired by any doubts as to its force and truth. Day by day I prowled the meadows, hedge-rows and gardens, carefully concealing my object under the pretence of gunning, and taking special care to administer an awful warning to the little, freebooters aforesaid, whom I might chance to meet in the same search, upon the evil consequences attending bird-nesting in general; becoming even pathetic towards the middle of my lecture, and not unfrequently winding up, on signs of obduracy becoming too apparent, with heavy threats of personal vengeance if I detected them in destroying a single nest.

Though I had thus constituted myself their champion, the poor birds had not, in all their enemies combined, so much to fear, so far as their liberty was concerned, as in my single self. I knew the sort of locality in which they might be expected to build, and there was not a solitary thorn tree, low clump of thicket or matted wild vine that escaped examination if it stood somewhat apart from every other growth; for the bird, with us, always selected such places for its nest.

I know its habits are very different in the extreme South, where I have seen the nests placed openly upon the top of the fence alongside the public road, or in fifty other places just as public. But this is the mocking bird under different circumstances, *if not a very different species* of which I now speak. It is of the hardy pioneer in a new country, subject to the dangers and annoyances, which I have been describing, and compelled to seek safety in the exercise of the extremest caution and subtlest sagacity of which it may be possessed, of which we are giving you the characteristics, not the smaller and feebler native of the emasculating orange-groves, where it has, from time immemorial, been protected and indeed domesticated, as our sparrows are. We tell you of a bird of lighter plumage, of nearly one-third larger size and weight, possessing a power of utterance superior in volume to the feeble Southerner, as are the notes of the clarion to the fife!

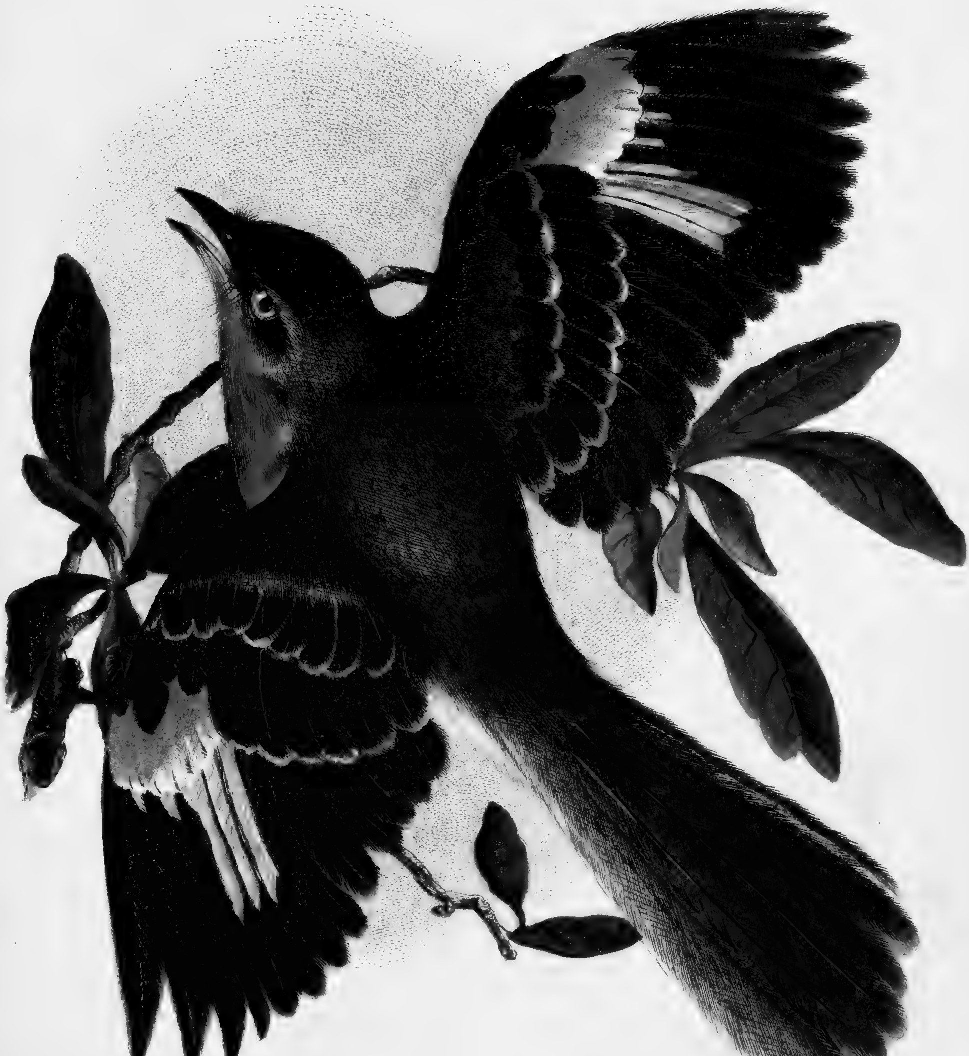
We are describing a conqueror, as well as a discoverer; haughty, strong, audacious, cunning, adventurous and sagacious, whose stormy and impetuous voice bids all living things be mute and listen to his song of Earth, triumphing over silence; whose hardy frame trembles not when the North-wind cometh, but who listeneth on his tossing perch, that he may mock its piping when the Summer comes, and scare the Tropic-flame bird with the icy notes of Winter; not of a monotonous, timid singer that fatigues the ear with running over a short gamut of imitations, the sounds of which can be distinguished a hundred yards or so, but of a singer, whose notes are infinitely various, and may be heard with thrillling distinctesss over a mile. It is, in a word, of the Mocking Bird of Kentucky and the Middle States that we speak, and not of the Southern Mocking Bird, which is, I believe I can prove conclusively, a different species.

I know I am running a great risk in this assertion, but I am confident of being able to maintain, that the bird of Kentucky and the Middle States is as different from the Mocking Bird of Louisiana as the stern, hardy, and giant-limbed Pioneer, who conquered the red-man of the dark and bloody ground, was a different man from the small and emasculated Mexican in his native South. I shall take some occasion to prove this position more at large.

But, my pursuit did not end with the day. At night I would retire to my room, as if to bed—wait until the night-song of the mocking bird began, which was usually about eleven o'clock. Then, disguised in a cloak and slouched hat, would let myself down from the window of my bed-room and hie away to the fields and meadows; for the moonlight was tremulous already with the silver arrows of those notes that came now, all at once, as if Cytherias' quiver had been emptied down the air, and then one after one would float in an Æolian sigh upon the ear, or in a sharp, ringing hiss go darting by! O, the wonder of those songs beneath the moon! The summer moonlight of southern Kentucky is not surpassed in the world for brilliancy and a peculiar soft transparency which causes the most striking contrasts of light and shade. The trees throw down shadows as black as solid midnight, while their tops, toward the moon, seem inspired of beams. Every object is thus startingly defined. The smallest blade of grass stands out haloed in relief of its own black shadow. Objects are thus defined at astonishing distances, and, for the same cause, sounds transmitted with almost painful distinctness. With such accessories no music I have ever heard on earth, or expect to hear, has so affected me as the marvellous night-song of my favorite mocking bird.

It must be known that these creatures differ from each other as do men and women, in their vocal powers, and there is usually *one* bird in a neighborhood that supremely surpasses all the rest. It is another most remarkable fact that all other mocking birds retire from the immediate neighborhood of this acknowledged monarch, to such a distance that you can hear but the faintest note from them in the pauses of his song, and that sounds as if they but prolonged its echo.

I soon detected the monarch from the rest, and, as they never change their night-haunts much, unless repeatedly dis-



SOUTHERN MOCKING BIRD

turbed, I could hear him on any night. He lived in a small clump of trees which had been left standing over a sink hole spring in a meadow, something like a mile from my father's house, and bordering upon a farm owned by our old friend B. Here I resorted regularly, every fair night, and, concealing my person in a corner of the fence, with my cloak about me, would lie down on the grass to listen. He sat in a high tree of the clump, and I felt sure that his mate brooded listening below upon her nest, in one of the low thorn-bushes scattered around; for, surely, nothing but love could have made him so drunk with music!

At the sound of my coming, he would hush for awhile, and then, in some short and rapid notes, the prelude opened. It rose slowly at first, with many sharp transitions, or low, dreamy interludes, as if he mused and dallied with his theme,—but now the song begins to swell. Silence has attuned her ear, and Earth hears her many voices singing in her sleep.

Yes, they are all there! Hear them, each warble, chirp, and thrill! How they crowd upon each other! You can hear the flutter of soft wings, as they come hurrying forth! Hark! that rich, clear whistle! Bob White! is it you? There, the sudden scream! Is it a Hawk? Hey! what a gush!—what a rolling, limpid gush! Ah! my dainty Red-Breast, at thy matins early! Mew! What, pussy? No, the Cat-Bird; hear its low, liquid love-notes linger round the roses by the garden walk! Hilloa! the world's on fire!—listen! listen! listen to that little Wren!—he will surely blow up—he *must* explode in the climax of that little agony of trills which it is rising on its very tip-toes to reach! What now? Quack! quack! phut! phut! craunch! craunch! cock-a-doodle-doo! What! the whole barn-yard? Squeak! squeak! squeak!—pigs and all! Hark that melancholy plaint!—Whip-poor-will! How sadly it comes from out the shadowy distance! What a contrast—the Red Bird's lively whistle, shrilly mounting high, higher, highest! Hark the Orchard-Oracle's gay, delicious, raving, run-mad, ranting riot of sweet sounds! I can see the mal-a-pert keeping time with his wings, as he goes sideways, dipping up and down, from one apple-tree top to another! Hear that! It is the Rain-Crow, croaking for a storm! Hey-dey! Jay! jay! jay! It is the impish dandy Blue-Jay! Hear, he has a strange, round, mellow whistle, too! There goes the little yellow-throated warbler—the Wood-Pecker's sudden call—the King-Bird's waspish clatter—the Dove's low, plaintive coo—the little owl's screeching cry and snapping beak—the Tom-tit's tiny note—the King Fisher's rattle—the caw, the scream, the cry of love, of hate, or joy—all come rapidly and in unexpected contrasts; yet with such clear precision, that each bird is fully expressed to my mind in its own individuality.

Thus, all the past of my communion with such creatures, and with each fresh reality of the abounding Earth that I so loved, is made to me as a presence in which I live again. But, then, that wondrous song could speak yet higher music, as the swollen tide rushed, in wilder eddies, yet more tameless, on; and then, amongst these hurrying notes I knew, a thousand liquid strains would dart, in play, through and around, to meet them in mysterious whirls of flashing sound. These mystic meanings nature only knew; my half-awed spirit could but dimly feel them! Ah! what calm, delicious hours were those! Until three o'clock I would lie as one entranced within a dream of harmonies, such as the soul of nature taught old Chaos until he rendered up their notes in form and order, and the world took beauty on.

At three o'clock the songs would cease, and then my spirit fell as one plunging down from glowing light into the sullen dark. Many, many nights have I thus spent beneath the moon and listening stars, when my good parents thought me safely asleep in my bed. Ah, those songs—those night-songs—ye can never pass away.

As yet, I had never obtained a near view of a mocking bird—much as I worshipped the creature; and as to finding a nest, mine was the luck of all the rest of the would-be robbers. But, perseverance has its reward.

One day I had paused near the "sink-hole spring" to hear my favorite mocker sing by day-light, for variety—when, instead of a song, I saw—what? A splendid pair of mocking birds, disporting themselves gaily along the fences and in the grass of the very slip of meadow in the corner of which I made my usual nightly couch!

I drew a long breath. What a discovery! How tame they are! It must be some mysterious sympathy! The male must be that magnificent bird I have listened to so many nights with rapture, and never seen! Hah! these have a black mark under the eye; the Southern bird I remember has not that mark in the plates of it that I have seen. This must be a new variety! I have heard my uncle and father, who have been to New Orleans, describe the Southern bird. It certainly has no such mark as this, which resembles that under the eye of the Red-Bird; and from what they have told me of its singing, it cannot be near equal to this glorious creature. My mother, though, has described the bird in northern Kentucky, where she knew it, and from what *she* has told me, this must be the very one. It must be this same wonderful bird I have been listening to!

O, how happy I was! I crouched down beside the fence for fear I might chance to startle them, and gazed in eager, anxious admiration. What a handsome bird! It seems rather shorter, though, than I expected from the appearance of those at a distance; and there is the white bar across the wings. But, somehow or other, the wings do not seem so wide, nor the stripe so broad; its neck, too, disappoints me; it appears much shorter and thicker than I supposed. But, that's easily enough accounted for in the fact, that it must require a very powerful neck to emit such loud sounds. But it is a lovely bird, with that light, gray plumage so delicately marked on the breast, and looks so warlike with the black mark under its eye! Ah! I see its bill is very hooked; it gives it quite the appearance of a little hawk! How happy was I!

Look! look! They fly towards that great black oak over the spring! As I live! there's a nest there! I hear the cry of the young ones! Strange place for mocking birds to build in, according to accounts. But this is a new variety; they, no doubt, prefer large trees.

The mate now flew to the same cluster of scrubby twigs, or small limbs, that grew out from a diseased portion of the trunk that formed a large knot, bristling "like quills upon a fretful porcupine." She lit in the bosom of this ugly excrescence, and, as I again heard the cries of the young, I sprang from my place of concealment—with my heart in my throat—leaped the fence, ran at full speed to the tree, stripped of my coat and shoes, and before I knew what I was doing, had ascended as nimbly as a squirrel the trunk of a tree that I would not have attempted to climb for a fortune, under other circumstances.

It was well I did not stop to think, or I should never have reached the limbs. As it was, now that I found myself up, the difficulty of getting at the nest seemed as great as ever. The small limbs that bristled out from the great excrescence, were as tough as they could be, and, how I was to drag my body over them so as to reach the nest was the question—but when, by rising on tip-toe, I could peep over the edges of the nest and see the heads and bright eyes of four lusty young birds, I literally tore my way through all obstructions, and with eager hands grasped at my treasure. I seized three, and the fourth sprang out in time to elude me and sailed down. Just at this moment I saw my old friend B. approaching to see what I could be at. I shrieked out to him in my tribulation; for the little wretches had bitten my hand so severely that the pain, and imminent danger of falling combined, had compelled me to let them go and save my neck.

"My mocking birds! Catch my mocking birds, Mr. B.

Oh! I wouldn't lose them for the world! catch them! catch them!"

I shrieked in my agony—for I had got myself hung upon that knot by the remaining rags of my clothes, and the dread of losing my birds was even greater than that of breaking my neck. The old gentleman heartily sympathizing with me, sprung to the work right briskly, and, although they compelled him to let them go several times by the severity of their bites, yet he finally succeeded in capturing three, which were fastened down under my hat.

During the chase, I heard several very droll exclamations from him which gave me a decidedly contemptible opinion of his attainments as a naturalist. As he shook one of the fierce little wretches off—that had fastened upon his finger when he tried to seize it—he cried out with an exclamation of pain and surprise—

"Ough! Young mocking birds didn't bite that fashion in old Virginia—my boy! Don't like that black spot under the eye! They do look mightly like mocking birds, too! How they do squall! Why they're as strong as young wild cats, and as fierce too! There! there! that one's gone!"

"Gone where?" I gasped, as I descended the tree with a speed which seemed much more like falling than climbing down, and completed the demolishment of my forlorn inexpressibles.

"He ran under these rocks and you'll never get him again, I'm afraid."

"Never get him?" and I almost burst into tears at the thought of losing one of my precious new variety. The spring came from under a sort of cave, and there were loose piles of stone intended once for walls on each side of the basin. Into these the cunning youngster had crawled, and was far enough beyond our reach. I consoled myself by heaping stones so as to prevent its escape, and determined to go home and secure the prize in hand, and then return with a negro man to dig this one out for me. This was not my only annoyance—for the old gentleman kept insinuating as we walked on towards my father's, that these were "mighty strange sort of mocking birds," until my insulted dignity as a naturalist and discoverer, fairly blazed out in wrath, as I remarked in a most emphatic manner,

"Mr. B. I repeat to you sir, that this is a new variety of mocking birds! When you have spent as many nights as I have sir, in ascertaining the fact—when you have heard the male parent sing as many hours as I have, while you were sound asleep, then you too will be convinced that I have not only discovered a new variety, but that I have now in my possession a nest of the finest singers in the world."

This long speech, with all its emphasis, did not seem to entirely convince the old man, who could not get over the way they bit, and that black spot under the eye; but, I saw it staggered him some, and when, as we were parting, he rather hinted that he should like to have a male bird, if they turned out as I expected, I turned upon him quite a compassionate look as I promised smilingly, "of course—in *case* they turn out to be mocking birds, Mr. B. you shall have one of the males if I have two."

This was my grand triumph, and I was proud as Lucifer when I exhibited my captives to the family; and great were the rejoicings of my sister over my brilliant success. But the triumph was incomplete, while one of the precious family remained behind, and soon I was on my return, accompanied by a strong negro man to dig the runaway out of the rocks. It was a work of several hours, and during its progress I observed something curious on one of the thorn bushes near—that had died the year before; though the thorns were stiff and tough as ever. This phenomenon consisted of the bodies of some dozen of the common gray or fence lizard, which had been impaled carefully upon the topmost thorns. They seemed to be in all stages of demolishment and decay, from the entire reptile that was bleeding and scarcely cold, to the mere blackened fragment that had been eaten away close up to the thorn on which it was spitted, and now seemed ready to drop to pieces at a touch. It struck me at first that some stupid boys must have been amusing themselves in torturing the lizards, but then I saw that those thorns could not be reached from below, and it was evident that some creature was eating them gradually. This recalled, dimly, to my recollection, an anecdote I had heard somewhere of a bird that was in the habit of impaling lizards in this way that they might become decomposed somewhat by the action of the sun, to prepare them for being eaten—but, as I could not recall the name of the bird just then, I somewhat hastily dismissed the subject from my mind for the time; I know not for or what reason, but, because it somehow made me feel uncomfortable.

The runaway was reached at last, and I now returned as proud of the success of my perseverence and enterprise as of the birds themselves, and my new discovery. The first person I met, when I reached home, was my sister, who ran to me, exclaiming—

"Brother! you never did see creatures eat like our little birds! They do nothing but eat, eat, eat, all the time. I never knew before that mocking birds were so greedy—and then they bite me so!"

I smiled benignantly, as became a youthful Cuvier, and holding out to her the new one, said, patronizingly—

"Look here! He could not escape *me;* although this new variety *have* the cunning of wizzards! Never mind the appetite, Sis—we shall be the more certain to raise them, and their magnificent song shall repay us for a little additional trouble!"

But Sis was not so easily comforted, for she said, as she showed me some ugly marks where they had been biting her little fingers severely—

"Well, brother, I hope you will not find any more of your new variety, for I expect to have my fingers eaten off by these that you have. They are not content with snatching down everything I can find to give, but have been trying to bite off the fingers that fed them!"

"I am sorry for your fingers, dear, and you must let me feed them hereafter—but I like their appetite and their spunk, they should have both, to sing as they are going to sing!"

"Well, brother—have it your own way; but I don't believe in making an angel out of a glutton!"

This last remark rather stung me, for somehow or other, since the discovery of the impaled lizards, I had been feeling uncomfortable. I went to the cage, and they received me with clamorous cries for more! I immediately got for them a quantity of food, such as I had supposed to be best for them, from what I had read and heard of their habits. I found, to my astonishment, that they would eat nothing but earth worms and fresh meat—farinaceous food they rejected with disdain—and certainly gulphed down as much as their own weight every few hours.

The thing was becoming more inexplicable, and what made matters still worse, my sister, for the first time in her life, refused to share my cares with me. She had taken a most unconquerable dislike to the creatures; declared she was absolutely afraid of them, and shuddered when they were brought near her. This reception of my new variety mortified me excessively; but I consoled myself that I was doomed to the common martyrdom of discoverers, and nursed my uncouth and boisterous pets with even the greater assiduity that they were rejected of men!

I now let them run about the yard; for I soon found that the ravin in their maws constituted a sufficient parole of honor to ensure their return to where food was to be obtained; but one morning I witnessed a trick of one of my vagabonds that considerably stumped me. He had straggled around to the back of the house, and got into the poultry yard. I saw him march very deliberately up to a brood of young chickens, and without saying "by your leave" to anybody, pounced upon one in the most savage fashion, and would have killed it in an instant, but that the old hen rushed to the rescue, with a blow that sent the young robber several feet distant. The indignant mother followed up the attack, and I was about to interfere when, to my surprise, the young wretch, with all his feathers bristling, like a little hedge-hog, threw himself upon his back and awaited the onset with open mouth and fierce eyes. The hen struck at him with her beak, and quick as lightning he clutched her head with his claws, and the astonished hen ran squalling off, shaking her head in agony to get rid of this new sort of head-gear. When she had shaken him off, she ran away in a great fright, and he strutted around with a most conscious air.

"Well!" muttered I, "this is getting to be something of a joke—my new variety seems to have more of the hawk than the song bird in it. I never heard of mocking birds killing young chickens or whipping old hens before! Rather a war-like variety of song bird, this new one of mine! I must look over my books and see something about that lizard story."

That lizard story had always haunted me—though I had not been able to summon courage to look it up. Just at this moment my sister, who had witnessed the little scene above, and heard a part of my muttered soliloquy, from a window close at hand—burst into a ringing laugh, and as I looked up, disappeared. In a moment she came bounding down the steps to meet me, with a small book in her hand, which I recognized with a forboding thrill, before she reached me. It was a small school edition of selections from ornithology, with wood-cut illustrations. She held her hand on the page to cover something, while she read as well as she could for laughter, Wilson's version of the lizard story, and when she got through removed her hand suddenly from the cut, and though it was remarkably rudely done, I instantly recognized in my new variety—"THE BUTCHER BIRD!" Exeunt omnes—screaming with laughter.

The many times I had been baffled in my pursuit of the mocking bird, only increased the fixedness of my resolution to accomplish my purpose of capture.

I managed to survive the mortification of mistaking the Shrike, or Butcher Bird, for a new variety, and endeavored, by the most exemplary meekness, to atone for the arrogance of the self-constituted Naturalist and Discoverer. Indeed, I was now, on occasion, quite eloquent upon the subject of the too frequent presumptuousness of youthful and inexperienced amateurs, in jumping at conclusions over the heads of aged and profound science, on the strength of a single "modern instance," with regard to the place and meaning of which, their ignorance may be utterly at fault.

I have been sensitive on the subject of new varieties ever since, and, although, in spite of my Butcher Bird disaster, I have yet ventured to assert still the existence of a second variety of the mocking bird; yet I shall do so with the terrors of the past before my eyes and on my conscience.

In the meantime, I shall relate the "pretty and effective manner" in which my pet sister came to my rescue in the case of some young mocking birds with whom I got into a droll difficulty!

I commenced to tell this curious affair, but the story of old man B. coming up, set me to remembering something of my own disasters in the same pursuit, and then I had to tell the whole affair right out. The good old man! If I have had my laugh at him, it is only "turn about;" for he used to quiz me most unmercifully about my new variety—though, by the way, I must say, I have heard of worse mistakes than that being made!

Well, in short, I was riding past the memorable sink-hole spring, a few days after the late denouement, when, to my delight, I discovered a genuine mocking bird *upon its nest*, in one of those scattered thorn trees to which I have so frequently alluded. There was no mistake this time; and stopping my horse at a short distance—so as not to disturb the bird—I gazed long and eagerly upon her, and now made out clearly enough the differences in color and outline which had so confused me in the Shrike. She was setting, evidently; but my heart beat loudly with apprehension when I looked around me and saw that there were a number of boys in sight, who had observed me. Although the nest was most ingeniously placed, and accident alone had revealed it to me; yet I feared that it would not escape the search of these sharp-eyed ragamuffins, if their suspicion should chance to have been aroused by my position, which would, of course, give them all the clue they needed for a successful search. I rode out slowly towards them, discussing with myself, on the way, whether it was best to tell them the truth and buy them off, or run the risk of removing their suspicions by my indifferent air. I concluded that the last was the best course.

They were standing on the side of the road, awaiting my approach, and I determined suddenly upon trying a grand stroke of policy, by way of diversion to their lawless enterprise.

"Boys," said I, stopping my horse among them, "do you want to make a shilling apiece this morning?"

(There were four of them—the most incorrigible little rowdies in the place.)

"Yes! yes! yes! What do you want? What is it?"

"Why, I found a squirrel's nest yesterday, out by the Sulphur Spring, and the hollow is too small for my hand. Now, if you will get a hatchet and go out there with me, and one of you climb and cut the hollow for me, I will give you a shilling apiece, and two of the young ones if there are four."

The proposition was instantly and eagerly accepted. One of the party ran off to his father's house, which was near, for a hatchet; while we moved slowly on.

I was just chuckling at the success of my ruse, when one of the little villians looked up with a mischievous expression and asked—

"You 'ain't found any mocking bird's nest yet—have you?"

I could not help reddening for the life of me, and answered sharply—

"I have told you there are no mocking birds' nests about here to find. What put that into your head, you scamp?"

"O, nothin' at all! What was you lookin' at so, down thar in the thorn bushes?"

"Pshaw! You'd better go and see, you silly fellow! I find a great many things to look at. I have stood for an hour over an ant-hill. You'd better follow my trail, if you like such amusement!"

"Drat if I don't go and see what's in them 'ar thorn trees! I believe they is somethin' thar mor'n a ant-hill?"

I could have strangled the pertinacious little ruffian; and it required a very great struggle for me to contain myself; for I well knew that if I let my excitement be seen, the case was a hopeless one from that instant; for nothing could save my mocking bird's nest then, as they would be sure to destroy it in sheer wantonness. I answered as coolly as I could—

"Well, go ahead youngster; you'll be apt to find a bag of dollars, no doubt!"

I was now seriously alarmed, and never, as I flattered myself, exerted greater ingenuity or more consummate tact, than in my efforts this morning, to turn aside suspicion from those unlucky thorn trees. I put them on half-a-dozen different scents, and offered such rewards as I thought would ensure the direction of their inquisitive activity toward other objects.

Our foray against the poor squirrels was successful, and I managed that my youthful inquisitor should get one of them, and in every way endeavored to propitiate him. I saw he had got it into his head that I was afraid of him, on account of something or other I had found in those thorns, and knew that his malicious love of mischief was only equalled by his inquisitive and suspicious temper. My only hope, therefore, was to propitiate and keep him busy until the thornbushes might be forgotten.

I managed to convince myself, before we parted, that I had no doubt succeeded; that it was impossible he would ever think of the circumstance again. So anxious was I, however, that I rode past the thorn tree a dozen times that day, taking care never to stop or turn my head towards it again; but, stealing a quick side-glance which showed that all was right—would pass on.

The grand discovery was of course revealed to my sister; though, this time, it was with something more of humility than had marked the announcements of the *ci devant* "youthful *Cuvier!*"

So eager were we to watch over the nest and make sure that it had not been despoiled, that we were off on our usual morning ride for the Sulphur Springs before sunrise, and stopped a few minutes near the nest to give her an opportunity to see. There was no danger of the vagabond boys being on the watch this early, and we had an undisturbed view of that lovely mother with her dark, bright, patient eyes, so calmly fixed upon us, and we watched while the globules of dew would gather and roll off her sheltering plumage. She looked so meek, so brave, so faithful to her precious charge, that we relented of our cruel purpose, and vowed, if we could protect her from the cruel boys, that we would place the young ones in a little cage, so that she could nurse them herself, and try, through her affection for them, to win this splendid pair to come and live on our place. Indeed, this was my usual object in endeavoring to capture young birds. I had no intention of keeping them prisoners longer than was necessary to domesticate them to my father's grounds.

I had often done this, and know it to be quite practicable —though there was a great risk of losing the pets after all my trouble, for they become so confiding as to be constantly in danger from the brutalities of men. The temptation, therefore, had been very great to retain these valuable birds in close confinement, rather than run such risks, and indeed we had determined to do so should we succeed in obtaining them; but now the sight of that gentle mother had moved us, and, to confess the truth, we felt our tenure to be so very insecure, that we were just now a little like the sailor in the storm, ready to promise his patron saint pretty much anything if he would *only* help him out this time!

As we returned from our ride, all was safe, and I took good care to be along that way several times during the day. So the matter progressed for several days, and as our solicitude had been rewarded by finding everything right at each of our frequent visits thus far, we had commenced congratulating ourselves that the danger was over, and that my strategy had succeeded in turning aside the dangerous curiosity of the boys.

It was in this mood we approached the, now, interesting thorn tree, on the fourth morning of our rides in this direction. We were discussing between ourselves the probabilities of the young being hatched by this time, for, as yet, we had only caught a glimpse of the greenish eggs, spotted with amber brown, when the brooding female lifted a wing as she shifted her position. We were in the midst of a gay and happy chatter when we reached the tree, before I observed that we were so near. There was an exclamation of pain and surprise from my sister. I looked—the nest was gone! The shady and thorn-guarded bosom of the tree was bare, to a few dried twigs and shreds of roots! A choking sensation of rage and grief came over me as I sprang from the saddle to examine for traces of the robbers. Vengeance was the first thought. "Look! look brother! they are dead!" and my sister points to the foot of the tree, where, on a scrap of old carpet, the poor little callow things, just one day in an inhospitable world, lay stark and motionless.

"Poor things—they are dead!" and I stooped to examine them. They certainly could not have been more than a day old in this external life. The large, blue, bulbous-looking eyes had never yet been opened, and they were entirely bare on most parts of the body. As I examined them in silence, it suddenly occurred to me to see if pulsation had entirely ceased, though I had not at the moment the most remote expectation either that they could have survived exposure to the chill night air; or, even if they had been fully alive, of being able to raise them myself. It would require a more delicate skill than mine to keep the life-current moving in those frail bodies. I was simply curious to see how long any indications of life would survive such cold—for the little creatures felt like lumps of ice in my hands. To my great surprise I saw through the transparent tissues of the under parts of the body, that circulation still went on. I could clearly see all the exquisite machinery of the heart and arteries working freely like some fairy watch. I uttered an exclamation of surprise, mingled with joy, as a new idea at the same moment flashed through my brain.

"Wonderful! why they are alive yet. We *won't* be cheated out of our pets. I am determined they shall live yet! See how their tiny hearts beat! Here, dear, put them in that warm little bosom of yours, and they will soon be well as ever again."

"But, brother, what good is it going to do to bring the little creatures to life? The mother has been frightened away, the nest is destroyed, and they will die before she comes back again, if she ever does."

"O, you must be mother just now! put them in."

"I cannot feed such tender things as these. My fingers are not small enough, and I do not know what to give them! It's a pity to bring them back to feeling again, just to starve!"

"Never mind. You put them in your bosom. I've got an idea. It's worth trying. I've always felt that I was going to have the first brood of these birds, and have it I will. Now, you see if I don't. These villainous vagabonds of boys have tried to baffle me, as I feared they would—but I've set my heart on this, and do not mean to be baffled!"

"Well, brother, I do hope you may succeed, but how could they have come here on this piece of carpet—do you think?"

"Why, I expect one of those youngsters who saw me looking at the nest the morning I found it, has been here and discovered it too, and in his anxiety to secure the rewards offered by his sisters, probably, and his desire to spite me, he has only been content to wait till they were out of the egg, when he has carried them off to his sister, and claimed his ginger-bread. She has had compassion enough to make him take them back, and the stupid Oaf, having destroyed the nest, has left them here in this characteristic fashion."

We afterwards heard that this was just how it had occurred. The little things being deposited in their soft, white nest, I mounted, and we returned immediately home. My sister was immensely inquisitive to know what my new idea might be, but partly to tease her for her doubts, and partly because I was by no means sure of my own success, and remembered the lesson about arrogance I had lately received, I would give her no satisfaction beyond saying that I was going to try a spell that a fairy in the form of a little bird had taught me, by which I could make any birds I chose, that had nests, take care of such little orphans as these. She was incredulous—but my only answer was—

"You shall see!"

"I suppose I shall, if it happens; but is it not cruel—too cruel, for you to be making foolish experiments upon the lives of these little things. I can feel them moving now."

"What? would you have me kill them while there is a a hope?"

"You should have let them die while they were insensible to pain. Now they've got to get over it all again, and worse too, for now they'll die of hunger!"

"Never mind, dear; let us try the fairy's spell—I have faith in it."

"Do tell me what it is you are going to do. Birds will only feed their own young ones, and they have enough to do to attend to them. What can your fairy do, unless she takes care of them herself?"

I laughed, and making a low bow of mock courtesy, exclaimed—

"Why, how could it be surprising if she did? Has not their new life commenced already in the bosom of one fairy? At least would not Mr. A. B. C.—what letter is it?—say so?"

"Pshaw! Do, brother, hush this nonsense, and tell me what you mean to do?"

"You shall see! Come, jump down."

We were at home, and we passed hurriedly into the garden. I called a little brother to join us, in a moment we were all three standing beneath the eaves of the summer-house. There was a small hole in the cornice of the eave, and I knew that in this a pair of blue birds had nested, and supposed that they must be just about hatched now. My sister stood watching my proceedings with great anxiety, for they were entirely mysterious to her. She saw me take my little brother aside, and whisper my directions to him; then the little fellow prepare to climb up the columns of the summer-house, and with my assistance reach the cornice. His little hand was inserted into the hole, and with the greatest care not to touch either the sides of the hole or the nest within, he daintily plucks out the young ones, one by one, and hands them down to me. They are the same age with the mocking birds, but smaller.

"Now, Sis, give me those little ones; and hurry, dear, for I am afraid the old ones, who have gone out for food, will come back."

She is so flurried she does not realize what I am about to do, but hastily places the young birds, now warm and fully alive, in my hand. They are reached to my brother.

"Drop them in quick, quick! and come down. Jump, I'll catch you!"

Down he comes, and then after my whispering something more to him, he snatched the young blue birds from my hand, and ran off among the shrubbery. At this moment we heard the sweet, clear warble of the blue birds, and I drew my sister a short distance away, where, from behind a tall rose bush, we could watch the proceedings of the old birds.

"What does all this mean, brother?—what do you expect?" she asked, in a low, puzzled voice, for she did not know that the young blue birds had been taken out—so dexterously had we managed, and only understood that her charge had been transferred to the nest.

"Brother, you surely can't expect that little blue bird to take care of eight young ones—your fairy will have to help, sure enough!"

"Hush! hush!" said I, all eagerness, for with an insect in its mouth, one of the old birds, twitting merrily, had alighted near the hole, and without hesitation glided in, and in a moment or two came forth again, without seeming to have observed that there was anything wrong. My heart beat more freely, for I saw that the insect had been left behind, clearly, in the throat of one of the intruders—for the bird plumed himself gaily outside, as if happy in having performed a pleasant duty. But this was the male bird, and it was the arriving of the female that I knew was most to be dreaded—for if the sharp instinct of the mother did not detect the fraud I felt that it would succeed.

In my elation at my success so far I had explained my object to my sister, who, as she did not understand about the making way with the young blue birds, was now infinitely delighted at the probable success of the scheme, and I could scarcely keep within bounds her dancing impatience to see what the mother would do—hear what the mother would say! Here she comes!—and in a business-like and straightforward way, glided directly into the hole. We held our breaths and stood on tiptoe. Out she darts with a low cry—still holding the insect in her mouth. Our hearts sunk—she has discovered all and refuses to adopt the strangers! She flew to her mate and seemed to communicate some sad intelligence to him. He was busily engaged in trimming his feathers and merely straightened himself up for amoment, and then with an air of the coolest indifference proceeded with his occupation. The poor female seemed to be sadly distressed and puzzled; she flew around the nest uttering a low, mournful cry—then returned to her philosophical mate for sympathy, which he seemed to be too busy with his feathers to spare just now. Then she would dart into the hole—stay a moment, and out again with the insect still in her mouth. Then she would circle round and round on the wing as if searching for the cause of the disturbance, the nature of which she evidently did not clearly understand. So she continued to act until the male having arranged his feathers to his liking flew off, with a pleasant call to her, in search of more food. This seemed to decide her uncertainty, for, darting now into the nest, she immediately fed the worm to one of those lusty young fellows that had grown so wonderfully since she last went out, and then came forth chirping and apparently reconciled and followed her mate.

"There! it succeeds! it succeeds! They are safe now—these birds are more industrious than the mocking birds, and will feed them better!—good! good!"

"Your fairy spell has succeeded, brother, sure enough!" and she clapped her hands and danced for joy; and I am not sure that I did not join her most obstreperously, for I never was more delighted in my life at the success of any little scheme.

I knew the birds were safe if the female ever fed them once. So it proved; for never did I see little fellows grow with greater lustihood than they. Daily we watched them; and in ten days or two weeks were greatly amused to see the industrious old birds perseveringly laboring to fill gaping throats that were nearly large enough to swallow them bodily whole. I now narrowed the hole with wire so that the blue birds could get in and the mocking birds could not get out, for they were quite double the size of their foster parents.

When they were full fledged we took them to the house and placed them in an aviary I had prepared for them in a recess which contained a large window and looked out upon the gardens. In two days I found to my great astonishment the old blue birds endeavoring to feed them through the wires. They had found them out, the faithful creatures, and not content with having already spent double the amount of labor upon them that they would have bestowed upon their own offspring, they followed them up with their unwearying solicitude.

I was greatly shocked at first to observe the cool indifference with which the young aristocrats of song surveyed their humble foster parents. After awhile it came—in spite of the shameful ingratitude it exhibited—to be a constant scource of merriment with us to watch the lordly and impudent nonchalance with which they would turn their heads to one side and look down at the poor blue birds—fluttering against the bars with tender cries to attract their notice—with an expression which seemed as plainly as could be to say, "Who are you, pray ?—get away you common fellows !"

A fine pair of old mocking birds found them, too, but when they came, our gentry behaved very differently, and seemed crazy to get out. They became very tame, and I finally fulfilled my vow of turning them loose, and for a long time they were so tame that they would take food from our hands anywhere. They lived on the place, and we felt ourselves for years afterwards plentifully—aye, bounteously rewarded for our anxiety on account of the little outcasts, by the glorious songs they sang for us the summer nights to dream by. Thus it was my fair sister helped me out of the scrape with my young mocking birds!

In conclusion I will present the reader with some things that have been said in regard to this extraordinary bird by Wilson, which may be of some consequence to those who may regard its value as a cage-bird.

"As it is of some consequence to be able to distinguish a young male bird from a female, the following marks may be attended to; by which some pretend to be able to distinguish them in less than a week after they are hatched. These are, the breadth and purity of the white on the wings, for that on the tail is not much to be depended on. This white, on a full-grown male bird, spreads over the whole nine primaries, down to, and considerably below, their coverts, which are also white, sometimes slightly tipped with brown. The white of the primaries also extends equally far on both vans of the feathers. In the female, the white is less pure, spreads over only seven or eight of the primaries, does not descend so far, and extends considerably farther down on the broad, than on the narrow side of the feathers. The black is also more of a brownish cast.

"The young birds, if intended for the cage, ought not to be left till they are nearly ready to fly; but should be taken rather young, than otherwise; and may be fed, every halt hour, with milk, thickened with Indian meal; mixing occasionally with it a little fresh meat, cut or minced very fine. After they begin to eat of their own accord, they ought still to be fed by hand, though at longer intervals, and a few cherries, strawberries, &c., now and then thrown in to them. The same sort of food, adding grasshoppers and fruit, particularly the various kinds of berries in which they delight; and plenty of clean, fine gravel, is found very proper for them after they are grown up. Should the bird at any time appear sick or dejected, a few spiders thrown in to him will generally remove these symptoms of disease."

This remark I have found to be amply verified in my own experience. Indeed, I have observed that *all* the Turdinæ are greatly benefited while confined in cages, by an occasional relish of the common house spider. This insect seems to act in some way medicinally upon many varieties of birds, and even the finches are occasionally benefited by them. Of the song and peculiar habits of the mocking bird Wilson says:

"In measure and accent, he faithfully follows his originals. In force and sweetness of expression he greatly improves upon them. In his native groves, mounted on the top of a tall bush, or half-grown tree, in the dawn of dewy morning, while the woods are already vocal with a multitude of warblers, his admirable song rises pre-eminent. Over every other competitor the ear can listen to his music alone, to which that of all others seems a mere accompaniment. Neither is this strain altogether imitative. His own native notes, which are easily distinguishable by such as are well acquainted with those of our various song-birds, are bold and full, and varied seemingly beyond all limits. They consist of short expressions of two, three, or, at the most, five or six syllables; generally interspersed with intonations, and all of them uttered with great emphasis and rapidity; and continued with undiminished ardor for half an hour, or an hour, at a time. His expanded wings and tail, glistening with white, and the buoyant gaiety of his action, arresting the eye, as his song most irresistibly does the ear, he sweeps round with enthusiastic ecstasy—he mounts and descends as his song swells or dies away; and as my friend Mr. Bartram has beautifully expressed it, 'He bounds aloft with the celerity of an arrow, as if to recover or recall his very soul, expired in the last elevated strain.' While thus exerting himself, a bystander destitute of sight would suppose that the whole feathered tribe had assembled together, on a trial of skill; each striving to produce his utmost effect; so perfect are his imitations. He many times deceives the sportsman, and sends him in search of birds that perhaps are not within miles of him; but whose notes he exactly imitates. Even birds themselves are frequently imposed on by this admiral, and are decoyed by the fancied calls of their mates; or dive, with precipitation, into the depths of thickets, at the scream of what they suppose to be the sparrow-hawk."

It is one of the most striking of the exulting attitudes of this bird described by Bartram and Wilson above, that my wife has selected for her figure of the Southern variety—for upon the question of the existence of the two varieties, my mind has long been distinctly made up in spite of the opinion expressed by Mr. Wilson, and coincided in by Audubon.

Wilson says upon this subject—

"Many people are of opinion that there are two sorts, the large and the small mocking bird; but after examining great numbers of these birds in various regions of the United States, I am satisfied that this variation of size is merely accidental."

As the purpose of this volume is not to include technical controversies, I shall waive any further discussion of this question for the present—merely giving it as my decided opinion, that what I have named the Kentucky mocking bird is a distinct variety from what I have called the Southern mocking bird.

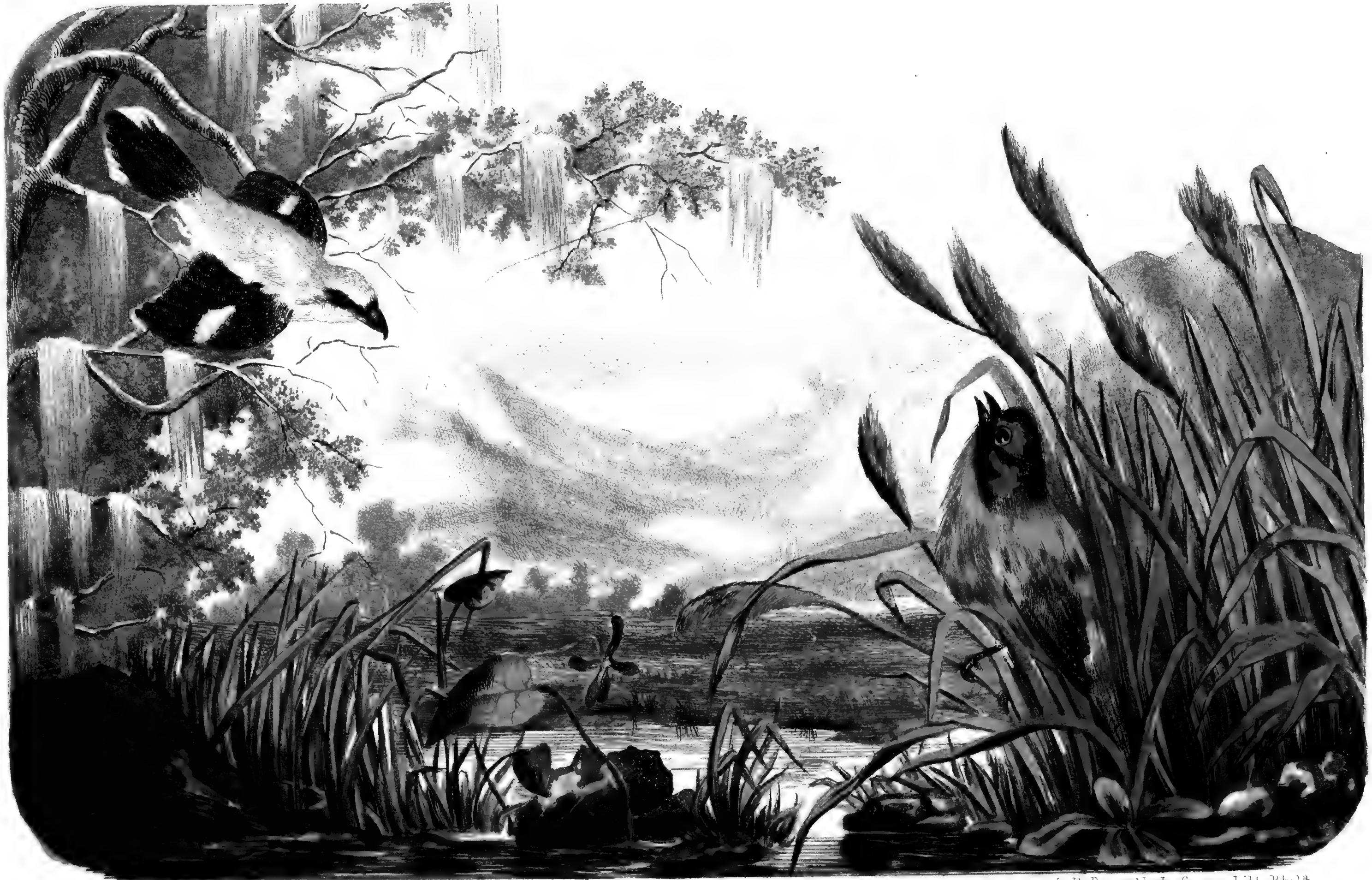
CHAPTER III.

THE SHRIKE OR BUTCHER BIRD.

It is worth while to say something more in detail about this same butcher bird before we dismiss him. The people who always have a reason for a name, have very properly called the little wretch butcher, for butcher he is in the very worst sense of the term!

I specially wish to attract attention to some curious coincidences between the apparent place of this bird on the scale of animal life, and—that last of all creatures with which it would seem possible at first view to institute a comparison at all—I mean the humming bird. Now do not be startled—but hear what I have to say! The humming bird is known as the apparent link between insects and birds. There is a moth so closely resembling it, which is found all the way South from Pennsylvania—that it requires an acute observer to distinguish one from the other at the distance of a few feet when they are feeding from the flowers, which they do in the same way.

Now the shrike is quite as evidently the connecting link between the raptores or hawks, and song-birds, as the humming bird is the link between the song-birds and insects! The shrike resembles the hawk in its thirst for carnage and manner of stooping upon its prey, except that, as it has not strong claws like the hawk, it strikes with its strong beak. It resembles the mocking bird so closely in plumage, that older naturalists than I was at sixteen, have frequently con-



Mrs C. W. Webber pinx.

L. N. Rosenthal's Cromo-Lith Phila

GREAT CINEREOUS SHRIKE.

PAINTED FINCH.

founded the habits of the two. Its general color is the same—they both have the white bar across the wings, and the difference consists mainly in the outline of the form—which in the shrike expresses compactness and strength, with short wings and tail, while in the mocking bird it expresses airiness, with graceful length and elegance of plumage—but the difference cannot be easily distinguished when the shrike is on the wing. There is another point of resemblance to the mocking bird, which is still more remarkable. Audubon asserts roundly, that the shrike can imitate the cries of birds, such as sparrows and other little people, so perfectly, that not only are we deceived, but the sparrows themselves, thinking it is one of their own kith and kin screaming in the claws of the hawk, flock thither in sympathetic terror, from their coverts, when the cunning mocker pounces upon one of them sure enough.

Audubon in his Biography of Birds, says:

" This valiant little warrior possesses the faculty of imitating the notes of other birds, especially such as are indicative of pain. Thus it will often mimic the cries of sparrows and other small birds, so as to make you believe you hear them screaming in the claws of a hawk; and I strongly suspect this is done for the purpose of inducing others to come out from their coverts to the rescue of their suffering brethren. On several occasions I have seen it in the act of screaming in this manner, when it would suddenly dart from its perch into a thicket, from which there would immediately issue the real cries of a bird on which it had seized. On the banks of the Mississippi, I saw one which for several days in succession had regularly taken its stand on the top of a tall tree, where it from time to time imitated the cries of the swamp and song-sparrows, and shortly afterwards would pitch down like a hawk, with its wings close to its body, seldom failing to obtain the object of its pursuit, which it would sometimes follow even through the briars and brambles among which it had sought refuge. When unable to secure its prey, it would reascend to its perch, and emit loud and discordant notes of anger. Whenever I could see it strike its victim, it appeared to alight on its back and instantly strike its head, which on such occasions I have several times found torn open. If not disturbed, the shrike would then tear up the body, and swallow in large pieces, not well cleaned of the feathers, every part excepting the wings. It now and then pursues birds that are on the wing to a considerable distance. Thus, I saw one follow a turtle dove, which, on being nearly caught, pitched on the ground, when its skull was bruised in a moment; but the next instant both birds were in my possession."

Now is not this a curious fact?—here we have the shrike possessing not only the plumage of the mocking bird, but even the weird power of imitation, and what makes the coincidence even yet more striking, it is a well-known and standing amusement of the mocking bird to call together a great number of small birds by some such trick as this, and then frighten them nearly to death by shrieking like the hawk in their midst. I have watched this droll manœuvre very many times. We shall show that the humming bird only eats one insect—the spider—but lives principally upon nectar of flowers, the food of that moth, which approaches it most nearly in the order of being it has left behind. It cannot live long upon the nectar alone, but its bird-nature requires the animal juices of the spider to sustain it. Now this butcher lives *principally* upon the same food as the mocking bird, namely, grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, and small reptiles, as it is a little stronger than the mocking bird; but it has to take even them cooked, for we have seen that it regularly spits its lizards and other larger prey, to be basted by the sun on the top of a thorn tree! And I have time and again witnessed the fact that it comes back regularly to feed upon these extraordinary deposits in preference to the fresh prey which it brings untorn to be basted in the same way by the sun.

It only takes a lunch of a small song-bird occasionally, as the humming bird does of the spider. It selects very much the same sort of location for its nest as the mocking birds, and has much the same haunts; and, in a word, I have no doubt that these two birds are regarded with more thorough dread and detestation by the small birds than all the hawks that ever flew put together; for while the mocking bird beats them singing until they are ashamed to hear their own voices; he adds insult to injury in frightening them out of their wits by his impish imitations. Then the shrike runs them in the same way, but it is in bloody earnest, so far as he is concerned, so that the timid little creatures must be as sadly puzzled between the playful elf and its ghost-like image, as I was with my *new variety.* There is another droll coincidence. The shrike is not more the terror of the small birds, than the humming bird is of the large ones. It is the most formidable enemy the hawks and eagles have, and almost drives them mad with its swift and torturing strokes at their eyes. I have seen many an eagle flying as if possessed, with loud screams of agony, while a pair of humming birds, coolly resting on the top of its imperial crown, were making the feathers fly therefrom in a long trail upon the air.

We have in America two varieties of the shrike. The one exhibited in our plate is the loggerhead shrike, which is in the act of stooping upon a painted finch. The habitation of this shrike is principally in the southern and middle regions of the United States, while the great American shrike frequents from the middle States northward to the Canadas. So audacious is this latter bird, and such the power of its neck and shoulders, that I saw one that had just been captured in a gentleman's parlor in Boston, during a late hard winter, that had shattered the stout plate-glass of the window-pane in dashing at a canary bird which it had perceived, caged, inside. The little captive was slain by the savage aggressor before rescue was possible on the part of those who witnessed the scene.

Wilson and Audubon both give some curious stories in regard to the habits of this bird.

Wilson says in reference to the great American Shrike—

"When we compare the beak of this species with his legs and claws, they appear to belong to two very different orders of birds; the former approaching in its conformation to that of the accipitrine; the latter to those of the pies; and, indeed, in his food and manners, he is assimilated to both. For though man has arranged and subdivided this numerous class of animals into separate tribes and families, yet nature has united these to each other by such nice gradations, and so intimately, that it is hardly possible to determine where one tribe ends, or the succeeding one commences. We therefore find several eminent naturalists classing this genus of birds with the accipitrine, others with the pies. Like the former, he preys occasionally on other birds; and like the latter, on insects, particularly grasshoppers, which I believe to be his principal food: having at almost at all times, even in winter, found them in his stomach. In the month of December, and while the country was deeply covered with snow, I shot one of these birds near the head waters of the Mohawk river, in the State of New York, the stomach of which was entirely filled with large black spiders. He was of much purer white, above, than any I have since met with; though evidently of the same species with the present; and I think it probable that the males become lighter colored as they advance in age, till the minute tranverse lines of brown on the lower parts almost disappear.

In his manners he has more resemblance to the pies than to birds of prey, particularly in the habit of carrying off his surplus food, as if to hoard it for future exigencies; with this difference, that crows, jays, magpies, &c., conceal theirs at random, in holes and crevices, where, perhaps, it is forgotten, or never again found, while the butcher bird sticks his on thorns and bushes, where it shrivels in the sun, and soon becomes equally useless to the hoarder. Both retain the same habits in a state of confinement whatever the food may be that is presented to them.

"This habit of the shrike of seizing and impaling grasshoppers and other insects on thorns, has given rise to an opinion, that he places these carcasses there by way of baits, to allure small birds to them, while he himself lies in ambush to surprise and destroy them. In this, however, they appear to allow him a greater portion of reason and contrivance than he seems entitled to, or than other circumstances will altogether warrant; for we find that he not only serves grasshoppers in this manner, but even small birds themselves, as those have assured me who have kept them in cages in this country, and amused themselves with their manœuvres. If so, we might as well suppose the farmer to be inviting crows to his corn when he hangs up their carcasses around it, as the butcher bird to be decoying small birds by a display of the dead bodies of their comrades!"

Wilson also says in speaking of this bird generally—

"The character of the butcher bird is entitled to no common degree of respect. His activity is visible in all his motions; his courage and intrepidity beyond every other bird of his size (one of his own tribe only excepted, L. tyrannus, or king-bird;) and in affection for his young, he is surpassed by no other. He associates with them in the latter part of summer, the whole family hunting in company. He attacks the largest hawk or eagle in their defence, with a resolution truly astonishing: so that all of them respect them, and on every occasion decline the contest. As the snows of winter approach, he descends from the mountainous forests, and from the regions of the north, to the more cultivated parts of the country, hovering about our hedgerows, orchards and meadows, and disappears again early in April."

It loves best, and is most usually found to frequent the wild, rocky and somewhat sterile commons of waste land, which are the favorite localities of its especial prey, different varieties of the lizard, grasshopper, and smaller finches. It has from this fact gained for itself the very general and popular sobriquet of "rock robin" throughout the South, West and North.

Wilson also remarks of the extent of the peregrinations of this species that, "In the *Arctic Zoology*, we are told that this species is frequent in Russia, but does not extend to Siberia; yet one was taken within Bhering's Straits, on the Asiatic side, in lat. 66°; and the species probably extends over the whole continent of North America, from the Western Ocean. Mr. Bell, while on his travels through Russia, had one of these birds given him, which he kept in a room, having fixed up a sharpened stick for him in the wall; and on turning small birds loose into the room, the butcher bird instantly caught them by the throat in such a manner as soon to suffocate them, and then stuck them on the stick, pulling them on with bill and claws; and so served as many as were turned loose, one after another, on the same stick."

In relation to the habits of the two species I would beg to differ from the absolute adjurations on the part of both Audubon and Wilson upon this subject, as I have seen both varieties in Kentucky and on the Mississippi, far above the mouth of the Ohio, though we will give in conclusion what Wilson says in reference to the loggerhead—

"This species has a considerable resemblance to the great American shrike. It differs, however, from that bird, in size, being a full inch shorter; and in color, being much darker on the upper parts; and in having the frontlet black. It also inhabits the warmer parts of the United States; while the great American shrike is chiefly confined to the northern regions, and seldom extends to the South of Virginia.

"This species inhabits the rice plantations of Carolina and Georgia, where it is protected for its usefulness in destroying mice. It sits, for hours together, on the fence, beside the stacks of rice, watching like a cat; and as soon as it perceives a mouse, darts on it like a hawk. It also feeds on crickets and grasshoppers. Its note, in March, resembles the clear creaking of a sign-board in windy weather. It builds its nest, as I was informed, generally in a detached bush, much like that of the mocking bird; but as the spring was not then sufficiently advanced, I had no opportunity of seeing its eggs. It is generally known by the name of the loggerhead."

CHAPTER IV.

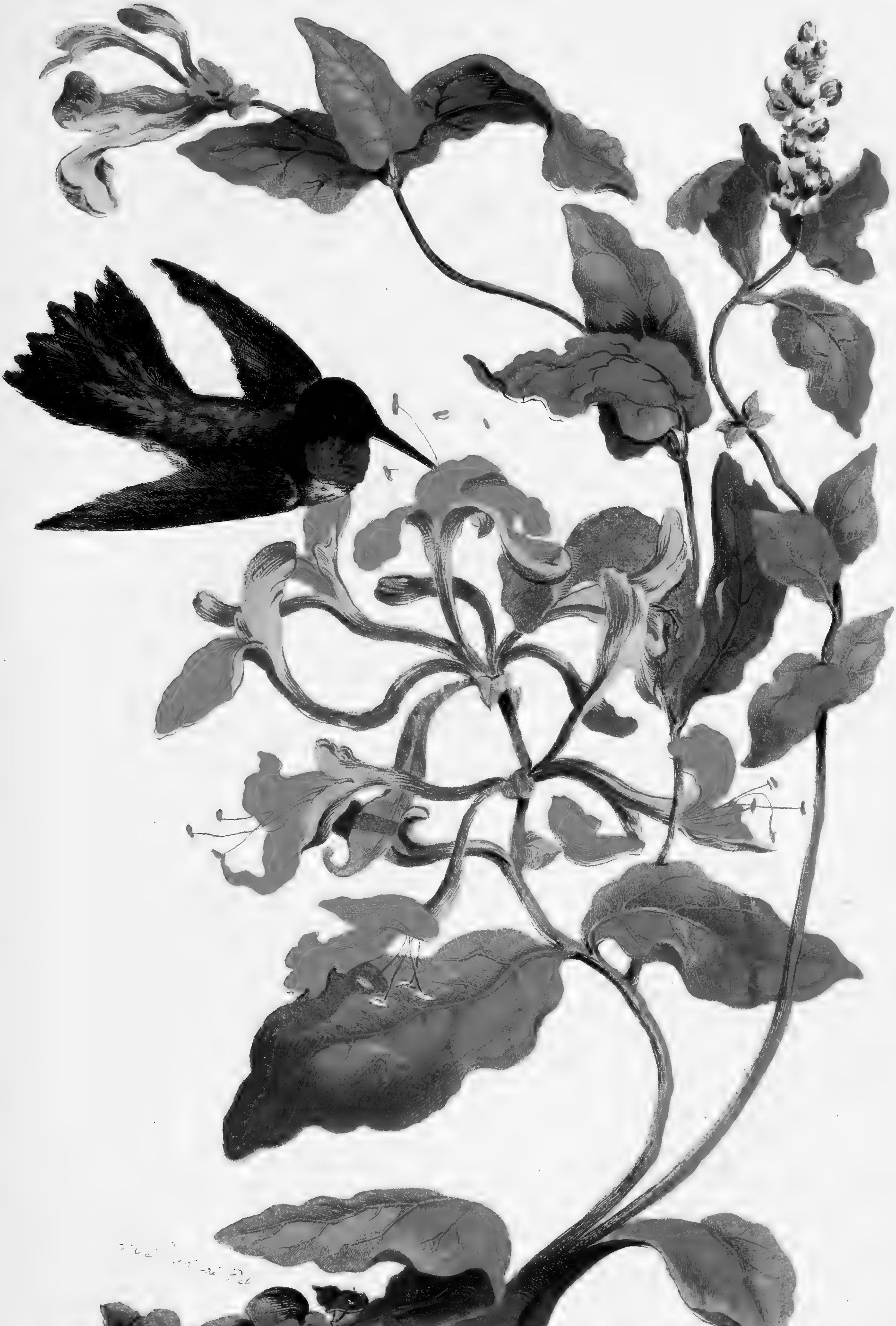
MY HUMMING BIRDS.

As a child, I always had a passion for the humming bird. It ever caused a thrill of delight when one of these glittering creatures, with its soft hum of flight, came out of repose all suddenly—hanging, a sapphire stilled upon the air—for here no wings are seen,—as, like a quick, bright thought, it darts, is still, and then away!

The mystery of "whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," was a lovely and exciting one to me. How and where could a thing so delicate live in a rough, wintry world like this? How could the glory of its burnished plumes remain undimmed, that it thus shot forth arrows of light into my eyes, while all other things seemed slowly fading?

Where could it renew its splendors? In what far bath of gems dissolved, dipping, come forth mailed in its varied shine? How could those tiny wings, whose soul-like motion no mortal eye can follow, bear the frail sprite through beating tempests that are hurling the albatross, with mighty pinions, prone upon the wave; or that dash the sea-eagle, shrieking, against its eyrie-cliff? How speeds it straight and safe—the gem-arrow of the elfs?

Could it be that the tiny birds lived only on the nectar of flowers? It seemed, surely, the fitting food for beauty so ethereal. But, then, it removed them so far from things of the earth, earthy—their home must surely be fairyland, and they coursers of the wind for Ariel to "put a girdle round



RUBY-THROATED HUMMING BIRD

the earth," if this be so. But, if there be no fairies, and these be only natural forces that propel it so, is nectar, or ambrosia even, food of the substance that could give the steely toughness to those hair-spring thews, whose sharp stroke cuts a resistless way through hurricanes?

These, and a thousand such questions, thronged upon me in those innocent times, but my most eager and continued inquiries were—How did they come? Were they born so, all bright and ready? Or did they come like other birds? I could find other birds' nests and eggs, and I understood how they came; but I never could find a humming bird's nest.

Nor could I find any one else who ever had found one. There were traditions that somebody's grandfather had heard a very old man say, that he had heard it once upon a time, from an old witch-woman, that to find a humming bird's nest, was as much a sign of good luck as reaching the end of a rainbow—that you were sure to get a heap of diamonds from it, instead of the bag of gold. Well, as I was for many a year, until I actually *did* stand with my feet upon the end of a rainbow, a devout believer in that same bag of gold, why should I not also have faith in that nest of diamonds?

This may seem like hazarding assertion for fact. I pledge my personal veracity for the truth of the following simple relation of an incident happening to myself. I was, when twenty years of age, passing on horseback from my native town, Hopkinsville, Ky., to a neighboring town, Clarksville, Tenn. When about half way, I was suddenly overtaken by one of those swift summer storms, peculiar to the South. I was then in the lane of a very large tobacco plantation, and knowing that I could obtain shelter in a country store near the end of it, I urged my horse into a run, and was soon there. I sprang down upon the low steps, and pushed my way through the crowd of farmers collected at the door—as people instinctively do, during a thunder storm, to witness its progress. I stood just within the door sill, where I had obtained a footing, and held my horse's reign. The storm was of short duration—when the sun burst through the vapory clouds that lingered heavily yet, and a dozen voices exclaimed, "the rainbow! the rainbow!"

I looked up—I never saw one so brilliant before—it dazzled me—I felt as if it was in my eyes. By this time I had stepped down from the door-sill to the step, and naturally looking down as I did so, to my great astonishment, the rainbow laid along the ground before me, crossing the road to the fence—up the rails of which it could be distinctly traced, until it again became visible up the air, forming the arc which dipped at the apparent horizon—about a mile beyond the field. I could distinctly trace that segment of the arc—which seemed to lay along the ground, and up the fence—on the air, as it sprang directly from where my feet rested.

It only seemed to lie upon the ground from its perfect transparency. The near limb made itself first visible on the points of my boots, and then sprung out and up, directly in front of me—the upper rim of the segments being within a few inches of my face.

I at first thought that the unusual brilliancy and suddenness of the appearance, had dazzled my vision and confused it, but when I heard one after another of the old farmers behind me exclaiming to each other at the strangeness of the thing, I turned and asked them if they could see it on the steps, along the road, and up the fence—all answered in the affirmative, and several remarked that they could see it on my shoes. I was unwilling to be deceived, and called forward the oldest man in the company, a farmer of 68, and asked him if he could see it. He said,

"Yes—but bless God, this is the first time ever I heard in my born days, of the end of a rainbow being seen, much less of a man standing on it. And they ain't no bag of gold thar after all!" he ejaculated, in a tone that drew forth a general laugh.

The company now began to distinguish the arc upon the air, and to see that it really did not lie upon the ground, as I had at first supposed too. This was mentioned without my hinting it to them myself. I never was more surprised in my life, nor did I ever see a company of men more so than these fifteen or twenty farmers, whose whole lives had been spent in observing the phenomena of storms. No one of them had ever heard of such a thing before, nor have I ever met with any one who knew of one similar. I, however, three years after this, witnessed a somewhat similar incident, in riding through the valley of the Tennessee River, with a friend. After one of those sudden storms we saw a vivid rainbow, with its left limb resting in a corn-field, a hundred yards distant. These are facts I cannot account for, and I leave them to the learned.

Faith I did bear, and most zealously was it awakened from the first hour that my heart leaped to the soft whirr of the delicate wings of the Hummer, as it dropped suddenly upon some early spring flower, perching with half-wearied and half-frightened look as if just come to the strange earth from its long, long flight towards the north. It seemed as if it had found here the freshest footprints of the jubilant spring, and paused for love. And, now, I would think, I must watch, for spring will hold them warm within her bosom and try to hide their little nests away. Many's the hour I have fruitlessly spent in watching them wherever I could trace their flight about the gardens—for, in my simplicity, I supposed it impossible that they could have their nests anywhere but amidst the flowers—but this, along with other poetical dreams, found the fact a more practical and wiser thing.

Years passed away, leaving me still unwearied, though my continued want of success might have made me what the world calls wiser. In the meantime I had, in poring over the time-stained volumes of the famous old "Port-folio"—certainly the first, if not the ablest of American periodicals of this class—come across a most charmingly told account of the entire domestication of a family of humming birds, by a gentleman of New England, who managed to keep them for two years in his large conservatory.

He had, by the merest accident, discovered the nest in a very large and heavy woodbine honeysuckle, which hung over the window of his sitting-room, and the idea at once occurred to him of gradually enticing the old birds into the room, which opened into the conservatory, and then transferring thither the nest with the young. The plan, after a great deal of patient dexterity, succeeded, and this lovely little family became his inmates and friends along with the flowers. The relation of this gentleman was sufficiently pleasing to enchant me—but there was not enough of the naturalist in it to satisfy me. We had great honeysuckles too; why did they not build there as well? Hundreds of times I had searched their intricacies with patient zeal, twig by twig, tendril by tendril; and this for years—yet there were hundreds around me all day! There was something in this I did not understand.

At last, in the work of a French Naturalist of note, M. Valliant, I found the hint, that many of the smaller tropical birds, among them the Hummers, invariably built their nests, where the locality of feeding grounds rendered it possible for them to make such a selection, upon the pensile limbs of those trees that hung far over running water, as their most dreaded enemies, the monkeys and snakes, were both very cautious of venturing out upon such insecure foothold to rob. This hint I accordingly treasured, and literally haunted the brooks, the creek and river sides in the spring months, watching with the ceaseless hope of catching one of the birds in the act of alighting on the nest, which I knew was my only chance. Still I found no success for years; but, I had gained one piece of information, namely;—that at eleven o'clock, A. M., and five, P. M., if I stood still for a short time, I would see them go darting past, directly over the middle of the channel. This might lead to something or it might not, it was worth remembering at least.

Now came the whirl of the youth's first ambitious struggles for excellence and success among his fellows. Bird-nesting gave way to Euclid, and idle strollings through the scented woods to scanning the Bucolics. For a long time my gentle playmates of the sun and flowers gave way to black-letter folios and smoky lamplight. I thought I had almost forgotten these once beloved children of the Free Life; but no sooner had I returned among them with some leisure on my hands, than my old love returned—my old passion broke forth once more with a deeper and widening enthusiasm. Every living thing came to me now with lives that bore a higher meaning, gleams of which were beginning to visit me.

It was no longer as an idle boy or a sportsman merely, that I went forth into nature—it was as a naturalist, in earnest for *facts!* The Principia had cured me of romance, and I was wild for demonstration.

An accident, about this time, attracted my attention to humming birds in particular again. Entering the library one morning, I saw, to my delight, a humming bird fluttering against the upper part of a window, the lower sash of which was raised. I advanced softly, but rapidly as possible, and let down the sash. I had been taught the necessity of such caution long ago, by a bitter experience, for out of more than a dozen I had attempted to catch in this very room—to which they were enticed by the vases of flowers within—I had not succeeded in keeping one alive beyond a moment or two after I had seized it—for, if startled too suddenly, ere there had been time enough for them to realize the deception of the glass, they invariably flew against it with such violence as to kill themselves;—thus my childish eagerness had always robbed me of what I most coveted, although it seemed already mine.

This time, however, I succeeded in securing an uninjured captive, which, to my inexpressible delight, proved to be one of the ruby-throated species—the most splendid and diminutive that comes north of Florida. It immediately suggested itself to me that a mixture of two parts refined loaf-sugar, with one of fine honey, in ten of water, would make about the nearest approach to the nectar of flowers. While my sister ran to prepare it, I gradually opened my hand to look at my prisoner, and saw to my no little amusement as well as surprise, that it was actually "playing possom"—feigning to be dead most skilfully! It lay on my open palm motionless for some minutes, during which I watched it in breathless curiosity. I saw it gradually open its bright little eyes to peep whether the way was clear, and then close them slowly as it caught my eye upon it; but, when the manufactured nectar came, and a drop was touched gently to the point of its bill, it come to life very suddenly, and, in a moment, was on its legs, drinking with eager gusto of the refreshing draught from a silver tea-spoon. When sated it refused to take more, and sat perched with the coolest self-composure on my finger, and plumed itself quite as artistically as if on its favorite spray. I was enchanted with the bold, innocent confidence with which it turned up its keen, black eye to survey us, as much as to say, "Well, good folk—who are you?"

Thus, in less than an hour, this apparently tameless rider of the winds, was perched, pleasantly chirping upon my finger, and received its food with edifying eagerness from my sister's hand. It seemed completely domesticated from the moment that a taste of its natural food reassured it, and left no room to doubt our being friends. By the next day, it would come from any part of either room—alight upon the side of a white China cup, containing the mixture, and drink eagerly with its long bill thrust into the very base, after the manner of the pigeons. It would alight on our fingers, and seem to talk with us, endearingly, in its soft chirps. Indeed, I never saw any creature so thoroughly tamed in so short a time before. This state of things continued some three weeks, when I observed it beginning to lose its vivacity. I resorted to every expedient I could think of; offered it small insects, &c., but with no avail; it would not touch them.

We at length came to the melancholy conclusion, that we must either resign ourselves to see it die, or let it go. This last alternative cost my sister some bitter tears. We had made a delicate little cage for it, and had accustomed it to roosting and feeding in it while loose in the rooms, and I consoled her with the hope that perhaps it might return to the cage as usual, even when hung in the garden. The experiment was tried. The cage was hung in a lilac bush, and the moment the door was opened, the little fellow darted away out of sight. My heart sank within me, for I could not but fear that it was gone forever, and my poor sister sobbed aloud. I comforted her as best I might, and though without any hope myself, endeavored to fill her with it and divert her grief by occupation. So we prepared a nice new cup of *our* nectar—hung the cage with flowers—left the door wide open, and the white cup invitingly conspicuous—then resting from our labors, withdrew a short distance to the foot of a tree, to watch the result. We waited for a whole hour, with straining eyes, and, becoming completely discouraged, had arisen from the grass, and were turning to go, when my sister uttered a low exclamation—

"Whist! look brother!"

The little fellow was darting to and fro in front of his cage; as if confused for a moment by the flower drapery; but the white cup seemed to overcome his doubts very quickly, and, with fluttering hearts, we saw him settle upon the cup as of old, and while he drank, we rushed lightly forward on tiptoe to secure him.

We were quite rebuked for our want of faith, threw open the door again, and let him have the rest of the day to himself; but, as I observed him playing with some of the wild birds, I concluded to shut him up for a week or two longer, when he returned as usual, to roost that night. While out, it had evidently found the restorative for which it had been pining, and what that might be I now determined, if possible, to discover. The necessity of having a pair of the young birds that I might be enabled to study their habits more effectually, became now more fully apparent; for I knew, however tame our bird might be now, that if it happened to meet with its old mate or a new one, it would be sure to desert us, as a matter of course. Young ones, raised by myself, I could trust.

Chance favored me somewhat strangely about this time. I had been out squirrel shooting early one sweltering hot morning; and, on my return, had thrown myself beneath the shade of a thick hickory, near the bank of a creek. I lay on my back, looking listlessly out across the stream, when the chirp of the humming bird, and its darting form, reached my senses at the same instant. I was sure I saw it light upon the limb of a small iron-wood tree, that happened to be exactly in the line of my vision at that instant. This tree leaned over the water a considerable distance. I thought of *Le Vallient* and watched steadily.

In about five minutes, another chirp, and another bird darted in. I saw this one drop upon what seemed to be a knot on an angle of the limb. I heard the soft chirping of greeting and love: I could scarcely contain myself for joy. I would have given anything in the world to have dared to scream—" I've got you! I've got you at last!" By a great struggle, I choked down my ecstasy and kept still. One of them now flew away; and, after waiting fifteen minutes, that seemed a week, I rose, and with my eye steadily fixed upon that important limb, I walked slowly down the bank without, of course, seeing where I placed my feet. But, the highest hopes are sometimes doomed to a fall, and a fall mine took with a vengeance! I caught my foot in a root, and tumbled head foremost down the bank into the water! I suppose such a ducking would have cooled the enthusiasm of most bird-nesters;

but it only exasperated mine: I shook off the water and vowed I'd find that nest if it took me a week; but how to begin was the question. I had lost the limb, and how was I to find it among an hundred others just like it.

The knot I had seen was so exactly like other knots, upon other limbs all around it, that the prospect of finding it, seemed a hopeless one. But "I'll try sir!" is my favorite motto. I laid myself down as nearly as possible in the position I originally occupied—but, after some twenty minutes experiment, came to the conclusion that my head had been too much confused by the shock of my fall and ducking, for me to hope to make much out of this method. Then I went under the tree, and commencing at the trunk with the lowest limb, which leaned over the water, I followed it slowly and carefully with my eye out to the extremest twig, noting carefully everything that seemed like a knot. This produced no satisfactory result after half an hour's trial, and with an aching neck I gave it up in despair, for I saw half a dozen knots, either one of which seemed as likely to be the right one as the other.

I now changed my tactics again, and, ascending the tree, I stopped with my feet upon each one of these limbs and looked *down* along it length. It was a very tedious proceeding, but I persevered. Knot after knot deceived me, but, at last, when just above the middle of the tree, I caught a sharp gleam among the leaves, of gold and purple, and looking down upon the last limb to which I had climbed—almost lost my footing for the joy—when I saw about three feet out from where I stood, the glistening back and wings of the little bird just covering the top of one of those mysterious knots—that was about the size of half a hen's egg. Its glancing head, long bill and keen eyes, were turned upwards and perfectly still, except the latter, which surveyed me from head to foot with the most dauntless expression. It seemed to have not the slightest intention of moving, and I would not have disturbed it for the world.

It was sufficient delight to me to gaze on my long sought treasure. Its pure, white breast—or throat, rather—for the breast was sunk in the nest—formed such a sweet and innocent contrast with the splendor of its back, head and wings!

This is the most common variety with us, and is about a size larger than the scarlet throat. I shall venture to call this variety the *Emerald Hummer.* I could see that this wonderful little creature, had not only formed the outside of its nest to correspond in shape and size exactly with the natural knots on other limbs—but had so skilfully covered the outside with the same kind of moss which grew upon them, that no eye, however practiced, could have discovered the deception from beneath. Having gratified my curiosity as far as prudent, without running the risk of driving her from the nest, I descended cautiously and ran home with the news; and great was the joy thereat between my little playmates and myself.

Now came the anxious time for us; we were dying to get a sight of the eggs, and yet afraid to disturb the birds. I conquered this difficulty at last by patience. I found, after watching for several mornings, that they both left the nest on warm days about noon, and were gone sometimes near an hour. We took this opportunity, and having climbed up first, so as to show her, my sister followed—the girls *used* to climb like squirrels in Kentucky, in my young days!—and many were the expressions of childish delight as she peeped over and saw those three little eggs—about the size of black-eyed peas—lying like snowy pearls,(if *not* diamonds, as I used to expect,) embedded in a fairy case, all lined with cygnet-down, or the delicate floss of elfin-hair. We did not touch, or even breathe on it, and descended quickly, lest the old birds should find us there.

I was unexpectedly compelled to leave home about this time, and my sister promised that she would not disturb the nest till my return. After an unexpected detention of two weeks, I got back, and the first thing the next morning we were on our way, with many misgivings, to visit our treasures.

I climbed the tree, and to my infinite astonishment, two birds entirely filled the nest, and in such full size and perfect plumage that I thought I must have come too late, and that these were the old ones. They looked at me as boldly as I have seen young eagles look unflinchingly, on the intruder into their eyrie. I determined to attempt the capture, at any rate, and reached my hand towards them with a gradual and almost imperceptible movement. They watched its approach with no sign of fear, and when I had approached it within an inch one of them boldly pecked at it, as it descended, gently covering them as they sat. I shouted for joy.

"I have them! I have them!" and then *such* dancing and clapping of hands as there was below.

"Hurry! hurry, brother! I want to see them. I want to see! I want to see!"

For a wonder, I got down without breaking my neck. I had, with slight violence, taken the nest, with the birds, from the limb entire. They made not the slightest effort to escape, nor did they seem in the least frightened. We hurried away, lest we should witness the sufferings of the bereaved pair, whom we had thus ruthlessly robbed of home and young.

The first thing on reaching the house, with our captives, was to try our nectar, of the home-made manufacture, upon the young strangers, who instantly paid us the compliment of recognizing its merits in a hearty draught, which seemed to set them perfectly at ease with the world and with themselves. They now left the nest, and perched upon our fingers with the most lovely confidence, and we saw that they were actually full plumed—though I doubt if they had yet attempted to use their wings abroad. They seemed to take the sudden change in their surroundings with a most consummate people-of-the-world sort of air—just as if they had been taught to consider it as ungenteel to look surprised or startled at anything, or to exhibit more than a very cool sort of curiosity. We were greatly amused at these aristocratic airs, and we were ourselves very curious to know what might chance to be the titles of our noble friends in their own principality of air. Much as they made of themselves, I thought our ruby-throat received them with a certain degree of hauteur, which was responded to with the most supercilious indifference at all consistent with perfect good breeding. A few days, however, sufficed to break down the icy crust of formality, and they began to appear most guardedly aware of each other's existence. In a few weeks we hung the cage out with open doors again—finding that all the birds were beginning to mope and look as if they were going to die, as had been the case with the ruby-breast several times before. He had always been relieved by letting him out; but, as he instantly disappeared, we could not discover what the antidote he sought might be.

When we opened the cage this time, it was a bright summer morning just after sunrise. What was our surprise to see the ruby-throat, instead of darting away as usual, remain with the young ones, which had immediately sought sprays, as if feeling a little uncertain what to do with themselves. Scarlet flew round and round them; then he would dart off to a little distance in the garden and suspend himself on the wing for an instant, before what I at first could not perceive to be anything more than two bare twigs—then he would return and fly around them again, as if to show them how easy it was.

The little bold fellows did not require long persuasion, but were soon launched on air again, and in a moment or so were using their wings—for all we could see—with about as much confidence and ease as Mr. Ruby-throat. They too commenced the same manœuvres among the shrubbery, and as there were no flowers there, we were sadly puzzled to think what it was they were dipping at so eagerly, to the utter neglect of the many flowers, not one of which they appeared to notice. We moved closer to watch them to better advantage, and, in doing so, changed our relative position to the sun. At once the thing was revealed to me. I caught friend Ruby in the very act of abstracting a small spider, with the point of his long beak, from the centre of one of those beautiful circular webs of the garden spider, that so abounds throughout the South. The thing was done so daintily, that he did not stir the dew-drops which, now glittering in the golden sun, revealed the gossamer tracery all diamond-strung.

"Hah! we've got your secret, my friends!—Hah! ha, hah!"

And we clapped and danced in triumph. Our presence did not disturb them in the least, and we watched them catching spiders for half an hour. They frequently came within two feet of our faces, and we could distinctly see them pluck the little spider from the centre of its wheel were it lies, and swallow it entire. After this we let them out daily, and, although we watched them closely and with the most patient care, we never could see them touch the spiders again, until the usual interval of about a fortnight had elapsed, when they attacked them again as vigorously as ever —but the foray of one morning seemed to suffice. We also observed them carefully, to ascertain whether they ate any other insects than these spiders—but, although we brought them every variety of the smallest and most tender that we could find, they did not notice them at all—but if we would shut them up past the time, until they began to look drooping, and then bring one of those little spiders along with other small insects, they would snap up the spider soon enough, but pay no attention to the others.

We were thoroughly convinced, after careful experiment upon two families of them, that they neither live entirely upon the nectar of flowers—as all the old naturalists supposed—nor upon *various* small insects in addition to the nectar, as Mr. Audubon asserts. The fact is, they can live no more beyond a certain time—about a fortnight—upon nectar alone, than they can upon air alone, nor do I believe that life could be preserved beyond a few days upon spiders alone. There is another rather curious observation we made, that so long as the white cup was not dry, for so long they did not condescend to notice the thousands of flowers by which they were surrounded. We used to starve them a little sometimes for fun, and then we would have to hide, for they would make *such* a row! if we appeared—flying close to our faces, pecking gently at our teeth and eyes, lighting on our hair and pecking at it, or on our shoulders pulling at it—until, sometimes, it was almost difficult to tell whether it was more amusing or annoying. At last they would go away with evident reluctance to the garden, and tear up about half the flowers they tried, and darting towards us the moment we appeared again with the magical white cup. Such was the spell it exercised upon them, that when any of our friends, who came visiting us, desired to see them when they were out and perched among the trees, either of us had only to walk into the yard, and holding up the white cup above our heads, imitate their own chirp to attract their notice, and in an instant one after another would come dipping down from above, and cluster round the rim. After a draught, which was always the first thing, they would sit and plume themselves, stopping every now and then to ask one of the strangers with their steady eyes, so like black diamonds—

"Who are you, pray? What'll you take?"

Their movements were so like lightning, that though they would let you get your hand near enough for them to peck it, yet it was impossible to catch them. They would let us do it sometimes, but never a stranger.

Now comes the, to me, most interesting portion of this narrative.

Our charming little family remained with us on these pleasing terms until the middle of September, and then, as they began to exhibit the usual restlessness of migratory birds, the sad question of parting had to be met. What we had already seen of them, convinced me conclusively that there must have been something of romance in the story that had so enchanted me in the respectable pages of the sage Port-folio, during my fanciful childhood, and which sc roundly asserted that the birds had been kept through two winters! Now it is barely possible said conservatory may have had a due supply of spiders, for of one thing I am very sure—that no Humming Bird could have been kept alive without them any more than gold-fish could be kept alive in distilled water, in which all the animalculæ, which constitute their natural food, had been destroyed. We came, at last, to the conclusion that it would be selfish and abominably cruel of us to keep the delicate things with us in the blustering north, to die of pining for the scented bowers of their far sunny home. We let them out, and with many tears saw them dart away at once towards the south, as if they felt they had already tarried too long.

We saw them but for an instant on the air, and our sweet pets were gone!

It took us a long time to reconcile ourselves to the loneliness in which they left us, but our consolation was, that next spring I should find another nest, and they should be scarlet throats this time, and we should know better how to take care of them now, as we knew better how to find them from experience. Such a lovely family as we were going to have! We made a new and elegant house during the winter leisure, in anticipation of the new tenants *that were to be!* In the meantime, as I always had some half dozen different kinds of pets on hand, we found occupation and amusement in taking care of them and occasionally adding to the stock.

This, together with the winter hunting, trapping, and books, gave swift wings to the hours for me. Winter broke up—spring came with its tender wild flowers and fickle smiles. Spring is the time for poetry—when one is yet in the teens—and I had fallen into a dreamy mood in which I was permitting the spring to go by, without noting its flight, when I was suddenly roused one May morning by a most curious and unexpected incident.

I had gone into the garden summer-house with my book as the excuse, but dreaming as usual, without noticing the letters on its pages, when a soft, whirring noise, close to my face, caused me to look up. About one foot from me a Humming Bird, poised so steadily upon the wing that its body seemed perfectly motionless, looked with its bright, knowing eye fixedly into mine. It did not move when I lifted my head, and retaining this position for nearly a quarter of a minute, with a low chirp darted out and settled on some flowers near to trim its plumes. I started up, while a quick thought sent a thrill of exquisite pleasure through my whole frame. The bird sat still. I ran with my utmost speed to the house, and, catching a glimpse of my sister, cried out to her, almost beside myself with excitement—

"Get the white cup! Get our cup! some honey! some sugar!—here's the water!—quick dear! quick! for heaven's sake!"

"What is the matter with you, brother?" exclaimed the distracted child, endeavoring at the same time to execute these multifarious orders all at once.

"O, our bird's come back! I saw him just now! Where are the closet keys? O, he's come back to us all the way from South America—the little darling! I thought he couldn't forget us!"

"But, brother, you are mad—how can you tell it from another Humming Bird—I've seen a dozen this spring!"

"Oh! I know it was one of the young ones—he came in and looked me in the eyes ever so long! Do make haste!"

The mixture is completed and off we run in trembling eagerness—for this test we knew would decide for or against us. We reach the summer-house—the magical white cup is raised before us, it is still sitting on the flower,—we give one chirp as of old, and without an instant's hesitation it darts to the cup, alights upon the rim and plunges its little thirsty bill up to the very eyes in that delicious cup, and takes the longest, deepest draught, I ever saw taken before by one of them; and this convinced me that it had just arrived, and had come straight to its old home for food and love. My sister burst into tears and screams of joyous laughter, and as to what ridiculous capers I might have been guilty of, I cannot tell—I only remember the self-contented and philosophical manner in which the returned pilgrim continued to plume its storm-ruffled feathers, uttering now and then the old chirps on the side of that cup; this position it continued to retain until we bore him on it to his new house, of which he assumed possession with a remarkably matter of fact, or rather matter of course, air.

About a week after this, while walking in the garden one morning, I observed two humming birds engaged in chasing each other in a very coy and loving manner. Something in the tame and confident manner of one of them made me suspect it was our bird engaged in making love. I went back for the white cup, and this time, too, its magic proved itself invincible—for both birds came without hesitation and settled upon the rim—the one which took the long and eager draught as if perishing of fatigue and hunger, proved to be the female that had just arrived. It was a little larger than the male, and seemed, at first, somewhat shyer than he, though a few days were sufficient to make all right as ever between us again.

How wondrous strange and incomprehensible it seemed to us—the acuteness of senses—the strength of memory and affection—the wizzard sagacity, in a word—that could have brought these tiny creatures back to us, from so many thousand miles away, straight as the arrow from the bow. I have never ceased wondering at that strange incident—but there is one yet quite as droll to come. The love season had now fully commenced, and our birds began to be absent for several hours together, and we observed that at these times they darted straight up into the air until they were out of sight before they took their course, so that watch as *we* might we never could find out which way they went. They also adopted the same precaution in returning, when they seemed to fall perpendicularly from the clouds. They did not appear any the less tame for all this—but, though I tried in every possible way to find out their secret, yet they entirely baffled me, and I am not sure that I ever saw their brood even—though about the time when they ought to have been out we used to notice more birds than we could well account for around the white cup in the cage; yet, as those strangers appeared to be somewhat shy, we did not press an acquaintance. It was nothing more than a conjecture on our part, that these were the new brood of our pets!

But I am getting a little ahead of my story in events. I have mentioned that we had vowed to have a nest of ruby-throats added to our collection this Spring, and in giving a detail of the manner in which I went to work for the accomplishment of this vow I shall furnish you some idea of the tedious processes of the practical naturalist.

My father had some men at work "getting out logs"—as it is called—on a considerable creek some two miles off. One of them, who knew of my passion for these birds, mentioned to me, that he had twice, while watering his horse at a certain crossing in the woods, observed a humming bird fly past over the middle of the channel and up the stream. This, he said, was about five o'clock, both times. This was enough for me. I ordered my horse, and in a few moments was under whip and spur—for it was nearly that time now—for this little ford. I reached it a few minutes before five by a bridle path. I sat upon my horse until dusk in the middle of the stream, but no humming bird. Next day I came at noon—staid an hour with no avail. I went at four again and staid until half-past five, but still no bird. I was not discouraged, but as I rode slowly home, determined to change my tactics next day, for I remembered that my impatient horse had been pawing in the water all the time, and this, no doubt, had alarmed the cautious birds, and caused them to change their usual course. Next day I chose my position under some thick overhanging trees, where I could see and not be seen. I did not see them on the morning watch. In the afternoon, precisely at five, the male came by, and I had the satisfaction of seeing that it was a ruby-throat. I judged from the height at which it flew that the nest was not very far off. Well, to make a long story short, I came the next day and took my station about a hundred and fifty yards farther up the stream—saw them both pass at five, flying, I thought, just a little lower; the next evening I moved still farther up with the same result.

The next I did not move so far—for here was a strait stretch of the channel of considerable length, and I could command it with my eye from where I stood. Here I saw them go by, one a few minutes after the other; and observed that their flight was now very low; but after they had passèd me a short distance, each of them shot suddenly and perpendicularly up into the air until I lost sight of them. The next evening, it was the same thing, and now I was convinced that the nest must be close at hand; that they rose in this sudden manner to make a perpendicular descent which would baffle pursuit from all enemies. I watched near this place three evenings more—changing my position only a little each time—before I had the satisfaction at last of seeing the female come down like a falling ærolite from the clouds and drop upon her nest. I had thus spent more than a whole week in this patient pursuit, and now that it had been crowned with success, I wheeled my horse, and with an indescribable feeling of both pride and joy, galloped home with the news to my sister. I had conquered one of the stubbornest secrets of nature—not this time by accident, but by science and perseverance. I was proud of it, and so was she. At the proper time I brought the young birds home in triumph. There were only two, though, as in the other instance, there had been three eggs. This curious fact is common to several families of birds, and seems to be a provision against accident, though I believe the third egg is seldom permitted to hatch.

We had now two families which seemed to get along together very amiably. The male of the ruby-throats was easily distinguishable by the dark feathers on the throat which marked the place where, on his next moulting, that breastplate of glittering mail should appear blazing like a talisman of carbuncle. We were greatly distressed that we should have to run all the risks of their problematic return in the following spring before we should be enabled to solace our eyes in the enjoyment of this coveted pleasure.

We now frequently captured old birds in the library, and never failed in taming them entirely in a few days. At one time, our family consisted of six, and we had but to walk out with the white cup and sound the gathering chirp, and, one after another, the whole of them came skimming down from the trees in all directions, to alight upon its rim, or upon us if they were not hungry.

The novelty of such pets attracted great attention; and we had many visitors; and the fair young girls plead hard with me to give them one—but I could never consent to trust my delicate people in unaccustomed hands, except in a single instance, in which the fair pleader bewitched me with eyes so like those of the bird, that I gave her one of the old ones, and heard to my sorrow that it died in a week.

Our lovely family broke up with the autumn. One after one, they disappeared suddenly, and we were left alone—alas, this time forever—none of them ever came back!

Have we been describing creatures of blind and fated impulse—machines without volition, propelled, like any other arrangement of springs and wheels, by elemental forces, on through a certain and fixed round of action over which they have no control,—or have we told the history of beings possessing memory in common with man—gratitude, whether in common with him or not—faith, affection, bravery—a small touch of the loafer, as witnessed in their affection for the white cup with its brimming bowl, in preference to the meagre and bee-rifled chalices of flowers—a remarkable degree of caution in hiding their nests—of cunning in going to and from them—of mechanical and artistic skill in constructing their wonderful homes—of judgment in placing them over the water—of sagacity in using their acute senses to guide them back and forth on their two long yearly pilgrimages? These are questions the learned will have to meet one day!

I ventured to suggest, in the first part of this article, that the scarlet or ruby-throated humming bird has been confounded with another variety, which I have named the Emerald or green-backed humming bird. They are both very common north of Florida, and, indeed, the ruby-throat is said to be the only variety which visits us at the North. The Emerald humming bird resembles the old female of the ruby-throated bird, or scarlet-throat, as we have called it from the predominance of that blazing hue in the changing splendors of its throat! The green birds resemble, also, the young female of the ruby-throat—and hence the confusion. The points of distinction, however, are clear enough, when the attention has been once attracted toward noting them. The two families of my pets belonged to the two varieties, and, therefore, I had ample opportunity of careful comparison. The female of all humming birds is the largest;—well, in the matter of size, I found the difference to be this—the female of the ruby-throat is of the same size with the male of the green—while the female of the green is nearly one-third larger. The throat of the male of the green is always a pure, clear white, while the plumage of the back is a darker and more resplendent green. The throat of the ruby, during the first year, is distinctly marked a grayish blue over that portion which, at the next moulting, assumes its splendid colors.

There is no possibility of mistaking the males of the two in the nest or out of it. The bill of the green is much longer and coarser; as are its shape, plumage, and color, than the ruby, which is one of the most fairy-like and graceful of all the hummers. Their habits do not seem to differ in any very essential particulars, but no observer, however careless, can fail to see the marked difference between the two varieties when compared together, either on the wing or perched. The flight of the green is the more heavy and slow, and it seems to possess less of spirit and boldness than the other. The pair that returned to me the next spring were green humming birds, and the male of this pair never exhibited either the blueish blotch on the throat, which the ruby has when it comes from the nest, nor was there any change perceptible in the plumage at all, except that the white of the throat and breast had become a purer white, and the green of the back darker, more variable and brilliant.

The nest, too, is larger by nearly one-third, and less elegantly finished than that of the ruby. So marked is the difference between the two varieties, that I can easily point them out on the wing in our gardens, although, not only all our American naturalists have classed them as one species, but the great mass of interested observers are not yet aware of the differences. Now, that attention has once been called to the facts, they are promptly enough seen and recognized. Mr. Audubon gives us four humming birds, north of Texas—the Ruby-throated, the Mangrove, the Anna, and the Ruffed. To this enumeration, I venture to add a fifth, the common or Emerald humming bird, and it is not a little singular that this species, which of all the rest is most universally diffused, should yet have not been named before. Of the three last named above, the first belongs to Florida, the other two to the Pacific coast.

We will, however, before concluding, give also to the reader some interesting passages from the observations of other naturalists. Audubon says of the ruby-throated hummer:

"The nest of this humming bird is of the most delicate nature, the external parts being formed of a light gray lichen found on the branches of trees, or on decayed fence-rails, and so neatly arranged round the whole nest, as well as to some distance from the spot where it is attached, as to seem part of the branch or stem itself. These little pieces of lichen are glued together by the saliva of the bird. The nest coating consists of cottony substance, and the innermost of silky fibres obtained from various plants, all extremely delicate and soft. On this comfortable bed, as in contradiction to the axiom that the smaller the species the greater the number of eggs, the female lays only two, which are pure white and nearly oval. Ten days are required for their hatching, and the birds raise two broods in a season. In one week the young are ready to fly, but are fed by the parents for nearly another week. They receive their food directly from the bill of their parents, which disgorge it in the manner of canaries or pigeons. It is my belief that no sooner are the young able to provide for themselves than they associate with other broods, and perform their migrations apart from the old birds, as I have observed twenty or thirty young humming birds resort to a group of trumpet flowers, when not a single old male was to be seen. They do not receive the full brilliancy of their colors until the succeeding spring, although the throat of the male bird is strongly imbued with the ruby tints before they leave us in autumn.

"I have seen many of these birds kept in partial confinement, when they wese supplied with artificial flowers made for the purpose, in the corollas of which water with honey or sugar dissolved in it was placed. The birds were fed on these substances exclusively, but seldom lived many months, and on being examined after death, were found to be extremely emaciated. Others, on the contrary, which were supplied twice a day with fresh flowers from the woods or garden, placed in a room with windows merely closed with moschetto gauze-netting, through which minute insects were able to enter, lived twelve months, at the expiration of which time their liberty was granted them, the person who kept them having had a long journey to perform. The room was kept artificially warmed during the winter months, and these in Lower Louisiana are seldom so cold as to produce ice. On examining an orange-tree which had been placed in the room where these humming birds were kept, no appearance of a nest was to be seen, although the birds had frequently been observed caressing each other. Some have been occasionally kept confined in our Middle Districts, but I have not ascertained that any one survived a winter."

Here are some curious facts concerning the most remarkable variety of the species--the Ruffed Humming Bird. They are from Nuttall's and Townsend's notes—

" We began," says the first of these enterprising travellers, " to meet with this species near the Blue Mountains of the Columbia River, in the autumn as we proceeded to the west. These were all young birds, and were not very easily distinguished from those of the common species of the same age. We now for the first time (April 16) saw the males in numbers, darting, buzzing, and squeaking in the usual manner of their tribe; but when engaged in collecting its accustomed sweets in all the energy of life, it seemed like a breathing gem, or magic carbuncle of glowing fire, stretching out its gorgeous ruff, as if to emulate the sun itself in splendor. Towards the close of May the females were sitting, at which time the males were uncommonly quarrelsome and vigilant, darting out at me as I approached the tree probably near the nest, looking like an angry coal of brilliant fire, passing within very little of my face, returning several times to the attack, sinking and darting with the utmost velocity, at the same time uttering a curious, reverberating, sharp bleat, somewhat similar to the quivering twang of a dead twig, yet also so much like the real bleat of some small quadruped, that for some time I searched the ground instead of the air for the actor in the scene. At other times the males were seen darting up high in the air and whirling about each other in great anger and with much velocity. After these manœvres the aggressor returned to the same dead twig, where for days he regularly took his station with all the courage and angry vigilance of a king-bird. The angry hissing or bleating note of this species seems something like *wht' t' t' t' tshvee*, tremulously uttered as it whirls and sweeps through the air, like a musket ball, accompanied also by something like the whirr of the Night-Hawk. On the 29th of May I found a nest of this species in a forked branch of the Nootka Bramble, *Rubus Nutkanus*. The female was sitting on two eggs of the same shape and color as those of the common species. The nest, also, was perfectly similar, but somewhat deeper. As I approached, the female came hovering round the nest, and soon after, when all was still, she resumed her place contentedly."

Dr. Townsend's note is as follows—

"Nootka Sound Humming Birds, *Trochilus rufus*, *Ahpuets-rinne* of the Chinooks. On a clear day the male may be seen to rise to a great height in the air, and descend instantly near the earth, then mount again to the same altitude as at first, performing in the evolution the half of a large circle. During the descent it emits a strange and astonishingly loud note, which can be compared to nothing but the rubbing together of the limbs of trees during a high wind. I heard this singular note repeatedly last spring and summer, but did not then discover to what it belonged. I did not suppose it be a bird at all, and least of all a humming bird. The observer thinks it almost impossible that so small a creature can be capable of producing so much sound. I have never observed this habit on a dull or cloudy day."

CHAPTER V.

SONG OF THE CHILDREN ABOUT SPRING.

THE HOURS.

I.

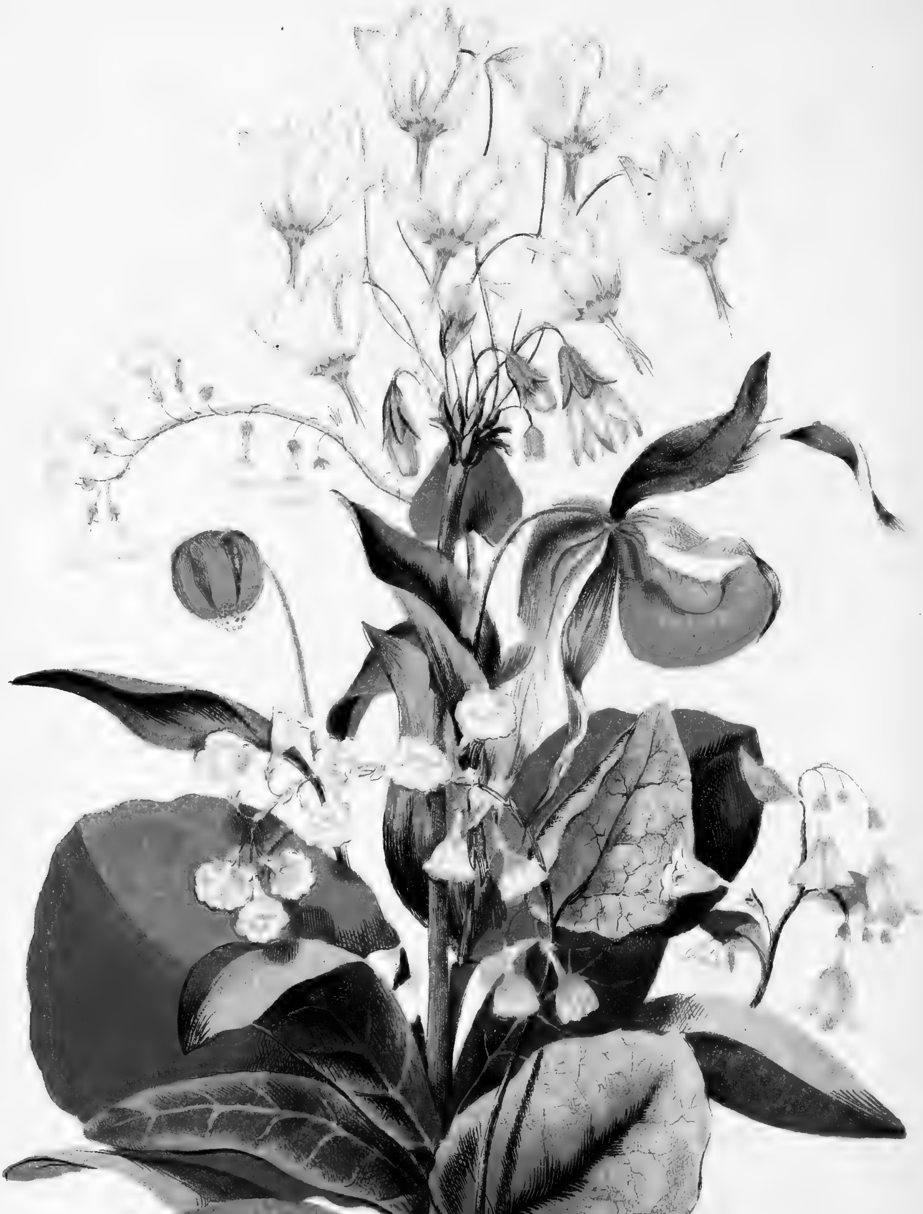
They the pure of heart never do grow old,
For spring-time finds them full of love to-day,
As three-score summers since when curls of gold,
Shone on those temples that are delved and gray.

They come! they come! with the golden hair
And sky-blue eyes—they all are there!
List! O list ye!—the song they sing,
Their song is a light song—light song—
A song about spring!

THE CHILDREN.

II.

We are younger forever as truth must be,
For we cannot grow old in simplicity.
We give out our lives as those streams do the sun,
That pratt'ling o'er pebble-beds flash as they run.
We sing in our joy—sing in our grief—
Must sing to be gladder—sing for relief,
Now we are so happy—must let our hearts go,
Ah sing we will—sing we must merrily O!—
Right cherrily O! Spring is coming again,
A jubilant earth is awaiting her reign!



KENTUCKY WILD FLOWERS

We are going to tell you the tale of mirth,
A right merry, a joyous tale,
About how this Spring cometh back to the earth,
And everything shouteth all hail!
Since Winter must flee;—
An old tyrant he!

III.

We hate an old fellow
Whose beard is gray
Who can't be made mellow,
Who wont be gay,
Who is all so shrivelléd that he hath no blood,
And whose breath is so mortal cold,
That he couldn't be pleasant if pleasant he would—
Then he is so piteous old!

Yet though he be old he is wonderous strong,
And weary from far is his flight,
And if he but pipeth his terrible song,
I ween you would shake with affright.

For though he be thin, he is a lithe eld one,
And he hath too, some fierce odd ways—
It's an awsome kind of a glee that has run
Through such mirth of his all his days!

He has an ugly knack of making fun,
When he sinketh tall ships at sea,
A gurgling whirl-of-a-laugh that hath spun
Them down! down, to where Death should be!

Then over mountains goes whistling to play
With 'wildered and wan Traveller,
And heapeth and hurtleth snow drifts in his way,
Until he forgeteth to fear.

And now he lies down beneath white sheets of home,
Sleeping slowly to dreamless rest,
While shrieking winds, as his senses grow numb,
Are changed for the harps of the blest.

And where the great city uplifteth its crest,
He will find how the poor folk hide,
Ah! that is the sport which he loveth the best,
In! through the rough crannies to glide!

And fiercely go singing beneath each tatter,
Then hiss at them when they make wails,
And pierce and pinch them until their teeth chatter,
And their lips grow blue as their nails.

Then he loveth to slam at the rich man's door,
And rattle and bang through his halls,
And taunt him with creakings and dismally roar,
'Till the fur-wrapped thing he appalls;
And it shivers cringing, to think of the Poor
That are dying without its walls.

IV.

He comes from a dreary, glittering land,
Where strange bright horrors dwell,
You could not expect he'd be very bland,
Whose playmates were so fell.

For all monstrous shapes like the Lion Seal,
Tusked Walrus and White Bear,
With the long Whales plunging, roar and reel
In uncouth gambols there.

Amidst great seas on the air uplifted,
Their icy walls wind-torn,

Into hugest craggy phantoms drifted,
Crashing together borne.

Deep green all below, and in glinting white,
Where clear peaks climb the skies,
They topple and clang in a loud vast fight,
Meet for a demon's eyes.

V.

Above this wild motion he broodeth and sails,
Makes the air dun with his wings,
Then rocks on the Kraken or stuns the Narwhales
With the ice-spear that he flings.
He loveth such delicate sports as these,
A hunter of monsters he,
I ween he rouseth those ice-mountained seas
To thunder and leap t' his glee,
Till they heave at the stars their lance-keen tops,
While the lashed chase passeth by,
Then lo! every burnish'd pinnacle drops
To crash down the steeps from on high!

Very rude are the points and angles there;
As he flaps between the crags
They topple and roll so much that they tear
His smooth pinions on the jags.
You may know when the nice sleet-polished plumes
Of a prim old Boy like he
Have been torn, how churlish vanity fumes
That other things nice should be;
For e'en the monsters gaping spout and jeer
That he looketh so dismally.

So he whirls him in great wrath up the air,
With his Fiend-Winds thronged behind,

And if green and sunshine make the earth fair,
  Food for his spite he will find.
But O! it's a hideous sort of spleen,
  And a very hard cold hate,
That could come where joyous summer had been
  Just to leave all desolate!

VI.

The rolling river,
  We loved to see
In sunbeams quiver,—
  Darkened left he
Green forests, waving
  Like the deep sea,
Vexed to upheaving—
  All, bare, left he
The flame-winged bird
  That lit the tree,
Where its song was heard,—
  Banished had he!
The floweret's eye
  That smiled sweetly
Where the dead leaves lie
  Frozen had he.

Fled darkened and bare and frozen were they,
The timid and bright things dare not to stay;
A cruel old tyrant to revel thus,
In murdering beauty, in howling and fuss!

Though mournful this be, it is far sadder still
When in the track of his merciless will
Human hearts bowed—they the warm and the brave
The best loved and frailest his stern hours gave
Coldly to Death. O it is hard thus to slay
These gentle ones when their loved summer's away—

No flowers to weep them in dew-glistening eyes,
Or climb in sweet odors up with them to the skies!—
They go with the chill of his breath on their wings,
Till they come to where Heaven's own fire-fountain springs.

VII.

But joy! O joy! a love-breath shall rout him!
Sing merrily O!—
The tyrant must go—
Bundle that ghastly mantle about him,
That mantle of snow
That beginneth to show
His shrunk limbs like grave clothes rent on a corse;
And far, fast and high
Old shrunk-shanks must fly;
Or what o'ertakes him than death shall be worse,
For zephyrs go by
Who tell spring is nigh—
And rather than kiss her he'd many times die!

VIII.

Ah! hah, she is coming
The merry-eyed maiden!—
We hear them far humming
Her train flower-laden.

For tripping sprites are they—
In beamy joyous throngs
Swiftly their light feet play,
Cadent to mellow songs.

Now old Gray-Beard must flee
Quite as fast as may be.
Could they only but catch,
How they'd tease the cross wretch—

Smother him in perfumes
Till their sweets made him faint,
Then bedizen his plumes
With such gay things—and quaint—

As Media, lamb's tongue,
The crocus, and star-eye,
Till his sleet-scales were hung
With each bright early dye.

IX.

When with vines they had bound him,
Then in mocking dance round him,
Till spring their maiden queen come—
We know by the swelling hum.

That she has just lifted one glorious wing,
As eagles pause on the stoop for a flight,
And the flashes its burnished hues outfling
Gild first like morning the hill-tops with light;
Soon now, the blaze of that splendor gleaming—
From each golden feather fully outspread,—
Down through valleys, and cold shadows beaming,
Will the warm glow, of her presence be shed!—
Away on her beautiful flight at last,
Sailing the arrowy breeze she has past.

X.

She is chasing Old Winter—a merry chase,
And the roused earth shouts to the clattering race.
She is wanting to kiss Old Frosty, I ween,
But bachelors never a-kissing are seen!

They were always so silly,
And their blue lips so chilly,

They never could stand to be wooed;
  But she'd kiss him and fan him,
  'Till her warm breath unman him,
And then that he tarried he rued.

XI.

  She would break his chains,
  Unlock all the tides,
And let the glad streamlets go;
  All the frozen veins
  Where the earth-blood glides
Awaken to joyous flow.

  Till that gentle race,
  The quaint fairies dress
That shrank from his frosty spite,
  Upturn each sweet face
  To her beams' caress,
And laugh in the new world's light.

  And those flashing things,
  With their souls all song,
That went like dreams when he came,
  With gay clamorings,
  A sweet noisy throng,
Come back like arrows of flame.

  And the meek blue bird
  We love far the best,
For he stayed while dark hours frowned,
  In low song is heard
  More soft than the rest,
That melts with a wind-harp's sound.

  And, accepted king
  Of all the earth-choir,

The bold wizzard mocker swells
In keen notes that cling
Round the brain like fire,
It's loud clear melodious spells.

Until all the air
Is one harmonie,
And the winds put music on,
And the echoes bear
Up the twice told glee,
Until fainter—more faint it is gone.

XII.

A crusty old gray-beard this winter must be
When a maiden comes after,
With her blithe songs and laughter,
And wooes him
And sues him,
T' tarry and travel with her,
To be hurried and flurried
And mightily worried,
To collect his blue-noses and go.
And sure a miscief maiden this Spring must be
To love an old Crusty so.

XIII.

Go where he will,
She follows him still,
Over far mountain and forest and dale,
Healing with love where he wounds with hate;
With gentle breath quelling his stormy rail,
Then tarrying awhile till the song-bird's mate
And the chiding call of the wedded quail
Is telling slow summer he cannot wait
To haste and hide his low nest in her veil.
Then sure and swift as the pinions of fate,

Sweeps on once again till the creaking wail
  Out from the ice-coated woods tells the tale,
How the old fellow is lording in state.
  Again her kiss thaws through his frosty mail,
Again she strews flowers where he had strewn hail.
          Till routed and scouted
          While all the earth shouted,
          In a terrible fright
          The old fellow takes flight,
     Clang! clanging away on his sleety wings,
          Nor dares he to alight
          Till he comes where long night
     Her sable curtain o'er dreary land flings.

CHAPTER VI.

DRAGGING THE SEINE;

OR, A FISH FRY IN KENTUCKY.

Fifteen years ago, a Kentucky fish-fry was one of the occasions to date from. Like the New England clam bakes, they were characteristic local scenes, in which you saw more of the heart of the people in a few hours, than you might, under other circumstances, in years.

We had other out-door festivals, to be sure, which were equally characteristic of time, place and people, but they were more public and miscellaneous—such as the barbecue, which was usually given in honor of some political person or event, and to which all classes were invited to join in festivities on a grand scale, and when oxen were roasted whole.

Then there was the bran dance, which—commencing with the barbacued feast—wound up with a grand dance upon the rolled earth, sprinkled with bran beneath the arbors—and in which everybody, high or low, participated with a reckless abandon of jollity. The confused jumble of all classes in this rude festival, made it more an occasion for roystering fun than refined enjoyment, and although forty years ago they were participated in by our ladies, and I remember well hearing my aunt and mother tell, many times, of dancing with the young Harry Clay at the bran dance, yet they gradually fell into disuse by the more refined.

By the way, I shall never forget the first picture of Mr. Clay at one of these dances, as drawn by my mother to my eager and boyish questioning. He was then, for the first time, a candidate for the Legislature, and, of course, very youthful, and "dressed like a young demagogue," as she laughingly used to say, in the home-made jeans cloth woven by the wives of the farmers of Kentucky.

It was considered that this dress was to propitiate the stout dames and ruddy-cheeked daughters of his constituents; and as the gentlemen of that day were excessively fastidious in their dress, and wore it of English cloth, and much more ornate and rich than now-a-days, the plainness of Mr. Clay's garb was laughed at among the young people of his own class, as an affectation. Nothing regardful of their sneers, the youthful politician, with his tall, thin figure, his graceful bow and fascinating smile, glided among the people, triumphantly winning everywhere the frank suffrages of simple and honest hearts.

They laughed, but he won—and a suit of that same Kentucky jeans has, since, consistently graced many a high position and noble circle, proudly worn by the older "demagogue" (perhaps?) in testimonial of his respect for that homely and honest constituency. It was, then, something of a sharp joke among the social peers of the rising politician, to accuse him of playing the demagogue in this earliest and manly expression of his preference for that home protective policy, which has now become one of the chiefest and most honorable distinctions of the great statesman's reputation.

While these more important festivals had all a political or public end, the fish-fry was entirely a social affair; a gathering of friends and equals for the purposes of out-door enjoyment. The event was usually talked of for a week or so, and, on one occasion which I particularly remember, the invitations to attend had been circulated by a sort of freemasonry, known among the elect, the responsible source of which it would have been difficult to trace directly, though the fact that a large spring near the plantation of one of our well-known, hospitable, country gentlemen, had been selected as the scene of the festival, was quite endorsement enough on that score.

Before the arrival of the important day, all the minor preparations of gallantry had been made, the various parties of young men and girls having paired off, for the ride out to the spring—which was seven miles distant—and satisfactorily adjusted all other preliminaries, for the occasion. The gentry of both sexes from the town, and from the principal plantations for miles around, commenced gathering from every direction, and at an early hour on the auspicious morning, moved towards the place of meeting.

The party of which I made one, consisted of four or five of the gayest and handsomest girls of our town of H——, with gallants "to match"—if I may be permitted the modest insinuation! Most of us were mounted on the dashing and spirited saddle-horses peculiar to our State, and, with the fearless command of accustomed riders, we gave way to our hilarious mood, and kept them up to their metal. Our girls usually ride with a boldness and a skill approached only by the daughters of the English country gentlemen. Those who preferred a more staid gait, fell back with the rear guard of the party, which consisted, principally, of elderly gentlemen, the fathers of these young girls, and other gray-haired citizens who yet loved fun and good things.

It was a delicious spring morning, and our hearts bounded merrily with the elastic movement of our horses. Our road was literally over flowers, for the "barrens," through which we swept, form the richest natural gardens in the world—far more varied and chastely beautiful than the prairies. The feet of our horses were stained at every stride with the red juice of wild strawberries, that crouched in luscious clusters beneath the tinted shadows of the over-hanging flowers, and the fresh, soft breeze bore up to us the delicate aroma of the crushed fruit mingled with the sweet forgiveness of their meek guardians, we thus rudely trampled in a doubly perfumed death. The sense was intoxicated in this delicious air, until we laughed, and sang, and said, we knew not what —shouted and screamed, and bounded our snorting horses wildly over and through these scented glories of the freshened earth, in a sort of delirious joy, which their game and high-bred natures could fully share. Other parties joined us on the way, and, together, we formed a noisy company that mellow morning as we darted, one after another, into the bridle-path that led to the spring, beneath a grove upon the banks of a little river.

Here we were greeted with shouts of welcome, as we burst in view of a pretty basin, overhung by a huge mossy rock, and shaded with tall trees, beneath which, and around the spring, were gathered some ten or twelve of the party who had arrived before us. The gentlemanly planter came forward with a hearty greeting for each, and all was for a few moments the bustle of dismountings, of salutations, &c.

My lady cared for—the horses delivered to the charge of the grinning and delighted slaves of the plantation, we had time to look around. It was a lovely spot that had been chosen, everything about it looked as wild as when the thirsty Indian, in undisputed lordship here, had come to lie down by the cold waters for his noonday draught.

The plantation was several miles distant; but our active host had already commenced preparations for our reception, as the blazing fire, the implements of cookery, the great baskets with mysterious covers, scattered around, most plainly showed. A droll-looking old mulatto, with shirt sleeves rolled up and knife in hand, proclaimed himself, by his authoritative demeanor, the chief cook and master of culinary ceremonies for the day. This was for him a glorious occasion; an event of mighty import; and he demeaned himself accordingly. Group after group arrived and dismounted, amidst a gay clatter of tongues, and now some thirty persons had collected. The ladies very soon rid themselves of their now superfluous bonnets, shawls, gloves, &c., while we, their unfortunate gallants, were permitted but little time to congratulate them upon the comforts of this disembarrassment, and their promised repose in the cool shade, for the jovial voice of our host promptly recalled us to a sense of service imposed upon us for the morning by the usage of the occasion.

"Come, boys! The girls can take care of themselves now. The seine's all ready down at the mill. Mount! Mount!"

This imperative summons was not very promptly obeyed, for young men would, naturally, after such a ride, be in no great hurry to exchange the exhilaration which deliciously lingered under the warm glances of their fair companions, for a cold plunge into the river to drag the seine for fish. This was our duty, and the young girls teazingly assured us that they would not touch or serve up a single mouthful for our dinners, if we did not drag the seine and catch the fish ourselves. But we managed to find consolation in the fact, that, if we were compelled to catch the fish, they had to cook them under old Jim's supervision, and wait on us at dinner too.

With abundant jokes and laughter at this quaint exchange of labor and offices, which usage exacted for the day, we tore ourselves reluctantly away at last, as our impatient host shouted, amidst peals of laughter—

"Come, boys, come! You are worse than Pagans—for they were willing to meet death with the hope of being served by Houries in the other world, while you are afraid to meet a little ducking, with the same prospect of being waited upon by them at dinner time in this!"

"Ha! ha! that will do! Let us be off, as we are Christians!" Off we were at a sharp gallop, led by the Planter, who, in about fifteen minutes, wheeled into a country road, which soon led us down the steep bank to a ford below an old mill. Here some of his negroes were gathered about the net, which lay stretched along the sand, and they sprang to our horses, as we dismounted rapidly.

"Now," called out the jolly Planter, "off with your dandy coats, boys. Strip off your fine feathers! quick!—every mother's son of you. Peel for your work—you've had play enough!"

Now there was a hurried scene of preparation, and now it became apparent that there were a good many saddle-bags thrown across the saddles of the young men, and from their depths were hauled forth rude suits of cast-off clothing, which were to supply the place of our "dandy suits."

The transfer was made with becoming rapidity. Our fine clothes were passed over to the safe keeping of the elderly gents of the party, whose duty it was to carry them for us along the banks, as well as to take charge of the fish, when any had been caught. Old shoes had followed the old clothes from their receptacles, and now we stood equipped in full—a pocket-handkerchief tied around the head, a pair of old shoes to protect our feet from the sharp stones of the river bottom, a pair of pants tied about the waist, and a shirt to shield our shoulders from the scorching sun. With shuddering steps we slowly waded in, bearing the net. It was two miles, by the river, up to the spring—and through holes and shallows, rapids or eddies, we were expected to drag this seine, which was full forty feet in length by four in depth. A heavy chain sinker was attached along the whole length to the bottom, while at the two ends were the stout upright poles, by which the ends were to be held on to the bottom and to be dragged.

The two strongest and most experienced of the party took hold of these poles, with which they stretched the seine between them across the river, while the rest of us took our stations at short intervals in the rear to "mind the floats"—that is, when the sinking of one of the large cork floats strung along the top of the seine showed that the chain sinker below had dragged against some obstruction on the bottom, it was the business of the nearest float tender to plunge head and shoulders, if necessary, beneath the water, and carefully remove the obstruction without lifting the sinker chain enough to let any fish that might be enclosed, escape underneath—then the seine could move on again.

The river was broken up into deep holes, to which the fish resort immediately on any disturbance, but above and below these holes, there was usually a shallow—"ripple" as it is called—and while the seiners commenced to sweep the hole from the lower extremity or shallow, the supernumerary boys or negroes were detailed above to form a line across the ripple there, and by lashing the water and otherwise making a great noise, they would prevent the larger fish from escaping to the holes above.

Thus, as the long seine stretched from bank to bank, the fish were entirely enclosed as it advanced towards the upper end of the hole, and here the side with the smoothest shelving bank having been selected for "landing," the pole-carrier on that side would stand fast with his pole at the edge of the water, and then came the exciting moment, as the pole man at the other extremity commenced rapidly sweeping round with his wing to close upon this one.

The critical instant has arrived. The boys dash to and fro along the shallow, yelling like wild Indians to frighten the fish back towards the closing crescent, while the excited pole-man upon whose rapid movement most depends now, tugs at the heavy net, with body eagerly bent forward, while the float-tenders tread close upon their charge in apprehension lest some ill starred snag may hang the drag—now, of all times, just when lifting it an inch too much over the obstruction, may lose them the whole results of this haul—and unlucky is he indeed, if, at the thrilling moment when the pole-man, having got through the deep water, as he closes towards his pivot-man, now starts into a desperate rush, to close up amidst the excited shouts of all, and finds himself jerked back by the hanging of the net!—the poor float man nearest is literally deafened by the universal howl of execrations, as if it were his fault that the snag was there—and shouted admonition to "make haste!"

"Take care!" "don't let them get out!" "you are lifting the sink too high!" "hurry, hurrry!" until he is so confused that he scarcely knows what he does—and looking about him as he stoops to obey all these injunctions in a second, is frightened still farther at the ferocious faces scowling upon him as if eager for his very life blood. Lucky is he if he loosens the net without much delay in the face of all this, for the next minute the landing is effected, and all the excitement is diverted from his devoted head by the sight of the glittering spoil dragged suddenly, flashing and leaping to the sunlight.

The fish are at once secured in baskets, carried by the elders on one arm, while the other bears across it a suit or two of clothes, or pairs of boots; and now the pent up breaths of excitement are drawn, and laughter and pleasant gibes relax the ferocious scowls of a moment since—while the net is being freed from the leaves and twigs that it had gathered, and sundry useless monsters of mud-cats, hard-shell terrapins, or snapping-turtles, &c., are being thrown back into the water preparatory for another haul.

Now the seine is carried on our shoulders across the "ripp," or ripple above, to the next hole—the boys sent on again to the "ripp" beyond that, and the seine spread out again, is dropped once more into the deep water.

There had been a heavy Spring freshet lately, and, now that it had just subsided, the fish which always ascend the small streams at such times, had been left behind in the holes in great numbers. The rule is, the deeper the hole, the larger and finer the fish; and sometimes we were plunged in over our heads by a single step, to rise sputtering and floundering, amidst the general shouts of laughter at the mishap.

But these unceremonious duckings were amply compensated by the more abundant reward of such a "drag;" for, great was the excitement when, as the wings began to close, we saw the quick gleams, like those of sword blades, up the deep green water, of the long-bodied pike, which were becoming alarmed, and then, as we rushed the net on them, one would dart swiftly upwards, and flashing an instant in the air, pass clear over the floats, unless caught by the ready hand of a float tender.

Then such clamors of approval at the feat, from the shore, mingled with the cries of warning as another went shining after and over, followed by a desperate rush of the strong and headlong white trout, or rather, perch, some of them leaping a full yard straight up into the sunlight, and others lashing the water in furious struggles to burst their way through the meshes of the net.

What a pell-mell of rushing, spattering, snatching, screaming and laughing, that landing was! Many of the finest fish escaped in the flurry, as is always the case in this kind of sport—as it is impossible to prevent the bold leaps of the white trout and pike. The succors, too, make their escape frequently in this manner, and some of the more active varieties of the perch—of which the fish I have called the white trout is the most remarkable. We have, indeed, no true trout in our western rivers; but the habits of this magnificent fish are so closely allied to those of that noble family, that the name is generally yielded to it in deference. The other fish thus taken, are the blue-cat, the black and golden perch, along with the glistening silver-side, and many similar varieties. The soft-shell turtle is frequently captured and recognized as a dainty.

Thus we continued, with varying success, to drag all the holes of the river, until the immediate neighborhood of the spring had been reached. By this time we were tired enough and the thought of dinner was a very pleasant one. The baskets of fish had been regularly, after each successful drag, forwarded to the spring to be cared for by the ladies; and now, as we crawled, weary and dripping, forth to dress ourselves, under the protecting bank, we blessed our stars that this "fun" was over, and that our expectant Houries had something more substantial on hand awaiting us than ambrosia.

Our hurried toilets made as best we might, we found our way to the scene of anticipated reward, guided thither by the smell of cooking fish, which "burdened all the air" with an aroma far more luscious to us now in our ravenous mood than that of all the flowers we had crushed in our morning ride.

Every one must remember, that long exposure to the effects of cold water is apt to provoke a most unpoetical appetite. Ah! how genial was the merry greeting we received —how romantic seemed the flushed cheeks of our cooking belles, and when fairly seated on the green sod for our table, how far more ethereal seemed their light forms than the Pagan Houries, as partly enwreathed in the smoke of Jim's great fire, they received from his lordly hand the steaming dishes, and bore them with divinest smiles, and fingers rose-tipped, like those of so many auroras, by the heat, to place them before us! Ah! tell it not to heathens what a Paradise was thus made for us of that scene, or all Christendom will surely be in danger from overrunning hordes of Infidels seeking to realize this supremest mundane bliss—*the Dinner at a Fish Fry!*

CHAPTER VII.

ANALOGIES AND SIMILITUDES:

BIRDS AND POETS ILLUSTRATING EACH OTHER.

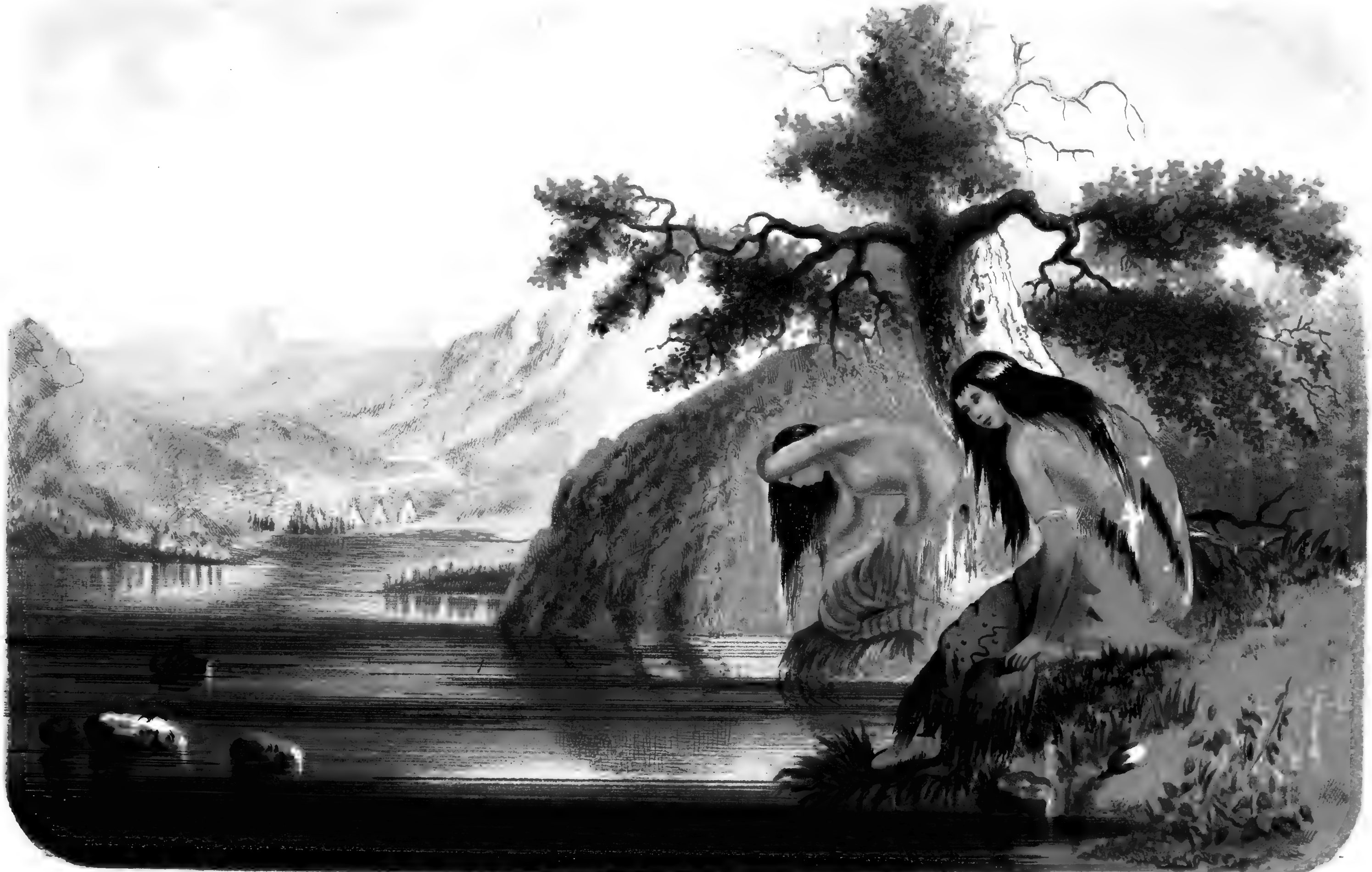
"We will entangle buds, and flowers, and beams,
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things."
PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

"Oft on the dappled turf, at ease
I sit, and play with similies—
Loose types of Things through all degrees."
WORDSWORTH—TO A DAISY.

WE love our own face in a mirror, and, like a second Narcissus, we grow amorous over it, shadowed in the burnished lapsing of a fountain—we love the stars sleeping in deep waters, too, (happy association!) and the pageantry of cloud, and rock, and tree, reversed in a still, liquid sky—in a word, we love all similitudes!

Perhaps this is because they illustrate to us a power of reproduction external to ourselves, and this is such an approach to that creative faculty which belongs to the "big imagination" in us, that, having no jealousy in our temper, we are charmed to see, even in "dumb nature," something like a rivalry of this "bright particular"—gift—we own.

In truth, there *is* something worth following up in this idea. We should like to see the painter or the poet who could ever produce a landscape so cunningly, even to the last minute tracery of its lines and shades, as we have seen the unruffled surface of a lake do it some clear, calm morn-


M. Rosenthal

Möller pinx.

L. N. Rosenthal's Chromo Lith. Phil^a

TOILET OF THE INDIAN GIRLS

ing before sunrise. Not one twisted fibre of the grass, one knotted eccentric twig, one blue-eyed, dewy-lipped violet but hung there—upside down, to be sure—but perfect as it came from God's hand.

"What is this? Does it not mock our pride of art, and shame its dedicated altars?"

"It is God's handiwork through his natural laws!"

"Ah! But the picture is not always there. Does God (in reverence) with his own personal hand paint the landscape in the lake whenever it is seen? Is it a special act?"

"No; it is consequential upon an arrangement of laws fixed since the birth of time."

"You are smiling! was that smile now upon your face pre-ordained since the same period?"

"So far as we know, it was, equally with the other, *consequential.*"

"That smile was a physical *expression* of a mental condition or humor in yourself, was it not?"

"Ay."

"It might have been a frown, or varied by other external modification?"

"Ay."

"Might not the landscape in the lake have been a storm-shaken blurr?"

"Granted."

"Is it not quite as '*consequential,*' then, that earth has her physical expressions of certain conditions and humors of the vital force in her which are affected by external relations?"

"What external relations can you mean?"

"First, those to her solar system; next, those to the other systems which make up the universe. These relations may determine in her all the action of elemental expression—variations of the seasons, &c., &c."

"Pshaw! fogmatic!"

"Guilty; but *still*, we 'love similitudes.'"

It is an old fancy of that science of seeing deepest into the millstone, called Metaphysical Philosophy, that the earth is an animal—a living thing—of course insensate brute and huge, to *our* apprehension, but to the vision of Higher Intelligences an apparelled creature in its robes of cloud and light —swung on its orbed circuit, amid travelling peers: that to them its vast calm front must be forever pregnant with a meaning of its own; and they can, to "the dumbness of its very gesture," interpret; that it has articulations, "joints and motives" to its body, which must move, act and obey the impulse of the life within it. This active impulse—call it the galvanic fluid, or the principle of life—lives through and animates its own great bulk, as well as through every modification of its aggregate mass which we see as forms, and know as existences:

> "One sun illumines heaven, one spirit vast
> With life and love makes chaos ever new."

That this sphered creature must have been itself in chaos a thought projected out of the mind of God—the base and original of the being of which was a self-modifying vital principle.

This vital force was independent of, and prior to, all organization; yet the law of its energies was the *creative* or self-formative—so that, if it acted through itself at all, it must act creatively—plastically—expressing this action in forms, the combinations of its own constituents.

Mark you; the gift of this creative energy was from God, who gave it its laws, making it through them self-acting.

In a word, His higher energy produced here a remote modification of some one thought or phase of His own Eternal might; and this we call—and it is to us—creative.

The fact of its being an energy sustained from God, implies the necessity of action, and this action constitutes its development of itself—its entity.

That this entity must be infinitely remote from the positive being of God is self-evident.

> "As if the *cause* of life could think and live."

God's being must be something immeasurably beyond the ideas of thinking and living, as they appear to us—for how could like *create* its like? It may *pro*-create—creation is absolute and beyond this; the power of pro-creation is from it an endowment: so that in applying the term creativeness to any being under God, we must be understood as using it in the sense of production or projection out of the laws of its own life.

We are no

> "Magian with his powerful wand,"

setting up to reveal, or be doctrinal of that which may not be known; but yet, we protest "we love similitudes," and are fain to test how far they may playfully and safely carry us; for we mean to *demonstrate* (save the mark!) that these Birds of which we are to treat are no less than the "winged words" of this Earth's Poetry!

Do they not express the supremest graces of a purely sensuous life—of action—which we have shown to be a necessity of that vital energy permeating the globe and all that is therein?

Now let us see how we can make our Earth a Poet—to discourse in sweet living numbers! This must be comparatively with Man, of course. There are, as we have before said, two souls; Man possesses a soul—a peculiar energy, "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"—Eternal life, higher than the life of the Earth, and to which its vital principle has been given as a medium.

Then, as the soul is man's *highest* vitality, why may not the Principle of Life, which is to the Earth *its* highest vitality, be to it the soul—

> "The lightning of its being,"

yet a lightning the fountain of which may be the sun, while the eternity of God's own life may be the source of that higher soul in man.

His soul is creative, and peoples the chambers of its imagery with rare and gorgeous creatures. Then why may it not be—as we have shown it must, from the necessities of its origin and existence—that this lower or Earth Soul is likewise creative, and all things that it contains, the expression of this self-exercised, self-modifying power, in thoughts that walk, run, creep, are still, or fly?

A union of the two energies, the Spiritual and Sensuous, seems to have been necessary to the consummation of things as they are.

The purely Spiritual could know nothing of the Sensuous, except as an abstract idea; nor could the purely Sensuous know the Spiritual at all, except through vague and undefined *images* of power; and this very necessity for the interposition of an image precludes the possibility of any knowledge of its essence.

Hence it appears to us, that the life of the Sensuous must have been confined to simple *consciousness*—a mere direct knowledge of external things, as they appealed to its senses, effected its organization; while *its* being, to the Spiritual, was only a cold and lifeless reflex, such as we have described the inverted landscape in the lake to have been.

Now we fancy that, to angelic vision, which alone, under God, regarded things from the *Universe* as a point of view, our world must have hung upon space about as unnaturally as that morning picture did, and all its action have seemed as the shadow of a Bird passing over it would have done to us from our point of view.

"————The Dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all sustaining air;
    But this divinest universe
    Was yet a chaos and a curse,

For *thou* wert not; but power from worst producing worst—
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds and of the watery forms."

That "*thou*" was Adam, and, in reverence, it seems to us that the only way left of righting that apparently shadow-peopled "island" to the apprehension of those Higher Intelligences was through the interpenetration of the idiosyncratic life of some one of the "Principalities and Powers" into its lower essence—in a word, by the marriage of the Angelic, or Spiritual, and Sensuous life.

That such a marriage was symboled by the breathing into the nostrils of Adam the *breath of life*, we have no question.

Into his organization—the most subtle and perfect expression of the creative energy of earth—a higher energy had passed, and in this sublimest marriage was the act and purpose of creation consummate.

To the universe, when he awoke in birth "the great globe itself," with all "the pomp and circumstance" of its peculiar being, stood first revealed beneath the pillared firmament as now it stands—

"Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the Pavilion
Of the sun's throne."

His organization became to this vast new entity the law of beauty—of perfect form—harmonizing it with the Universe; his point of vision in common with the Seraphim, disclosing not the *only* but—near to them—in the linked Spiritual gradation—the *highest* reality.

He first saw beauty here, and heard the choir of morning birds, but he as well, first looked upward into heaven to hear the singing of the morning stars.

He, alone, could look beyond mere consciousness, and see things, not as they appear to animal sense, but nearly as they exist, absolutely, to all intelligences.

All Truth is relative—but Existences are positive. It is only to man that the higher truth of these Existences was revealed, for he alone of Earth saw them in their *relations.* These relations were wide as the extended firmament—deep as abysmal space; and, to him, in right of his angelic birth, the "seeing eye" was gifted.

This is "the vision and the faculty divine;" and that his recreant spirituality does not always use it—that he has sometimes walked through life as one having eyes that saw not—does not, for an instant, alter the relations of things, or make their position on the eternal scale less absolute, or iron-hinged.

That he has Free Will, in this repect, is his own awful and peculiar gift—we cannot conceive, even of Gabriel, "nearest the throne," as one who *could not* FALL! But we *can* conceive—if man could only see as we do—or (more modestly) would only walk with his eyes open, how charmingly and pleasantly his relations to the Earth might be changed.

It is not so absurd, as might appear at first glance, to suppose her our Primal Parent through whom we have been born of Spirit—for surely we owe to her what we have of flesh and blood. And, to our mind, how lovely such a faith would be!

With our hearts possessed of it, then would all the rude tremendous phases of her energy be tempered with amenities. It would then be our large Old Mother, chaunting in her seas a lullaby to us, when the long waves broke roaring on the sands, or shook the fast cliffs with lashings.

Then it would be the heavy trample of her roused strength in chastenings, when the hoarse storm made noises and the "cross blue lightning" spit its shafts against the crags—or, when her mountainous brows shook off the mellow evening, it would he in parting smiles for us—when their white fronts laughed out with the fiery kiss of morning, it would be to greet us.

We might gaze back tranquil love for love into her dark eyes of sleeping waters when they showed eloquent for us the sparkling visions of her infinite life. In pleasant wonder, and some awe, we might look down where the cavernous arteries of her warm great heart were yawning—hear the clinking ripple of her nourishing blood go through her veins—while, far beneath, her fiery bowels yearned and shook the hills with belchings.

Then in her long rivers we would see the arms of a nursing Mother thrown around the nations—we should know in the wind-bowed voiceful forest, the shaking of her musical hair—and ah! how tenderly salute the Wild Flower " cinque-spotted with its crimson drops," sent forth to us from near her heart—a thought of odors painted and embodied by the Sun.

We should then see in Brute active life; not simply savage foes with whom our dealings should be under the law of blood, but Anti-types in which were foreshadowed the physical thoughts of strength, activity, courage, &c., which were to be united in man the Type. Lion, tiger, horse, hog, monkey, all blended into one; and he—with his union of the Higher Vitality acting through these forces—exhibiting their utmost capabilities, the basest as well as the best powers of these organized thoughts of action and of passion.

Then would they become to us forever a lower Brotherhood, reminding us that we too are born " of the earth, earthy;" that, with all the keen exulting of this star measuring vision, we are linked to them through a common life in half that constitutes our being.

Then would the Brute King of Numidian forests be a reproach to us—with its inviolate faith to the original laws which stamped it royal—would rebuke its Human Brother of the lion-heart back to " mere nature;" when he grew voluptuous, would taunt him through the fixed wrinkles in its tawny face and the still strength of fierceness in its eye, to

"Rouse! and the weak and wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose its amorous folds,
And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,
Be shook to air!"

Even the striped Tiger, in its Hyrcanian lair, stretched, gorged with blood, and harmless as a sleeping child, might teach a Robespierre to tire of slaughter and sheath for once his gore-stained claws.

We are forever drawn away from our Earth-Mother by that counter force in us. May it not be that all Evil is the result of this unceasing antagonism of the Organic and Spiritual lives—that in a struggle which should elevate the lower, the symmetry of both is most frequently destroyed. Earth calls us back to her in this symbolical language, while the stars draw us by affinities. We will not see that our true Heaven lies between the two; but in the blindness of our perverse strivings make that happy half-way place a Hell!

Our Mother discourseth with us through these her living words—through these her constant Anti-types of the heroic virtues in us she illustrates the changeless laws by which they are sustained.

She warns us when we have disgraced our lion—or even our dog or donkey natures—how we may get back again to truth by copying their simple lives. She speaketh sternly to us, for she cannot lie. Ay—

"Call the creatures
Whose naked natures live in all the spite
Of wreakful heaven; whose bare unhoused trunks
To the conflicting elements exposed
Answer mere nature—bid them flatter thee."

Ah! then, too, as well, would birds be the Anti-types of the Poetical in us. As we have said, they are to our Eld-Mother her "winged words" of poetry. The similitude is perfect here! Even as poetry is to us the higher language of our highest—*i. e.* our angelic nature—so, with this Matron Sister of the stars, is this Poetry the higher expression of the strong and beautiful in her.

Furthermore, as in our case, it matters not whether this expression speak outwardly through the heart, the blood, or the brain, so it be the most purely *creative* and perfect *of its kind,* it is yet our Poetry—exalted just in proportion as the brain—chief organ of the soul—has worked it forth. So with her--it boots not whether sunset, waters, clouds, herbs, creeping things, beasts or *Birds* be her language—each condition is the expression of the Soul of action in her, and is, in its highest revelations, her Poetry—and as Birds embody the purest graces of this action, they are her most elevated articulations!

Is not this fairly "*demonstrated?*" Should they not seem to us the sublimest voices of her worship, lifted up on wings towards God, and be therefore sacred from all wantonness? Should they not thus be taken closely to our hearts because they not only so clearly speak to us of the Soul in her, but as distinctly symbolize our own Souls? for is it not from their swift aërial movements and melodious tones we gather all the images and language of the Spiritual Life? In short, are not Birds the clearest, loftiest strain of the Earth's Poetry—the most perfect allegories of the life to come—the finest Anti-types of the noblest aspirations of the life that is?

Though man has, in common with the elephant, sagacity—with the horse, generous activity—with the lion, magnanimous courage—yet, only in common with the Bird hath he wings, or rendereth up his heart on high in singing. But, even as Anti-types of the physical virtues, Birds are the highest expression, and therefore the Heroic Poetry.

The traits enumerated above, in connexion with brutes, are those of subordinates, of such as, sword in hand, lead columns crashing in the onset, or mount first "the imminent deadly breach;" but they act under a controlling mastery, and it is that of such a spirit as the Eagle typifies—of a broad-pinioned cleaver of the mists, whose far-flashing, sun-defying eye sees beyond the concurrence he has wielded to the results. Such a one was Napoleon—whose whole career was the sublimest Heroic Epic the world ever saw. The Eagle was, naturally, his favorite bird, and perched upon his standards, leading his fiery veterans to victory.

It was his Anti-type, with its whole hungry family of Raptores, flame-eyed and hook-beaked, clustered around it in his Marshals!

It has been the bird of victory since time began—all the mighty Geniuses of war have loved it—

"The Anarch Chiefs, whose fierce and murderous snares
Have founded many a sceptre-bearing line,"

have taken it for a sign, an omen of triumph. The wry-necked, world-conquering Macedonian followed it to the "Ganges golden" and the Temple of Ammon. The nation-yoking, "hook-billed Roman" carried it before his legions. Beneath its wings the grand Wallenstein, with his German cohorts, "blue-eyed, yellow-haired and strong," battled haughtily with his Destiny. "The sterner stuff" of our own daring and hardy Fathers saw in its strong wings and continent-girdling flight, the fittest emblem of the freedom and the boundless Empire they were founding here.

In a word, it has idealized and glorified all sublimest action and triumphs of the physical. It is the Epic of earth's heroic Poetry. In it like Homer, the Old Mother has loosened from "thunderous brows" her topmost thought of beautiful, fierce, exulting strength, and sent it plumed to float upon her storms.

That will do—Miss Barrett-izing the earth! But let the Daughter paint for us—her bold pencil does it well!

When we set up for one of "God's prophets of the beautiful," then may we, too, grind down the elements for our palette, and at a single stroke, dash off such a profile of our Shynx-headed Mother in her eternal youth, that the very Raven of the ark—said to be now abroad—will recognize it for the same face it saw lifted above the flood!

That would be Miss Barrett-izing with a "*line* effect," especially if by the one effort we could throw in, as an accessory, the old fellow's croak of greeting, hoarse with the phlegm of ages.

But we are mournfully fain to confess we may not be a Seer—for as yet we have seen no sights

"Of calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire,"

worth talking about; though, in equal humility, we are ready to acknowledge that, all this while, it may be

"—— true I talk of dreams
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy."

Be our similitudes veritable, or this the "base and fabric of a vision," still we reiterate our "weakness" for them! Sure this wondrous wide ocean of Analogy (had we not as well have said *Truth?*) has some sunny spots in it—green islands where we love to stop and play upon the pebbly verge with the weird Albatross—it brings us "whispering shells" from the deep, deep sea. Rebuke not our toying fancy, and you shall hear them, too!

But has not Earth, as well as Man, a yet more exalted and exalting Poetry than that of which the Bird of Battle is a sign? We, ourselves, can vouch for this—for have we not heard it?—not alone in strains such as

"————Bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination,"

but through this carnal sense in our own pricked ears have we confessed it. Ah! how different that mellow rhythm, from the harsh, hungry clarion, sounded in its scream?

Have we not gone aside into those secret places where our Primal Mother

> "Plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too rumpled and sometime impaired."

Here an awed silent witness have we not listened when her solemn moods of worship came upon her? Think you she does not know the *Mighty One*, who thought her—Daughter of the Sun—into being?

Yes! and she serves an altar to him, in a "house not made with hands;" and thus, for that service—away from the hum and dust of bruising cities—from the rock-rude chaos of her sterner moods, where Eaglets nestle with her Storms—doth she draw apart; and, gathering about her there her delicate thoughts of love and gentlest peace, she lifts them on her green bosom to her old Sire to kiss, and resting tranquil in his warm light—sings! First, she sings an under prelude with the breeze and stream—then, soft and clear, a louder diapason swelling rings in sweet articulations, warbled out or trilling from a thousand living throats! Must not this be her choral incense—hymn of praise—the holier strain she carries in the anthem of the stars? Every note, too, is plumed with wings, and is the living movement of her heart towards God.

Have we not thus seen that she, too—comparatively with man—has a Poetry, and discourseth "sweet living numbers," after the same manner with his rapt inspirations?

This, *her* "tuneful choir," is the eldest; and, as it expresses in her the highest yearnings of her purer life, so it stands the Anti-type of the spiritual and truest Poetry in Man—Man! her wayward child, half tyrant and half stranger on her bosom.

What recks he, the hard self-worshipper, that the Linnet is his lowlier sister! Still is she bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and sings for him of love! Yet he, too, sings of love. Her love is of the sun and flowers—his love goes winging to freeze among the stars, and will not stoop to caress her. Ah! unfraternal despot; ye may not know the innocent joy when it is warm about the heart. Thus her meek rebuke would be plained low from out her tiny heart!

But, gentle singer, though in the aggregate we be

"A people currish, churlish as the seas,
And rude almost as rudest salvages"—

yet have we men and women of us, who

"Subscribe to tender objects"—

who can turn away from the unholy altars of this "dark idolatry of self," to know and feed upon the beautiful in outward things. To such, thou *art* a lowly sister—

And for thy songs they give thee song again,
But set thy lispings to a loftier strain!

Safer in their wide sympathies thou mayest nestle than in the strong cedar—cherished and nourished at their deep hearts—take thine ease—thou mayest be glad!

These are the true Monarchs here. They have thrown aside the purple and forgotten State. They go forth bare and meek into the throng of living creatures, and in their beneficence alone do they seem royal—"the benediction" of, their calm, genial smiles falls everywhere in dew;

"And they shall be accounted Poet Kings,
Who simply say the most heart-easing things."

These are they the Song Birds typify!—the soft-eyed and musical-hearted!—Ah, alike—how full of happy love and the power of giving joy!

It is very pleasant and curious to see how many points of resemblance there are between these Plumy Poets and their bifurcated rivals without feathers. The points of departure are rather of manner than of kind. The bird is its own instrument, and

"Singeth of Summer in *full-throated* ease;"

though there are exceptions; the Woodpecker sometimes makes of the hollow oak an "instrument," whereon to beat a tattoo. The Grouse extemporizes the thunder of deep bass, using an old log for a drum; but these are incidental deviations, for they are not strictly Song Birds, though they carry important parts in the orchestra. The Man has a voice too, and uses it to a purpose sometimes—for old Herrick says,

"So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the damned would make no noise."

And, in further proof of the earnestness with which it may be used, even the delicate Juliet exclaims,

"Else I could tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her fairy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of my Romeo's name."

And could you but hear the exquisite Mrs. Mowatt in the "Else I could tear" of these lines, you would understand what might be the voice of Shakspeare's "dove-feathered Raven" in sad beautiful rage! In loftier numbers we are told how

"————The harmonious mind
Poured forth itself in all prophetic song."

But this labial lute—the organic "instrument" in man—could not yet equal the effects produced by those of his rivals; and, as he was to express in himself everything, he brought his constructive creativeness to bear, and soon through it equalized his individuality with *all.* From the time of

> "Jubal's pipe awakening the young echoes,"

down to the present, his art has grown until his creatures—in emulation of his mother—have become alive, and he can

> "———With fleet fingers make
> His liquid-voiced comrade talk with him—
> It can talk measured music eloquently."

And now—oh rarest miracle!—wondrous consummation!

> "Let but thy *voice* engender with the string,
> And *angels will be born whilst thou dost sing.*" HERRICK.

Here is the triumph, "in special," of Man's creativeness over that of Earth! We should like to see the old Dame or any of her Poet-Birds surpass this charmingly-refined mode of populating a Heaven! But yet, withal, it is the legitimate procreation of

> "Music married to immortal verse,"

and the logical deduction from our "foregone conclusions," that while Earth's music notes are embodied in the forms of Birds, those of Man become angels!

Birds love best "the bedabbled morn," and their boldest, freest song bursts forth in wild, sweet garrulous greeting to the sun—while their evening hymns are plaining, low and mellow! Our Poets have not been remarkable for seeing the sun rise. They permit

> "Full many a glorious morn
> To flatter the mountain-tops"

unreproved of them. They rather affect the ghostly watches of the moon, and given to becoming somewhat "*mellow,*" too, of evenings, "the wild disguise has been apt to almost antick" them.

"Cup us till the world goes round,"

was ever the favorite chorus of their mellow vespers. God bless them! Poor Chaucer is not the only one of whom it might be said—

"That mark upon his lip is wine!"

The song-bird with its pipes a-weary, sips, for refreshing, the fiery dews inspired of the sun. They, as well to awake the frost-bound blood or rouse the sacred madness, have quaffed at this

"———— Thespian spring,
Of which sweet swans must drink before they sing
Their true-paced numbers and their holy lays."

Not a strictly Washingtonian sentiment, by the way, but it will do, since Birds and Poets are accountable for it—though so staid a Poet as Wordsworth talks about "Thou drunken Lark!" Birds are proverbially improvident and regardful of the injunction, "give thyself no thought for the morrow, what we shall eat, or what ye shall drink"—for with them "sufficient to the day is the *joy* thereof!" That therein Birds and Poets do most agree, the Lay of "The Flower and Leaf" shall bear us witness. The gentle Poet, idling through an embowered Dream-land, becomes

"—— Ware of the fairest medler tree
That ever yet in all my life I see.
* * * * *
Wherein a goldfinch leaping pretilie
Fro bough to bough."

The little bird begins to sing

"So passing sweetly, that by manifold
It was more pleasaunt than I could devise."

Thereby ravished into paradise, he sat him down upon "the sote grasse" to drink in tranquilly the fulness of the new bliss; and reclined thus, his heart begins to chaunt of itself —like wind-stirred boughs—concerning this song of its little Brother which so moved it. Above all images of soft delight, that rippling accord was

"More pleasaunt to me by many fold
Than meat or drinke or any other thing,
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
That as I deemed sith the beginning
Of the world was never seene er than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man!"

You perceive that Chaucer and his Goldfinch might both have sprung from from a very "Halcyon's nest" of spiritual "Loaferdom!" Indeed,

"———— the placid mien
Of him who first with harmony informed
The language of our fathers———"

seems to have marked him peculiarly as Prince and Founder of this world-wide Order of "the lovers of quiet." He absolutely and unblushingly confesses the whole implication in "The Romaunt of the Rose"—

"And then wist I and saw full well
That *Idlenesse* me served well,
That put me in such jolitie."

But then, who does not love that "jolitie" when he understands that

"There were many a bird singing
Throughout the yerde all thringing,"

"is fit for treasons, stratagems," &c. Ay, he is the veriest hind that ever turned up clod, who has not a fountain of sweet apprehensions stirred within him when he hears, mellowed through the gray rifts of Time the rhythm of

> "These birdes that I you devise
> They song her song as faire and well
> As angels doon espirituell."

Ah, exquisite Idlers!—would that in this busy, froward, vexing "Play," the only "acts" for those like you might be to

> "——— Sit apart and sing,
> And smoothe your golden hair!"

To the Bird, this gay, blissful Aiden is the reality of sunshiny life—to the pale Poet, alas! the "semblant shadow" of a taunt. Yet, withal, his brave "faith of gentleness" lives too far on high—too self-sustained in its own quiet might to lust for base appliances. The making melody to feed his own heart's yearning brings to him

> "A greater content in course of true delight,
> Than to be thirsty after tottering honor,
> Or tie *his* treasure up in silken bags
> To please the fool and death."

But however charming these *general* "similitudes" of the Birds and Poets may be to *us*, it is necessary for us to remember that there is such a thing as being "cloyed of sweetness" known in the world! We must descend to *particulars* in illustrating our theory of concordance. We have said that song-birds were the Anti-types of they who "shall be accounted Poet Kings."

By this we mean that—for each of the Human Poets who has illustrated the external relations of Humanity distinctly from himself—or, in other words, who has seen and sung of things as they *are*—and been purely *creative*—our mother furnishes among Birds a distinct Anti-type.

For instance—as the most immediate and convenient example—what sentient thing so strikingly illustrates Shakspeare as the Mocking Bird? Though circumstances rendered the interposition of a "Discoverer" necessary to bring to light the New World, which *alone* could furnish the prototype of such a Genius, yet it is not the less true that it *has* been found.

And here we, daringly perhaps, present it. The Mocking Bird is the Monarch of Earth's song—imperial over all the choir of woods and plains that lie beneath the stars—as Shakspeare is over that more spiritual choir which,

"In the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself sublime and strong."

Shakspeare is more human than humanity itself—in the subtility of his mimetic art another "nature that shapes man better." The Mocking Bird in its native powers of song surpasses all other birds; and even when imitating them,

"All that ever was,
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass."

On some fair morning, when our Mother wears such holiness of smiling peace upon her face that the dreamy Poet wandering forth might be pardoned for supposing that he was

"Amidst the young green wood of Paradise,
Such store of birds therein yshrouded were,
Chaunting in shade their sundrie melodie,"

until the very hills reverberate, and meadow grasses dance in cadence—then might he hear the Mocking Bird triumphing! Loud above them all its notes would swell—

"With wanton heed and giddy cunning
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony!"

Every trill and quaver of a rival song its victorious, Elfin skill would reproduce, until each separate throat was choked with envy. Ah, then the joy and glory of its conquest comes! Out of the silence there would go such a "storm of music,"

> "Such harmonious madness
> From its throat would flow,"

as might "shake the dull oblivion from his dreams!"

Shakspeare was diverse as a peopled world; all moods, all thoughts, all humors of all men, alike were his. The verisimilitudes and Protean versatility of the Mocking Bird are quite as strange. Indeed, its power of adaptation is most remarkable. Mr. Audubon represents it in its native and congenial home—the dew-dropping, odor-breathing South—as the most gentle and confiding of creatures. We can bear eye-witness of this; for here it is known and cherished in the fraternal spirit of our Philosophy, and is as fearless, familiar, and domestic as a household sprite. We have seen it, as he represents, place its nest openly upon the fence by the side of the public road, and have often thrown crumbs to it as it hopped about the door-sill. But like all vigorous natures, it is restless and a wanderer—though, with a sagacious and mysterious sympathy or apprehension, it never pushes its migations beyond the vicinage of Humanity of some sort or other.

So when impulse and poverty had driven Shakspeare to London, his masterly genius mated itself with circumstances as he found them, (so far as was necessary,)—with the base huckstering elements he saw to be all-powerful around the theatres—until, interfusing his own "candied nature" into those about him, he elevated them upon his triumphs into dignity, as well as awed respect. But this facility of adaptation illustrates only a phase of its Shaksperian character. Shakspeare was the genius of "infinite humors"—Jack

Falstaff, Bardolph, Shallow, Nym, *et ii omnes*—with Puck, Ariel, Titania and Oberon thrown in—stand like chiselled laughter upon the monumental front of Time. Our feathered Shakspeare can, in its sphere, contend for nothing so sublimely fixed—but that it is a practical, habitual humorist of the rarest water, as we have already shown.

We will here dismiss this particular contrast. We are fully prepared to expect, that in this instance as well as in those which are to follow our "Similitudes"—our whole Philosophy indeed—will appear to many surface-glancing minds,

> "Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain—
> Like aught that is which wraps *what is to be!*"

We are smilingly content to rest all upon this interpretation, so that—in the Poetical sense, it include the pregnant meaning of

> "The infantine familiar clasp of things divine."

And then, again, who but Milton, "blind Thamyris" among the "Prophets old" should be a type of the Nightingale? Who does not remember that delicate and touching comparison instituted by himself in allusion to his blindness?—Who, other than he, could under such circumstances of blank, rayless desolation—poised on his own supreme spirituality—have loftily fed

> "——— On thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers as the wakeful bird
> Sings darkling, and in shadiest covers hid,
> Tunes her nocturnal note."

All minds must be impressed by the strange excelling appositeness of the similitude in this case. Ah, Soul of the beautiful! thy

"Cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,"
"Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass from that sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw with a dejected mein."

And what a starry "night" was that thou didst disclose to him! How great a firmament, moving and mingled, populous with burning spheres! And what a dawn is that which has leaped forth from it—in flames, in purple, and in music over Earth! We see it to have been both with Milton and his own loved Philomel, that their midnight song

"——————begins anew
Its strain when other harmonies stopt short
Leave the dinned air vibrating silvery."

To both, the prerogative has been given, as a dominion over that ominous, awful pause 'twixt Life and Light,

"To satiate the hungry dark with melody."

With both it is a solemn minstrelsy—solemn and liquid from its shadowy source—pregnant and high as prophesy. The Nightingale

"The light-winged Driad of the trees,"

sitting and singing 'neath the moon, will make the long-drawn shades to stir, and night's deep bosom palpitate with bliss. In its rapt song, fluent and rounded like the roll of waters going free, the fountain of its heart comes forth—now the tide is full and slow, up-swelling through the dusky void—then it is rippled out in low, sweet laughings, and again bursts in the shrilly ring of jubilant loudest symphonies. What a joy it is beneath the "visiting moon,"

"The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close
Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,
Thus interfused upon the silentness."

In the tender melancholy, the full, liquid flow of Milton's majestic measures we can perceive something more than an imaginary resemblance to the characteristics of the bird's song;

> "And Philomel her song with tears doth steep!"

as well as the Blind Singer. The nations crowding eagerly around the pedastal of the Poet's fame, to do obeisance to his memory, bear witness that

> "The mellow touch of music most doth wound
> The soule when it doth rather sigh than sound;"

and, softened down the lengthened night of ages, do those

> "Sighs resound through harkless ground."

Though this saddened, mournful earnestness tempers and leads the general flow of his verse, yet "L'Allegro" is contrasted with "Il Penseroso:" he can and does smile as well as weep; and the music of his delicate mirth

> "Falls on us like a silent dew
> Or like those maiden showers
> Which, like the peep of day, do strew
> A babtime o'er the flowers!"

The Nightingale will not sing freely when deprived of its liberty, and fast languishes in a cage. Here we are reminded of Milton's stern indomitable devotion to human freedom.—Who does not remember that glorious burst of this holy enthusiasm—

> "———— The uncontrolled worth
> Of this poor cause would kindle my rapt spirit
> With such a flame of sacred vehemence,
> That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
> And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake."

Both Bird and Poet were clothed in that "russet mantle," which Time and all things else solemn and strong, love best to wear. In the Bird, with its plain, brown plumes hid in the lowly hawthorn, singing to the night, who does not see a resemblance to the Republican Poet, in his coarse, simple garb, retired beyond the reach of persecution to his humble home, while, out of his darkness, over all the world,

"Prophetic echoes flung dim melody."

With so many and such singular points of coincidence between them, who can doubt but that the Poet felt them, and that his mild spirit yearned, and was moved by the tender drawing of affinities towards his tuneful Brother. He, rather than poor Keats, might have passionately pleaded :

"So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours.
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet,
From swingéd censers teeming ;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat,
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming."

As is Milton, so is the Nightingale peculiarly the favorite of the poets. They are regarded alike with a gentle and deep affection. Kind old Spenser has expressed this for us all, and for all time, concerning the Bird ; and the Poet and the Bird are one.

"Hence with the nightingale will I take parte,
That blessed byrd that spends her time of sleepe
In songs and plaintive pleas——."

Other coincidences—if possible, even yet more apparent—suggest themselves.

"Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our head."

The thought of Shelley at once occurs in the high place of that aërial melodist. Who has not, long ago, linked indissolubly in his memory the image of this Poet with that of the Skylark. One could not avoid this association, even if the "Ode to a Skylark" had never been written. The Poet felt it to be his skiey Brother, and greeted it out of his heart of hearts, in the silver-footed cadences of that most rare of exquisite strains. It seems to us that the poet had unconsciously thrown out his own soul upon those music-hinged plumes up the blue dome of air,

"————— To float and run
Like an unbodied joy whose race has just begun."

It is evident that, in the simplicity of this beautiful egotism, he was singing to, and of himself, without being aware. In all poetry, there is not a more nice and perfect similitude of the life and mission of the individual Poet, than that he has furnished of his own in this ode. Who other than Shelley is

"Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathize with hopes and fears it heeded not!"

But it was an atmosphere akin to the sun-bright radiance of a prophet's brow, in which he was "hidden;" and the vision of bat-eyed, oblivious dreamers has shrunk before it, because it was of a

"Light diviner than the common sun."

Such "muling" in their dull infanticide of thought, have been venomous as they knew how to be in denouncing him as "a cold, incomprehensible Idealist!" Miss Barrett, in her magnificent "Vision of the Poets," has been most shamefully disloyal to the glorious apprehensions in herself, when amidst such "goodlie companie," she dismissed this poet down the ages, on the attenuated echo of this vulgar lie:

"——— And Shelley in his white ideal
All statue blind—————,"

is a falsehood base enough to be incendiary. The "white wings" she prayed might sprout upon the shoulders of George Sand, were singularly unfaithful to her own strong aspirations for the Eternally True at this particular juncture.

A cruel and unrighteous falsehood with regard to that heroic man has been conveyed by her in this characterization. Its meaning, as a Poetical image, most significantly and effectually shuts him out from the whole region of human sympathies.

This is the very error in which the mobocracy of mind has persisted with regard to him, and to find a genius possessed of such remarkable prowess as her's has given abundant evidences of, stooping to demagogue with a scrubby prejudice for the sake of an effective image, is painfully displeasing to us. Well might his saddened shade be imagined as exclaiming "*et tu* Brute!" (with a feminine affix) to a thrust coming from such a hand. Yet, though she, herself, has first really unsexed genius, she has as well unfraternized it in thus countenancing the mongrel herd which has so long been barking at his heels.

What, Shelley!--meekest of the "Elder Brothers of humanity"—who would gladly have anointed the feet of the poor fallen ones and wiped them with his hair, could he thereby have raised them up again

"To live, as if to love and live were one"—

who informed himself of medical science, and walked the hospitals while a mere youth, in view of no other rewards than those which the consciousness of ministering to the woes of others might bring—whose whole private life—with all its passionate derelictions upon mistaken *principles*—is now acknowledged on every hand to have been spent in the "dedicated air" of universal love—whose very errors have a sublimity in them approaching to the awful, from the consistent earnestness of this love for the Brotherhood of Humanity which made them blind!

He to be stigmatized from such a quarter as whitely cold, in the frozen isolation of his ideality "all statue blind," is too unpardonable. None but fools and fanatics pretend to pin their faith upon any particular poem of Shelley's as the embodiment of a philosophy or creed.

To all *thinkers*, Queen Mab is, to the last intent, false—as he, himself, regretfully acknowledged in later life. But then it is recognized as, *artistically*, the most intense and finest expression of a peculiar period or phase of development common to that dawn of eager energies which as well makes a

"——Morning like the spirit of a youth,
Who means to be of note, begin betimes."

There is a sublimer thing than Reason, which is Faith—the highest faculty of the human soul—and Shelley has differed from other lofty, earnest minds in the particular, that he has not only thought out and felt out with singular distinctiveness, but left on record every step, feature and condition, of that weary travel from Doubt to assured Truth, each one has to make for himself over the highway of development.

All along the way of his pilgrimage, he has left landmarks which may lead the weak, who stop short, to error; but to the strong-visioned and the hardy must prove important guides to that high-placed "house of life," upon the very threshold of which he suddenly fell into the abyss of death. As a metaphysician and philosopher, he is not to be classified so much by what he *was*, as by what the evident tendencies of his later modes of thought showed he *would* have been.

His life was an unfinished act upon which the curtain has fallen. He was a mighty Prophet sitting on his grave, which gaped and took him in before the full burthen of his inspiration had been sung. Therefore should he be dealt with in charity, which forgiveth and hopeth much.

Every thorough student of Shelley smiles at his ravings against Religion, because he perceives that, simply, they are monomaniac. He had dwelt upon the fixed idea of its *abuses*, which he so keenly deplored until he had come to place them for the thing itself; while he had, in reality—calling it by another name to himself—taken more of its *essence* into his heart than many who have born a better name.

That all his morality—apart from those vagaries with regard to social organization and perfectability which he, in common with Coleridge, Southey, and other bright and true souls, was misled by in early life—was of a Christian spirit, is perfectly transparent; though he was unconscious of this himself.

He was working his way up through clouds of error, made splendid by his genius, to the clearer atmosphere of Faith—glimpses of which he had already been visited by through the rifts. Had he lived, we have no question, he would have mounted to a *realization* of Faith, and calmly settled with folded wings upon the "Rock of Ages."

We see indications, towards the last, that he might have even reached the opposite extreme of high Conservatism in Christianity. Students who cannot get beyond the "notes to Queen Mab," in their appreciation of Shelley as a Man and a Poet, had better have had nothing to do with him. His works are dangerous play-things for children of any age!

But we have not room—in the repletion of a philosophic mood—to say all in this connection we should be glad to say about Shelley. This we intend to make a future occasion to do. We have seen that never were Bird and Poet so mated.

Let but the impulse of some holy, even though miscalculated, purpose be presented—of some deed of loyal chivalry to Her *he* knew as Truth, come to him in the humble walks he chose, and

"The low-roosted lark
From its thatched pallet roused"

never sprang up on sublimer flights than did this Poet,

"Swift as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good,———— "
"Sunward now his flight he raises,
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
With uninjured plumes."

With all this flashing wonder of his far and graceful winging, yet is that shrill delight we hear—showering a rain of melody, while soaring he still sings—the voice of our humanity, mellow and rich with old familiar tones. Still we are "overcome, as by a summer cloud," with admiration of this most chaste and sacred enthusiasm, which seems to be mounting, on its own joy, to shake the earth-dews from its pinions off into their old fountains up to the sky!

Ah, what a charming symbol is it, of the wild, unconquerable might of Love! Though its cradle and its common home is on the base glebe, yet its exultations *will* not be weighed down and tamed—but must as well mount to gladden all above—linking, in "subtle silvery sweetness" the dust-trodden with the starry fields! Shelley most beautifully characterizes that marvellous and indefinable sympathy between the Earth and the Human Poetry—which we have been endeavoring to illustrate—in one of the concluding stanzas to the Skylark!

"Better than all measures,
Of delighful sound;
Better than all treasures,
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground."

But, ah, wo is me! Weep now, Urania—thou eldest muse —for *him!* That harmony paused—

"——And the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn."

We have not space for a further extension of these Similes. We will only glance at a few others. There is no English Bird which furnishes a good type of Keats—this Country affords, though, a perfect one in the Brown Thrush, or, as it was most beautifully, though technically termed, "Orpheus Rufus." It is inferior to the King of Song in the infinite variety, the triumphant energy and force of its minstrelsy. But we are constantly reminded of the poetry of Keats, in the deep liquid rush of its strains and the keen intense melody of each particular note. Like him, it is a plain, humble Bird, hiding in the low thickets, and only coming forth to sing. Then it mounts upon the topmost pinnacle of the highest tree, that all the world may know of it—for now it has forgotten its timid humility—all its heart is big with the melodious prophecy of sound. Its mood of worship is upon it, and what cares it, or knows, that a proud, cruel world lies at its feet, and that it is only mounting to where every shaft may reach it. Death and fear are no more to it now—it *must* sing—and forth goes the rapt hymn. It has become now

"As one enamored is up-borne in dream
O'er lily-paven lake, 'mid silver mist,
To wondrous music——"

Wondrous, but coming unconscious, out of its own heart. Then, to we favored Human listeners,

"O blessed bird, the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place,
That is fit home for thee."

It is one of those strange coincidences we have before noticed—that Keats, without ever having heard his Prototype, should have yet produced the most exact and singularly minute characterization of its peculiar song—

> "———My sense was filled
> With that new blissful golden melody.
> A living death was in each gush of sounds,
> Each family of rapturous hurried notes
> That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
> Like pearl-beads dropping sudden from their string,
> And then another, then another strain," &c.

The very collocation of the words themselves, produces upon the ear the effect of a remote resemblance. Alas, poor Keats! The savage Archers reached him on his airy perch, and cut short, forever, those miraculous strains. But though now he be "in his far Rome grave," among "the sleepers in the oblivious valley," yet must the echoes he has waked live in still reverberations musical, through all the enchanted caves of human thought. They are deathless, for in him

> "Language was a perpetual Orphic song
> Which ruled with Dædal harmony a throng
> Of thoughts and forms."

But concerning Wordsworth—

> "Once have I marked thee happyest guest,
> In all this covert of the blest.
> Hail to THEE far above the rest
> In joy of voice and pinion!
> A life, a presence, like the air,
> Scattering thy gladness without care,
> Too blest with any one to pair;
> Thyself thine own enjoyment!"

The poet thus furnishes us to hand an exquisite characterization of himself in the choir of this "covert of the Blest," through whose shades we thus tardily "linger listening." But which shall be prototype to him?

> "Art thou the Bird whom man loves best,
> The pious Bird with the scarlet breast,
> Our little English Robin?"

On the highways, in the by-ways, from the green lanes, the hedge-rows and the gardens, by the lintel near the hearthstone, summer in and winter out, under sunshine, under clouds, happy, calm and musical, ever—

> "A life, a Presence like the air;"

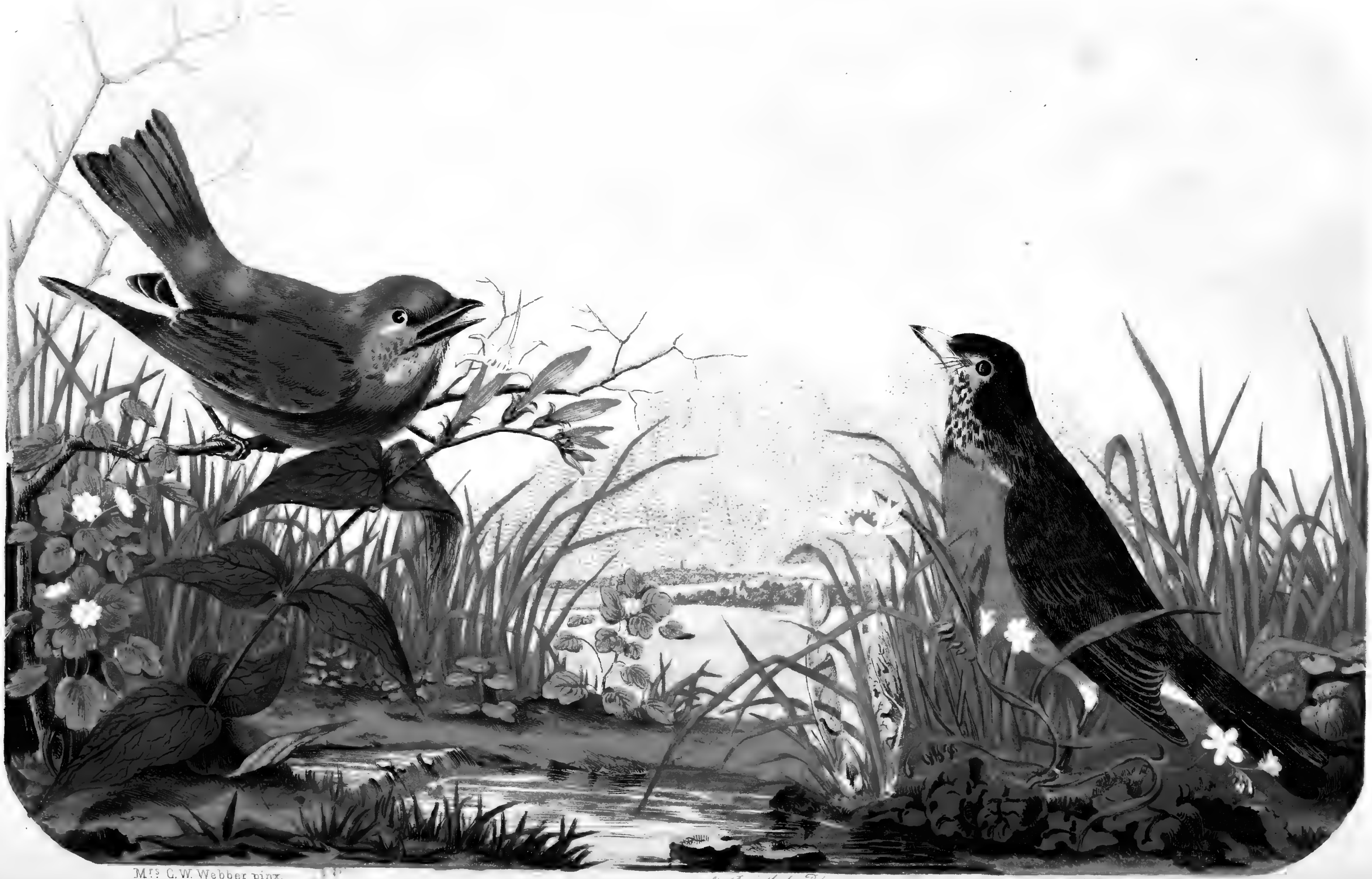
over merry England and the world will Robin and the Poet go together,

> "Scattering gladness without care."

But the "Little English Robin" does not furnish a sufficient Anti-type to the higher powers of song which distinguish Wordsworth, as well as these gentler graces. *Our* American Robin, which belongs to the Shaksperian family of "The Turdinæ," which includes the Mocking Bird and the Song Thrush, is, in a better sense, his Anti-type.

This Bird is as well a social familiar, and builds its woven nest upon the limb that leans nearest the homestead walls. Many a time have we seen it, about dusk, catch the fire-flies within ten feet of the door-sill—as if it swallowed the weird light to feed and go flashing through the tender magic of its vesper hymn! And ah! who—that has heard that vesper hymn, beneath the last golden pauses of the twilight, swell out as if it took the plaintive echo, of a saddened Human heart for key-note, and set it in gradations up through the soft notes of Hope to the shrilly clamors of a Joy set free, chastened by the memory of prison bars—will fail to understand how the American Robin is the true Anti-type of Wordsworth!

But with thee, venerable and most venerated melodist! "Sunset is on the dial," and soon we may expect thee to be



Mrs C. W. Webber pinx. M. Rosenthal Del. L. N. Rosenthals Cromo-Lith.

BLUE BIRD AMERICAN ROBIN

numbered with "The Prophets Old." Though thy head is silvered, Time clothes himself in gray when his topmost deeds of wisest strength are to be done, and, in the language of another daring Singer, to whom, like this Robin, our new world has given birth, we would address thee on this dreadful pause betwixt Sublimity and Death:

> "Then let the sunset fall and flush Life's Dial!
> No matter how the years may smite my frame,
> And cast a piteous blank upon my eyes
> That seek in vain the old, accustomed stars,
> Which skies hold over blue Winandermere,
> Be sure that I a crownèd Bard will sing,
> Until within the murmuring barque of verse
> My Spirit bears majestically away,
> Charming to golden hues the gulf of death—
> Well knowing that upon my honored grave,
> Beside the widowed lakes that wail for me,
> Haply the dust of four great worlds will fall
> And mingle—thither brought by Pilgrim's feet."

Byron stands in singular contrast with Wordsworth. Of Wordsworth's calm, slumberous, Oceanic mind, Earth is populous with Similitudes; but of Byron our Mother furnishes no Anti-type. We know of no sentient natural thing upon her broad placid bosom which symbolizes him—and unless we adopt the old Greek Fancy, and embody the distortions of Human action and passion in scenes like those in which

> "—— the half horsy people, Centaurs hight,
> Fought with the bloudie Lapithies at bord,"

we are utterly at a loss to conceive how he is to be illustrated. We might create some monstrous cross of the dull, filthy, ravin-hearted Vulture upon the beamy, bounding Lark, and thereby make a tame "similitude" of him to the apprehension of the shadow-substanced Citizens of "Faery"! But to the Common World Wordsworth has quietly and fitly designated his hybrid entity, when he says:

"—— thou surely art
A *creature* of a fiery heart;
Those notes of thine, they pierce and pierce
Tumultuous harmony and fierce."

We cannot dwell longer in the atmosphere of Him who tortured music through his whole dissonant volcanic life into singing—that

" Our life is a false nature—'tis not in
The harmony of things—this hard decree,
This *uneradicable taint* of sin—
This boundless Upas," &c.

We do not recognize him among "God's Prophets," who eternally cant of

" *The immedicable soul* with heart-aches ever new."

There is an equal difficulty in finding any distinct Antitype of Coleridge—though not for the same cause. His magnificent Genius hangs upon the Times like some clouded mystic Fantasy.

" Up from the lake a shape of golden dew,
Between two rocks athwart the rising moon,
Dances i'the wind where eagle never flew."

Though there is a Bird—as yet unknown and unclassified of Naturalists—we heard of, and saw a single specimen of, in Mexico, which fully expresses him. It is of a very splendid plumage and most miraculous powers of song, and the superstitious natives hold it in great veneration. It haunts the deep groves about the old Catholic Missions, and they say is often heard to imitate from its hidden coverts the strains and voices of the Nuns singing their Aves to the Virgin. We heard it singing one night, and shall never forget the wild unearthly mellowness of that song—

"——— and all the place
Was filled with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense."

So this stranger from a "far countrie,"

"——— a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock,"

can alone stand as Anti-type of the weird melodist of Christabel and the Ancient Mariner.

The same difficulty presents itself with regard to the gorgeous metaphysical Genius of Old Spenser. We shall have to find his Anti-type in that peopled realm of majestic shadows where he lived. We see

"A Bird all white, well feathered on each wing,
Hereout up to the throne of God did flie,
And all the way most pleasaunt notes did sing,
Whilst in the smoak she unto heaven did stie."

And are we not satisfied—filled to the fulness of repletion—with the beauty of the "Similitude?" But we have already sufficiently extended our recreations in this sunny latitude of charming thought. There are very many Similitudes of equal appropriateness and loveliness which present themselves. These are the chiefest. As for the smaller flock, we will only say in the quaint simile of Spenser:

"The Nightingale is Sovereigne of song:
Before him sits the titmouse, silent bee."

Here we dismiss this, to us, inexpressibly delightful theme.

"So let it glide, like a bright-footed dream,
Out of the chambers of our daily life!"

CHAPTER VIII.

DROLLERIES OF THE WOODS.

THE BLUE JAY.

JAY! Jay! Jay! Hilloa!—What's to pay? What shrill clamor breaks upon the silence of the dark woods, like a watchman's rattle, sudden on the midnight—Jay! Ja-a-a-ay! in prolonged and angry shriek answers the alarm, from a thicket near at hand. Jay! sharp and shrill, takes up the cry yet from the distance, until far and wide the woods re-echo with the clang of the gathering guardians of the wild!

The intruder stands mute in astonishment, at this unlooked-for outbreak. They come! they come! They gather yet more fiercely about him. See there! a saucy fellow has descended, limb by limb, a tree close by, screaming yet louder as he comes more near, with crest erect, spread tail, and sharp, fierce eyes, and with snapping beak, seems ready to devour the unoffending stranger in his wrath. With many an antic pirouette, it peers into his face, and turning to its noisy fellows, now gathered close behind to back its valorous charge, shrieks the report of its inquisition, to urge their tardy courage on.

"What ho! my friends, am I a robber or a thief!" the bewildered hunter may remonstrate. But the answer is in yet fiercer cries, until they dance above his head in a fantastic ecstasy of fierceness, and yell their deafening gibes and taunts into his ears. Patience has bounds: one shot into their midst—ha! ha!—what a scurrying! Silence instantaneous, and how profound!

Whither have the brave and clamorous champions of the old wood fled? Gone! gone!—not a blue coat or a braggart top-knot to be seen—ah me! It is a deceitful world, and valor is a most deceitful virtue.

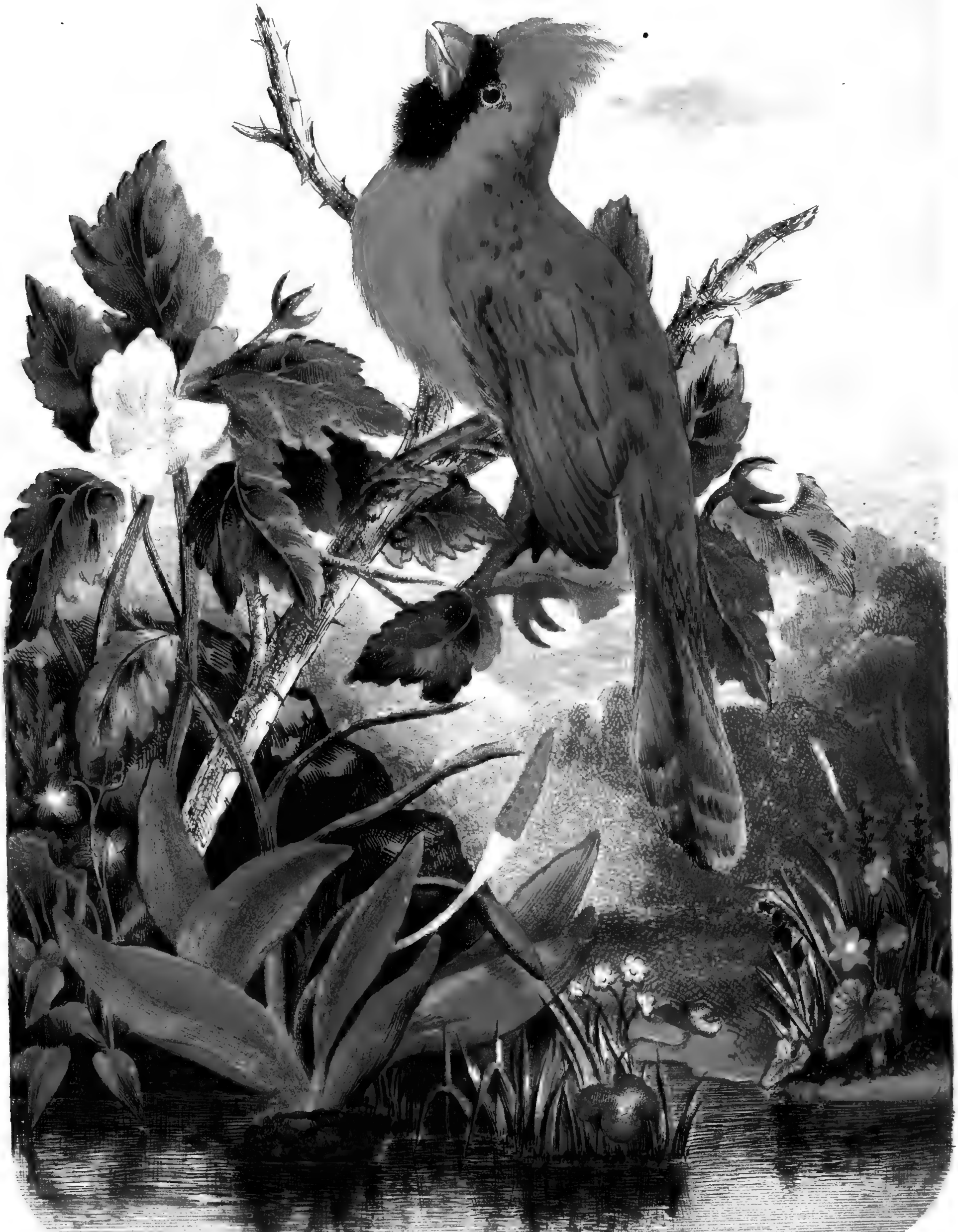
The Blue Jay is the very Falstaff of heroes, and Jack was never more ready—aye faith, than Jay—to fight nine knights in Buckram-green, and with his dinted sword to make loud boasts thereof. But our knave has fun in him as well; therefore we can afford him seeming pardon, for never Merry Andrew took a kick so well. It almost seems a sin to be so serious with him, and yet the fellow has enough of ugly mischief in him too. His long list of accomplishments, beginning at braggart and poltroon, may most properly be wound up with dandy and thief. He is that very Prince of dandies that, in olden times, was generally called Popinjay, and which has been modernized into Grammont, Brummel, or D'Orsay. He is certainly the most felicitous specimen of the exquisite that ever wore plumes, whether borrowed or not. The natural inference would be, that they were borrowed from his inveterate propensity for pilfering from his neighbors, but that the beauty of the plumage which really belongs to him, relieves him from the imputation of any such necessity.

See him, of a fine Spring morning, in love-making time! —and oh! ye comely gallants, ye swash-buckler knights, that haunt about the environs of gay Dan Cupid's court, away with your swelling airs, you fanfaronade of mincing courtesies, and dainty terms—ye are all eclipsed—away! The transcendent graces of yon blue-plumed Euphuist of the acorn tree, doth so utterly surpass ye all, that your diminished heads were best hidden now, in very shame. See him raise up and down upon the mossy limb, his gay crest bent in quick and frequent salutation, while a rich, round, thrilling love-note, rolls liquidly from off his honeyed tongue.

Then see him spring in air with his wide wings, azure and white, and dark barred, graceful tail, spread to the admiring gaze of her he woos, float round and round her passive form; then to return again in rapturous fervor to her side, to overwhelm her glowing charms with yet more subduing graces.

But the fun of it all is, to see our Euphuist practicing these seductive arts by himself. You will often catch him alone, thus making love to his own beauty, with an ardor fully equal to that of the scene we have just described. Indeed, I am not sure that it does not surpass it. For, like other dandies, he is most in love with his own beauty. It is the richest and most fantastic scene I know of, among the comicalities of the natural world, to catch him in one of these practicing humors: he does court to his own charms with such a gay and earnest enthusiasm; he apes all the gestures, and the love-lorn notes of his seemingly volcanic amours, and turning his head back, to gaze on his own fine coat with such fantastic earnest, that one can scarcely resist roaring with laughter.

We like the impish philosophy that can thus burlesque its own follies. But his accomplishments, as we have hinted, are multifarious. Understand, we do not by any means set out to defend the morals, but the character of our friend Jay. We are opposed, in principle, to using hard names, especially to so courtly a personage as this; but, in plain truth, we must say, as we before insinuated, that he is one of the most arrant of thiefs and plunderers. In addition to the assumed character of knightly defender of the wide woods against all intrusive comers, he takes upon himself the superlative one of care-taker and inspector-general of his neighbor's nests. So great is his solicitude in their behoof, that the moment his watchful eye perceives that the weary parents have left the nest for food and recreation, he directly glides into their places, and lest some harm from cunning snake or mischievous squirrel should come to the dear speckled treasures, he takes one after another to his warm bosom, or his crap;



M. Greenthal

CARDINAL GROSBEAK.

rather meekly reasoning to himself, the while, that the poor birds should be consoled that so benevolent a friend as he had rescued them from the wily snake, or other hard-hearted foes. Jay, indeed, is particularly famous for his tender heart; for suddenly discovering that all kind of provender is getting scarce, he is seized with harrowing apprehensions lest the young of his neighbor, Grosbeak, should suffer from hunger, or the poor, dear parents overwork themselves in finding supplies for their hungry mouths, and to prevent such lingering suffering, he glides slyly to the nest, and, with the stern heroism of the Roman Brutus, subduing all natural weakness in the sense of official duty, devours the young to save them from the dreadful pangs of hunger. This severe duty is, of course, performed by this self-denying Lictor of the people, in the absence of the parents Grosbeak. Not, that he fears them—not he! He let the male Grosbeak give him an awful thrashing the other day, to be sure, because he had been caught by him in that neighborhood; but, then, it was more in pity than in anger, that he had submitted with philosophy, for he well knew that the benighted bird did not appreciate the benevolent purpose which had brought him there; and, then in coming in his absence, he had spared him the pain of witnessing what this most unpleasant duty cost his official dignity. The executioner should never show a weakness!

So jealous is he, too, of his sole prerogative of supervision over the interests and welfare of his neighbors—indeed, of the whole community—for no one can be better imagined as saying:—

"No pent up Utica contracts our powers,
The whole boundless universe (of eggs and fledgings) is ours,"

—that he is forever on the look-out for all interloping stragglers who may chance to have given way to the same weakness of appetite. Every Raccoon that shows his inquisitive nose, is assailed with vehement clamors and furious snappings of beaks, which compels him in terror for his eyes, to retreat to his hole.

It is said that some Spanish gentlemen, who were in New York at the time of the death of General Taylor, attributed this untimely event to the fear and anxieties growing out of a prospect of a collision with the terrible power of Spain! It is for much the same reason that our friend Jay is said to attribute the nocturnal habits of Raccoons, Wildcats, Opossums, Owls, &c., to their apprehension of his valorous vigilance by daylight. Be the facts of the case what they may, no one of these gentry, nor snake, nor mink, nor weasel, can make its appearance without being beset by the obstreperous screams of this audacious knave. Nor does he confine his operations to the defence of his foraging ground from these depredators, from whom he has little to fear of personal danger on account of his superior activity. But he even, sometimes, dares assail the lightning-winged and lordly Hawk. These affairs are very characteristic and very amusing, and I have frequently witnessed them. If our friends happen to be in the open ground and the warning cry of "the Hawk is coming," spreads startling through the fields among the feathered people, the foremost in the scattering flight, they dart into the lowest thicket, or skulk beneath the grass and weeds, until the dreaded tyrant, sweeping past on overcoming wings, plunges with some shrieking victim in his talons, into the neighboring forest to tear it at his ease.

Now, one after one, these valiant knights appear, shaking themselves while they crawl forth as if they would scatter all foul imputation on the air. Now a timid Ja-ay! is heard. Then another joins the modest cry, and another yet more boldly, until the reveille is fairly sounded. All the wood at once is ringing with the alarm, and now our knaves are in their glory. They gather about the bloody tyrant, with wild, besieging shrieks, but he is feasting, and cannot deign to notice, now, the noise. They grow more bold with impunity, and all the small birds for a mile round, are gathered there to back them—roused by the alarm—and even the clamorous crow, brings too his sooty phiz to give them countenance. Thus reinforced, they even dare to strike at the passive robber, and so inflame the valor of their force, that even the Tom-tit brushes by his kingly crest, in spiteful rage. Our cunning friends know well, that should their foe lose patience, and condescend to strike at his tormenters, that their shorter wings and quicker motions among the thick forest boughs, would ensure them their escape. A few unsuccessful feints the wary Hawk has made, (for he has now finished his meal,) has filled them with excessive confidence, and now they absolutely dare to buffet him, while he takes wing, all panic-struck to find some more quiet refuge, followed by all the flock of warlike brawlers, exulting in his wake. The fugitive has bent his flight, all unawares, of course! towards where the forest is more open, his heedless pursuers hurrying pell-mell after him. The open spot is gained, and his broad pinions have now room to cleave. One fell backward swoop, and all is silence! save the dismal squall of the one captive Jay, who was the foremost knight of all, and led that rabble rout! Where, where are his brave peers now? Echo answers, and so does his dying screech!

So we see that Mr. Jay is subject to some of the vicissitudes of war, and with all his cunning strategy, it is sometimes turned upon himself! This is, moreover, sometimes illustrated too, quite pathetically in his case, when, returning some fine morning from a neighborly round, during which he had sucked the eggs from half a dozen nests, he finds, to his dismay, that there are more benevolent people in the world than himself, and that the Butcher-bird or Crow, has been taking the occasion to pay him their respects in turn; or, the Black Snake, having seized the opportunity to embrace his mate, whom he left brooding quietly upon the nest, is now preparing to swallow her crushed body, having disposed of the eggs or young beforehand. It is then, no doubt, he is made to feel, as a public officer, that the way of duty is sometimes hard, indeed.

But it is toward the hunter that our acquaintance manages to display some of his most benevolently officious traits. Every animal that ranges the forest is familiar with his alarm notes and watchfully attentive to them; they can tell on the instant, the meaning of the cries, and to what kind of intrusion they refer—whether it be fox, or wolf, owl, snake, or man, and deport themselves accordingly. In every kind of hunting for large game, they feel themselves called upon to take a hand. In "driving" for deer, you have been placed at your "stand," far away from any sound of the coming hunt, in some solitary place, deep in the shadowy forest; rifle in hand you have paced restlessly back and forth, listening to your own heart beat, or starting when the squirrel throws an acorn down, or the red-capped creeper scales the dry bark from the limbs above, until you grow weary with waiting, impatient of the silence, and shower imprecations on the unlucky "driver" and his worthless hounds—when, suddenly a sound, borne faint upon the winds, thrills through every nerve. Now, still as any oak-stem of them all, you listen, bending towards the sound. Hark! Hark! again! again! the sound swells out. It is the pack—the game is on foot! And now the air is burdened with the heavy roll, of burst upon burst, swept fitfully by, as the eager pack rush down the valley, or climb the opposing ridge in the swift changes of the headlong chase. Now the face turns pale—the rifle is clutched hard—the trembling nerves grow taut as steel.

Hark! that wild, musical roar! They are close at hand—the quarry must be near! Now is the moment when silence is worth a world to the eager huntsman: the cracking of a stick may ruin all, for the deer, he knows, is listening warily, and may be even now within gun-shot. He holds his very breath; another roar from the fierce pack yet closer still, when a sudden shriek close to his ear—Jay! jay! jay!

Oh, fury! he sees the bushes bend—he hears the bounding crash—too late! The deer has turned upon its track—he heard the alarm.

Our hunter may be a philosopher, but most likely his ball will be sent along with his curse, after the Jay, who, with impish clamors, flies off through the echoing woods in scatheless glee.

This is not, by any means, the only joke our friend manages to perpetrate upon those whose pursuits carry them into the fastnesses of his haunts. The pine-log cutters at the North know him well, and bestow upon him many a blessing from the wrong side of the mouth. The deep snow is raked away, and the camp is pitched beneath the gloomy shelter of the heavy pines—scarcely has the odor of the first roast steamed through the rare air, and freighted every biting wind, when, with hungry cries, from every side, the Jays come gathering in. But here our particular acquaintance, the Blue Jay, with all his blustering and obstreperous vanity, is obliged to play second fiddle to his cousin-german and master, the Canada Jay, who not only drubs him soundly when they meet, but, on occasion, even makes a meal of him. They swarm about the camp in hundreds, and, such is their audacity when hard pinched with hunger, that they are frequently seen to dash at the meat roasting before the fire, and hot as it is, bear pieces off till they can cool it in the snow. They are regarded with singular aversion by these hardy men; for, take what precautions they may, they are often robbed to such serious extent by these persevering depredators, as to be reduced to suffering. They dare not leave any article that can be carried off within their reach. When they kill game and leave it hung up until the hunt is over, the Jays assemble in hundreds, and frequently tear it in pieces before their return.

The plumage of the Canada Jay is very curious, and some of its notes are the strangest and most peculiar sounds to be heard in our forests. The northern hunter, log-drivers and cutters, have many superstitions with regard to this bird, and tell some droll stories of its humors and feats. It is said, among other things, to drive off or exterminate our hero, the Blue Jay, before very long, wherever it makes its appearance.

There is a more delicate and beautiful variety than either of them, and better behaved too, by the way; for it possesses, among other accomplishments, some very sweet notes. It belongs to the extreme South, and is not found north of Louisiana. There is also yet another, a more beautiful variety still, which has lately been discovered in California, *Cyanocorax Luxuosus.*

The Blue Jay has many of the traits of the Magpie, and, like him, possesses an inveterate propensity for hiding everything he can lay hold of in the shape of food. The Magpie hides things that are of no value, as well; but our Jay is in every respect a utilitarian, and when, after feeding to repletion, he is seen to busy himself for hours in sticking an acorn here, or a beach-nut there, in a knot-hole, or wedging snails between the splinters of some lightning-shivered trunk, or making deposits beneath the sides of decaying logs, naturalists wonder what he is doing it for. But our Euphuist knows well enough, and you may rest assured, if you see him along that way next winter, as you will be apt to, if you watch, you will find that he has not forgotten the place of one single deposit; and that, with a shrewder economy than the Ant or the Squirrel, instead of heaping up his winter store in one granary, where a single accident may deprive him of all, he has scattered them here and there, in a thousand different spots, the record of which is kept in his own memory; so that it cannot be denied, whatever may be said of his thieving and other dubious propensities, that the Blue Jay is a decidedly sagacious personage—so far as a pains-taking care of that No. one, of which we have found him to be so desperately smitten, is concerned. There is also a variety of the Wood-pecker in California, *Melanerpes formicivorus* (*Swains*), which carries this propensity to an extraordinary extreme. It bores innumerable little holes in the bark and trunks of trees, in each of which it wedges firmly an acorn with its bill. They may be heard hammering away at this work the live-long day. The whole family of squirrels—all the burrowing animals together, with many other birds besides those enumerated, have this same propensity for hiding their food in the ground or elsewhere. It is thus preserved from decay, and whether used by the creature depositing them or not, they grow into trees and renew the earth with vegetation.

Thus do these little creatures, in the economy of nature, become the planters of our forests.

So universal is the Blue Jay's reputation for mischievous and impish tricks of every kind, that the negroes of the South regard them with a strange mixture of superstition and deadly hate. The belief among them is, that it is the special agent of the devil here on earth—carries tales to him and all kinds of slanderous gossip, particularly about negroes, and most especially that they supply him with fuel to burn them with. Their animosity is entirely genuine and implacable.

When a boy, I caught many of them in traps, during the snows, and the negro boys who generally accompanied me on my rounds to the traps, always begged eagerly for the Jay Birds we captured to be surrendered to them, and the next instant their necks were wrung amid the shouts of laughter.

Alas, for the fate of our feathered Euphuist!—yet he was "a fellow of infinite wit!"

CHAPTER IX.

MY PET WOOD THRUSHES.

I DO not wonder that the world is full of superstition, and that men talk vaguely, as if they were in a dream of the

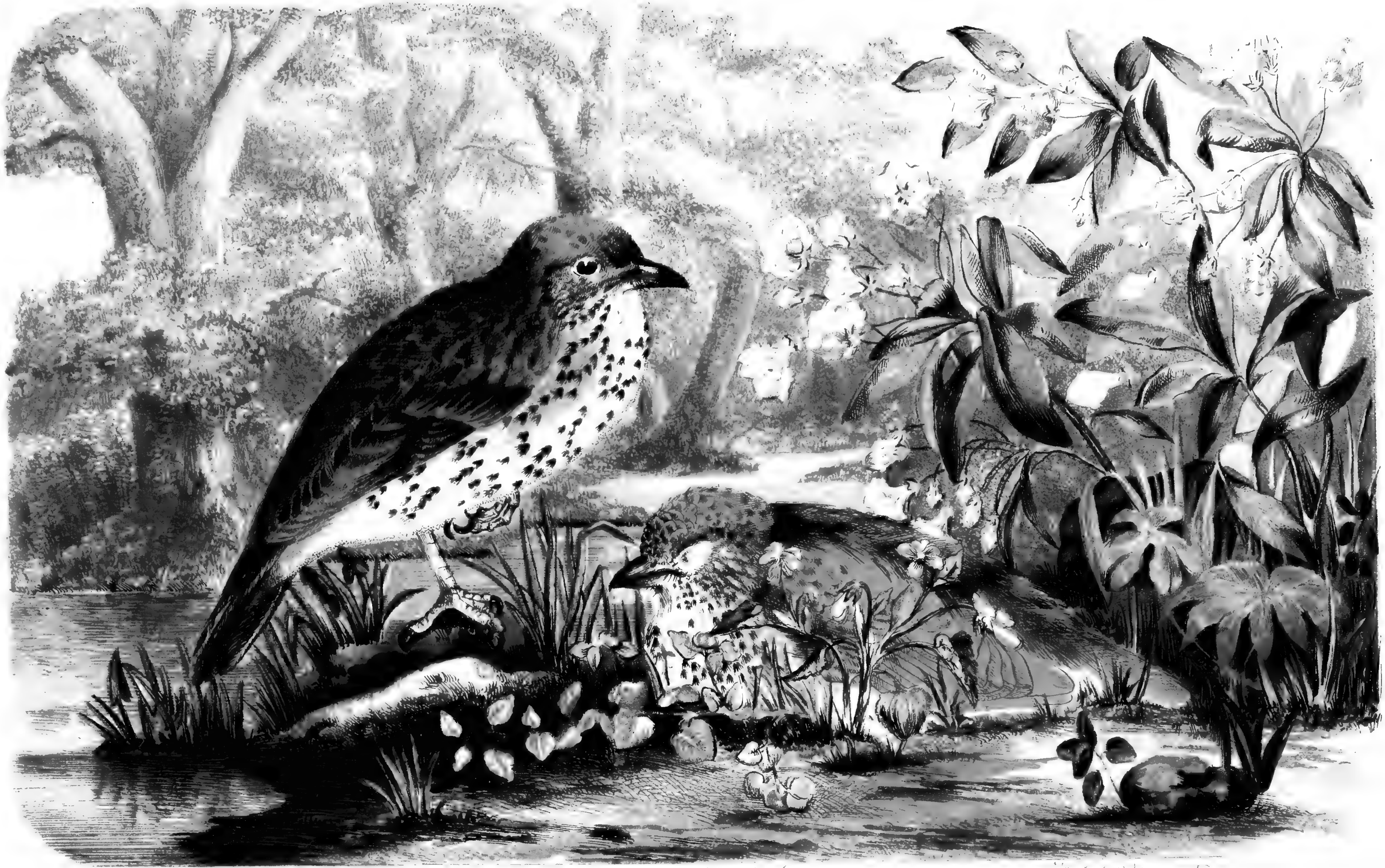
"Angels and ministers of grace"

belonging to another sphere, when they know so little of the divine realities of this!

How many of them, for instance, know anything of the Thrush—that present angel of the solemn woods? I venture, there are not ten men out of a thousand, that call themselves intelligent, who can go into the woods with you of a summer morning, and point out which is the Wood Thrush, or tell you, amidst the choir, which strain belongs to it. They may notice the right bird, but be sure they do not know it as the Wood Thrush; and they will give you some other name—as Wood Robin, Ground Nightingale, &c.; but even then, they will seldom fail to identify the notes for you —and yet they have been hearing them—unless they've lived in cities—all their live-long days, and feeling them too, if they have any souls to feel with. It is one of the most common song-birds we have in our woods—is, literally, what Wordsworth calls the little English Robin,

———a joy,
A presence like the air!

and yet I believe there is less correctly and generally known



Mrs C.W. Webber pinx. R. Rosenthal [illegible]

AMERICAN SONG THRUSHES

of it, than of almost any other bird within the limits of settlement on the Continent. Now, the question, why is this? admits of many a sage answer; but I say it is simply because men have sold "their birth-right for the mess of pottage." They were born with the gift to know their angels, but, in their progressive obesity, they are worse than Abraham of old, and seldom make the mistake of entertaining them even in disguise. The clear seraphic vision of childhood, which once could see the halo and the folded wings, stares now through the dim medium of worldly grease and dust, upon what may seem a mystery or a monster. We are born in God and nature, and so long as we remain unvitiated, there is no such thing as mystery and fear—for love is our pure enlightener, and faith maketh sport of fear—but, as the world wags, the same child that could smile in confiding wonder amidst the rock of elemental war, and toy with the very bolts of heaven, as with its own rattle, would, as a man, tremble at a moon-thrown shadow, or faint if a donkey should bray of a sudden in the dark. The farther from birth the farther from nature, is almost a truism, and to the rheumy vision of age we owe the ghostly forms of superstition. As men become more and more besotted in the worship of the golden calf they have formed to themselves, so do the realities of beauty and harmony about them become as common and unclean—they cannot see them, neither can they hear—and then with dim and morbid yearnings for more exalted communion, they turn to the shadow realm of sickly dream, and "call up spirits from the vasty deep" of superstition, to minister to their craven appetites, and bring them the empty visions of a servile bliss. With the best of us, those voices which spoke to our young sense in lofty themes have lost their meaning, and now they seem wise indeed in their day and generation who can invoke even the echoes of that innocent time, and name them by holy names—their comforters!

Who knows the little Wood Thrush for a comforter?—and yet, ye children of mammon, it was the first sweet singer that sang a cheering song from out the primeval forests here unto your fathers. The wolves had howled their greeting in chorus to the wintry winds, but the gentle salutation of the Wood Thrush came, the earliest harbinger of Spring and hope. Seeming as though the spirit of solitude that had so long infused those hoary aisles with harmony, of whispering boughs, now clothed its dædal hymn in voice most meet for human ear, and came in that plumed form to bid the weary wanderers welcome to the new empire nature yielded. What a welcome! Conquerors never found such. A melody that haunted every shade, and filled the ear of silence, where, deep within, she leaned upon her mossy couch to listen—touched their rude hearts with its tender spell, and fired their souls with loftier daring; for that clear, loud and mellow minstrelsy was to them as the first fresh song of freedom on a new-found earth. Was not the little bird then a comforter to these, the hardy pioneers of freedom? Their stout souls found fittest inspiration in its real voice, for actual deeds that have lived after them in honor. Above the turmoil of their rough struggle with the elements, the savage beasts and more ferocious savages, that gentle song rose ever in its wild and sweet recall to win the soothed Passions back to peace and calm repose. Men, however stern and embittered by unceasing conflict, do not easily get away from the refining spell of music, and notes such as those of the Wood Thrush—that fill the common air like sun-beams—will search the clefts of these rugged natures as do those same sun-beams when they pierce ice-mailed cliffs to find the Alpine Rose hidden there, and glow in blushes on its tender cheek. There is a soft spot, even in the rough hunter's heart, and the enchantment of that song will reach it somewhere, in the drear, deep solitudes of pathless wilderness, all unaware, and then the warm tears welled up with his yearnings, will leave him humanized again—and is not the little bird a comforter to him?

Aye, and it has been the angel to the weary and way-far-ing pilgrim of loftier name and deeds than such as these. Hear what the dedicated high priest of Nature's temple—Audubon!—has told us of his little comforter, the darling Wood Thrush.

"You now see before you my greatest favorite of the feathered tribes of our woods. To it I owe much. How often has it revived my drooping spirits, when I have listened to its wild notes in our forest, after passing a restless night in my slender shed, so feebly secured against the violence of the storm, as to show me the futility of my best efforts to rekindle my little fire, whose uncertain and vacillating light had gradually died away under the destructive weight of the dense torrents of rain that seemed to involve the heavens and the earth in one mass of fearful murkiness, save when the red streaks of the flashing thunderbolt burst on the dazzled eye, and, glancing along the huge trunk of the stateliest and noblest tree in my immediate neighborhood, were instantly followed by an uproar of cracking, crashing, and deafening sounds, rolling their volumes in tumultuous eddies far and near, as if to silence the very breathings of the unformed thought! How often, after such a night, when far from my dear home, and deprived of the presence of those nearest my heart, wearied, hungry, drenched, and so lonely and desolate as almost to question myself why I was thus situated, when I have seen the fruits of my labors on the eve of being destroyed, as the water, collected into a stream, rushed through my little camp, and forced me to stand erect, shivering in a cold fit like that of a severe ague, when I have been obliged to wait, with the patience of a martyr, for the return of day, trying in vain to destroy the tormenting musquitoes, silently counting over the years of my youth, doubting, perhaps, if ever again I should return to my home, and embrace my family!—how often, as the first glimpse of morning gleamed doubtfully among the dusky masses of the forest trees, has there come upon my ear, thrilling along the sensitive cords which connect that organ with the heart, the delightful music of this harbinger of day!—and how fervently, on such occasions, have I blessed the Being who formed the Wood Thrush, and placed it in those solitary forests, as if to console me amidst my privations, to cheer my depressed mind, and to make me feel, as I did, that never ought man to despair, whatever may be his situation, as he can never be certain that aid and deliverance are not at hand.

"The Wood Thrush seldom commits a mistake after such a storm as I have attempted to describe, for no sooner are its sweet notes heard than the heavens gradually clear, the bright, refracted light rises in gladdening rays from beneath the distant horizon, the effulgent beams increase in their intensity, and the great orb of day at length bursts on the sight. The gray vapor that floats along the ground is quickly dissipated, the world smiles at the happy change, and the woods are soon heard to echo the joyous thanks of their many songsters. At that moment all fears vanish, giving place to an inspiring hope. The hunter prepares to leave his camp. He listens to the Wood Thrush, while he thinks of the course which he ought to pursue, and as the bird approaches to peep at him, and learn somewhat of his intentions, he raises his mind toward the Supreme Disposer of events. Seldom, indeed, have I heard the song of this Thrush, without feeling all that tranquillity of mind to which the secluded situation in which it delights is so favorable. The thickest and darkest woods seem to please it best. The borders of murmuring streamlets, overshadowed by the dense foliage of the lofty trees growing on the gentle declivities, amidst which the sunbeams seldom penetrate, are its favorite resorts. There it is, kind reader, that the musical powers of this hermit of the woods must be heard, to be fully appreciated and enjoyed.

"The song of the Wood Thrush, although composed of but few notes, is so powerful, distinct, clear and mellow, that it is impossible for any person to hear without being struck by the effect which it produces on the mind. I do not know to what instrumental sounds I can compare these notes, for I really know of none so melodious and harmonical. They gradually rise in strength, and then fall in gentle cadences, becoming at length so low as to be scarcely audible: like the emotions of the lover, who at one moment exults in the hope of possessing the object of his affections, and the next pauses in suspense, doubtful of the results of all his efforts to please.

"Several of these birds seem to challenge each other from different portions of the forest, particularly towards evening, and at that time nearly all the other songsters being about to retire to rest, the notes of the Wood Thrush are doubly pleasing. One would think that each individual is anxious to excel his distant rival, and I have frequently thought that on such occasions their music is more than ordinarily effective, as it then exhibits a degree of skilful modulation quite beyond my power to describe. These concerts are continued for some time after sunset, and take place in the month of June, when the females are setting."

The Wood Thrush is seldom visible while it sings, and it is partly owing to this modest shrinking from the common gaze that few identify the bird with the song, and then it seems so entirely the voice of the place—the very language of Shadow and the Wood—that men are scarcely conscious they do not expect it to be a living thing, or look to find a bird more than they would think to search the clear rivulet lapsing by, for some embodiment of murmurs. As with Shelley's Sky-Lark, so is our Wood Thrush,

"Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing songs unbidden,
'Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

Were we an imaginative race, this mellow and mysterious music would be the inspiration of many a charming myth;

but, unfortunately, whatever of Greek taste there may be among us is so emulously expended in erecting Doric Pigstys and Corinthian Coal sheds, not to speak of building temples for Banking Houses and domes to light our stables! that we have no time or wit to spare for more graceful fancies, so the apotheosis of this syren of the solitude must be even left to the hearts of rough way-farers, whom it has cheered when stumbling by the way!

But I commenced to tell you of my Pet Wood Thrushes! I have one now before me on my table. The wild and gentle little fellow!—he watches my pen with such a knowing air. I wonder if he doesn't understand all about it? His curiosity becomes, now and then, rather troublesome, for, he occasionally gets upon a regular "lark," when we let him out of the cage, and then such a hubbub as we have upon my sanctum table! He seems to be of a decidedly literary turn, and attacks my papers the first thing. Here they go scattered over the room, sheet after sheet sent flying from the table! He seizes one at a time from the chaotic heap, and, running backward with vigorous jerks to the edge of the table, tosses it off, and then, with body stooping over the edge and head turned sagely awry, he watches it sail down to the floor, and returns gleefully to the attack again. Tired of this somewhat laborious sport, the running of my pen on the paper attracts his attention, and standing erect with most sagacious port, he eyes the proceeding for a moment and then commences racing to and fro after the pen, pecking at the words as they are left, to the great and frequent detriment of my orthography, which is often sadly blurred and bedraggled by his reckless toes.

How much the saucy pest has learned by his audacious inquisition, I can only judge by the fact that he soon tires of his pursuit of knowledge, and now has attacked my inkstand —the temptation of those long white-feathered quills is not to be withstood—they too would look well sailing down to the floor after those sheets of paper—hey-day! spatter, spatter! Can't stand that, friend Brownie—go home, you scamp! my ink is everywhere—and with an elfish chirp he darts away to find new mischief on the work-table. Now for the spools, and balls, and skeins—silks, cottons, tapes, cords, scissors, thimbles, pins, &c.—how they roll and bounce, and fly about the room in most admired disorder! while he surveys it all with such a grave and serene look as would express to you the heartfelt conviction on his part, of having just performed a most responsible duty. But you may know that at this rate we cannot afford to Mr. Brownie the frequent indulgence of such a spree; for all would soon be chaos come again with a vengeance. It is only occasionally that we thus surrender to the Prince of Misrule, and he is sure to make the most of it.

I have some rather curious facts with regard to this facetious friend of ours, to relate. I found the nest in a lonely piece of shady wood, within the bosom of which a charming spring was sheltered. These birds are so seldom disturbed in any part of the country, that they seem to make no attempt at concealment in placing their nests, being governed by convenience only. Indeed, this nest was placed on the lower limbs of a small beach-tree, exactly on the side of a narrow path that was much frequented by persons walking past at all hours of the day. It was so low that I could nearly touch it with my fingers, and there the old birds brooded as cosily and calmly—their bright eyes within a yard of the face of every passer by, as if they sat secure in Paradise, before the children of Adam had taken to bird-nesting. I watched the brood as it came on, and one fine day transferred the nest entire, with the three young that were nearly full fledged, to a small wire cage which I hung in the same place, that the old birds might continue to feed them. It happened that only one of them—that I thought to be a male, and the boldest and strongest of the three, perched upon the roost, which enabled it to reach the food brought by the parents, through the bars above. The other two remaining on the bottom of the cage could not reach the food, and to my great regret I found them dead on my next visit. Our present acquaintance stood erect and alert upon his perch, and the warm orange tint tinging the white ground of his speckled throat and breast, assured me that my conjectures as to its sex had been correct. The old birds continued to feed it with great industry until it was full grown in size, and nearly so in plumage. The abundant supply of food which had fallen to its share, instead of being divided between two other throats, had caused it to thrive astonishingly, and it proved one of the most thrifty cage birds I have had. This is always the best way to raise birds of any kind, but more especially, the finer varieties of song-birds, which are usually very delicate and difficult to bring up by the hand with good constitutions. The young mocking birds of which I have told you that I had raised by the blue birds for me, and this thrush made the finest and healthiest birds I have ever seen in cages. There is another great advantage in pursuing this plan, which has been fully illustrated in both these experiments, besides many similar ones with different birds; you can, by frequently visiting the little prisoners, so gradually accustom them to your presence that when the time for separation from the mother comes, they are already tamed, and will eat immediately from your hand. There is no danger of the faithful parents deserting them on account of your visits, for I have known instances of their continuing to minister with the most unflinching patience, to their young thus confined, for a whole season.

It is cruel thus to impose upon their beautiful loyalty, I admit, but then, as men and women will have such pets, it is best that they should know how to obtain them with least suffering to bird and owner.

Brownie had now been installed in our room for a week or two, and my wife and myself were walking through the fields one day, when we came upon a very dingy, bedraggled and deplorable looking specimen of the American Robin, or migratory Thrush. It was not half fledged, and had no doubt been turned out of its nest by some accident, and as it happened to be on the edge of a piece of swamp, where it evidently had no business, it instantly called to mind a couplet of Scott's, describing the Exodus of the Fairies:

> And the Kelpie must flit from the black-bog pit
> And the Brownie must not tarrie.

"Yo ho! here is our kelpie! so now he shall flit from the black-bog pit, and be playmate for our Brownie." So I captured the little monster, than which surely no goblin shape was ever uglier. I had called our bird Brownie, from the color of its back in the first place; but now, the coincidence was so evident, that the poor captivated Robin must needs be christened Kelpie! He was taken home and placed under the guardianship of Mr. Brownie, who, for the first day, seemed to be afraid of the hideous little creature, and although he hopped round and round it with the most intensely curious expression, yet its harsh and incessant cry with the wide gaping of its great yellow mouth, seemed to be too much for his nerves. On the morning of the second day, we observed Mr. Brownie employing himself in a very mysterious sort of fashion, for instead of eating the worms that were placed as usual at his disposal, he would take one, and after beating it with his bill until it was quite dead, he would gather it up with the greatest care until it made the smallest possible bulk, and then carefully wetting it in the water, he would hop about the squalling Kelpie, as if to attract attention. Failing in this, he would perseveringly attempt to push the food into its mouth; having, it would seem, made the sage discovery that stuffing food into that wide mouth was the only way to stop it. During the whole day we watched the benevolent little fellow, endeavoring by every conceivable art, to make his dingy fellow-captive understand what it was he wanted of him; but open his mouth at the right time, the heathenish Kelpie obstinately refused to do. Brownie, in the meantime, was in a perfect agony of worry that his good intentions should be so misunderstood, and when even the creature became clamorous, he renewed his efforts in a seeming entire forgetfulness of himself. On the third morning he seemed to have begun to lose all patience, and to be determined that his protegé should accept his kind offices, whether or no.

I observed him now pushing at the corners of its mouth with all its might, to force it open, and that evening, seeing Brownie grievously disturbed and troubled—fluttering about the Robin, I took it up to examine what had happened. I was not a little shocked to see that one eye was entirely destroyed! Poor Brownie, in his zeal to force its mouth open, had wounded the eye-ball fatally with his sharp bill! In all my experience of human actions and emotions, I never witnessed anything more touchingly expressive of distress for an accident and affectionate solicitude for the subject of it than was now displayed by our Brownie. He evidently understood perfectly that he had done serious mischief, and appeared to feel that he could not do enough to make amends. He now almost killed the little sufferer with kindness, and stuffed it incessantly with food, for the unfortunate Kelpie seemed, when it was now only just too late, to understand what had been all the time required of him, and fed with the utmost readiness. This was certainly a singular and touching exhibition of a parental, or else chivalrous feeling, on the part of this bird, which was only a few weeks older than the other. The Kelpie died not long afterwards, and we were not sorry except for Brownie's sake, who seemed to feel the loss very seriously. After its painful mutilation, we neither expected nor desired to raise it. I have known many instances in which old birds that had bred before captivity, have exhibited this sort of solicitude for young birds that might be placed in the cage, without reference to the species. Indeed, I knew an old woman in Washington City, who possessed a fine male Grosbeak, (the common Red Bird,) from whose parental sympathies, she managed to make a very pretty income. I have frequently seen him with three or four young birds of different though analagous species, under his charge at the same time. He raised many fine birds for her during the year, and even possessed sufficient sagacity to adapt the food, in a certain degree, to the different varieties. I have known her to refuse offers of considerable sums for this extraordinary bird. Instances resembling this are frequent in Natural History; but Brownie's is the only case in which I have heard of a young bird volunteering to undertake such a ministration.

The story of my other pet is a short but sad one. I was walking through the summer grove in which Brownie was born, early one morning, when in passing near a tree, in which I had observed a Thrush's nest, I saw a young Wood Thrush that had no doubt been just helped down from the nest by the mother, hopping on the ground at the foot of the tree. I saw that it was almost fully fledged, and walked towards it very gently. It stopped as it saw me, and drawing up one foot in the attitude of careless repose, turned up its dark, bright eyes, and looked calmly and softly into my face. I was astonished that it made no attempt to escape, when evidently so well able to do so, and paused a moment. The little creature turned back its bill and lightly trimmed a feather of its wing; then looking up at me again with the same indescribably confiding softness, remained motionless, as if awaiting me to act. I stooped and took it gently in my hand, it made not the slightest movement, even now to escape, but in a moment nestled itself sweetly in my open hand, and still looked into my face with its lovely eyes, as confidingly as any seraph might have done, that had waked on a sudden, on a smiling earth, and thought it heaven. I felt the warm tears gush to my eyes, for I had never before seen that fearless innocence of childhood, that can outstare the lightning, so touchingly and beautifully illustrated. The little creature did not, absolutely, seem capable of imagining that there could be such things as evil or danger in a world where the sun shone bright, and the leaves were all so rustling green. It had not yet learned the terrible lesson of hate and death. It had only learned of love, beneath the warm brooding of its gentle mother's breast; and now the tender innocent, with its unvitiated vision, saw the upturned face of man, with that true recognition that first graced Adam in the Eden of his birth and power, as sovereign, lord and mild protector, not as persecutor, tyrant and the brutal robber.

I never saw an incident more beautiful, or that filled me with such strange and glad delight. I felt as if a messenger of harmony and holy peace had left some Halcyon's nest of love, to bring me calm and holy teachings, and I could not bring myself to let it go away from me—cruel as it seems thus to have to abuse that meek seraphic confidence.

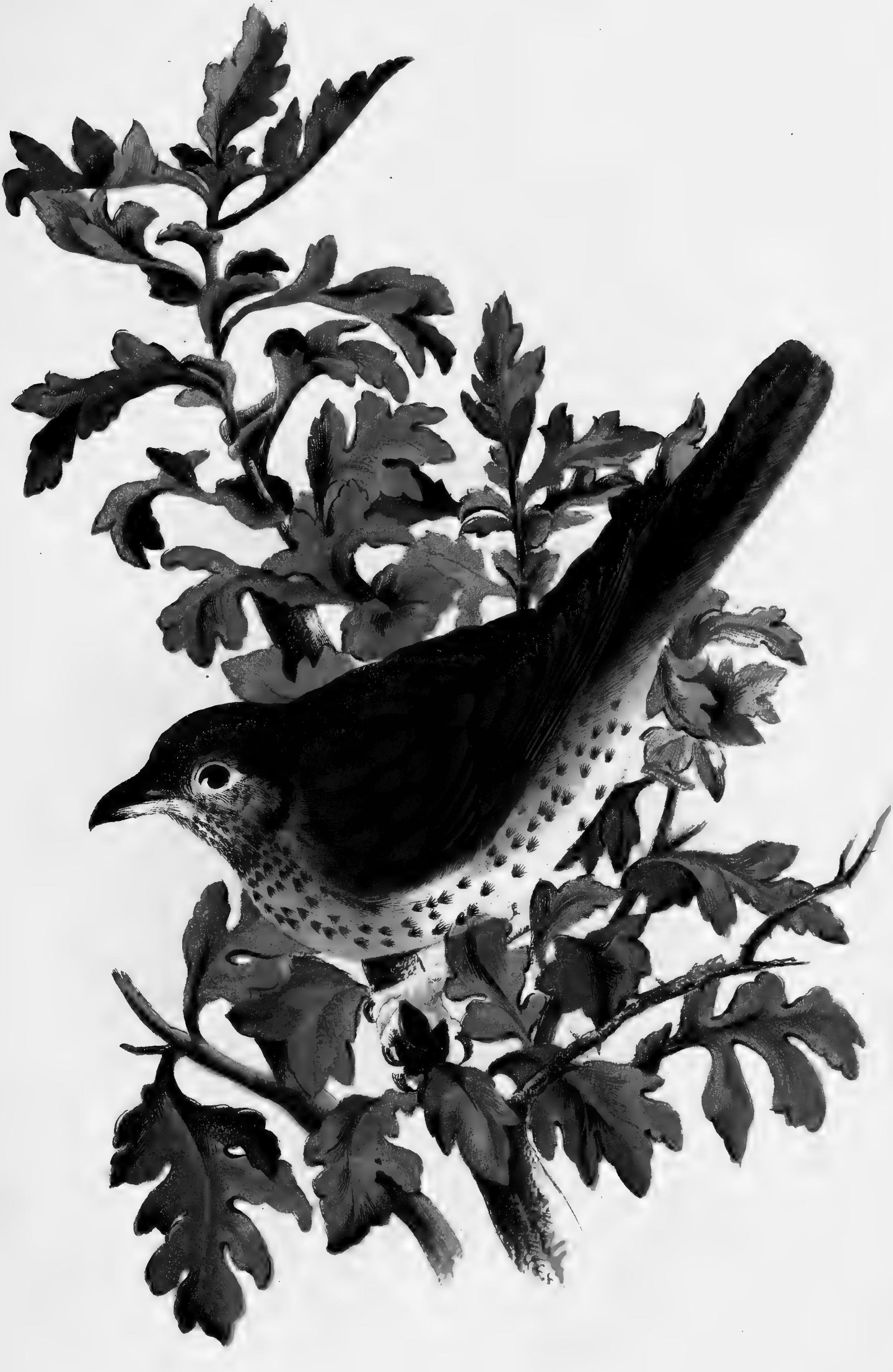
I am not romancing now. I am telling you a vivid fact of natural truth—that strange little bird—that sweet new comer in the birth of love—fed from my hand as regularly on from that moment, as it ever did from its mother's bill—never exhibited any fear of me, and never made any attempt to escape. It followed me everywhere about my room, and perched constantly upon or close to my person.

Alas! this too great affection finally proved the cause of its loss to me.

I left my room hastily one day, and this affectionate creature followed close at my heels, without my observing it!

It was lost! My gentle little Wood Thrush, I never yet loved a pet so dearly!

A short time after the loss of our charming pet Brownie, a dear friend presented my wife with an English Wood Thrush. It was a remarkably fine specimen—a male in the first year. We give you here a singularly accurate portrait of this bird, in the plumage of the second year. We called him "Brownie the Second," and I have some curious things to relate to you of him, too.



ENGLISH SONG THRUSH

I had a theory which I often broached to my wife concerning this branch of the family Turdinæ. It was, that the Wood Thrush constituted the feathered incarnation of the Affectional Sentiment in Mankind—that in its mellow, clear and wonderfully liquid notes, we heard the natural language of tenderness, pity, charity and hope, and that therefore, the fact of Brownie's feeding the poor Kelpie was no accident, but that the same sympathetic benevolence would be found to characterize the specimens quite generally, and without regard to sex. Now, this bird, (*Turdus Musicus,*) the Song Thrush of Europe, is so nearly allied to (*Turdus Melodus*) the American variety, that the two were for a long time confounded among the Old World Naturalists; and indeed, Wilson was the first who drew the clear line of distinction between the two, and established ours as a distinct species. This bird was presented to us in the fall of the year, and as I had ventured to predict, that with the return of spring our new English friend would exhibit the same traits as his late American kinsman—poor Brownie—in feeding the first young bird of the family Turdinæ presented to it, I was all eagerness to have the spring come, that we might test the question fully.

It happened that a nearly fatal illness overtook me this winter, and I was compelled to seek for restoration in the South.

We arrived at Charleston very early in the spring, and by the time the mocking birds began to breed, I was able to travel far enough by railroad to reach Columbia, the lovely capital of the State, where, under the care of that distinguished naturalist, physician and gentleman, Professor Robert W. Gibbs, I was soon so far relieved as to be strong enough to get out on short excursions occasionally. My wife was then engaged in making the drawings of birds which are presented in this volume.

We had, in addition to our pet Englishman, alluded to, a fine male Southern mocking bird, which was not quite old enough—though it sang very well—to furnish her with the necessary definition of plumage for a correct drawing.

Her ambition was to achieve, as nearly as possible, the butterfly airiness with which this marvellous bird floats upward and around upon the eddying ecstasies of its mighty song.

It was, perhaps, a presumptuous attempt, but presumption has ever been one synonym of daring.

She made an hundred studies from the action of the caged bird, all to the same end, but none of them were entirely satisfactory. At last, the conviction came that we *must* have a specimen bird—not a "stuffed specimen," but one warm, and yet throbbing with the last pulses of life—that could be placed naturally in the position studied from the living bird, and sketched rapidly before it grew cold in the rigidity of absolute death.

When my wife announced to me that she *must* have such a specimen—that although she had studied the wild bird on the wing at a distance, and the tame bird near at hand, and had many good ideas of this movement in her sketches—yet there were numerous details of outline and finish which it was impossible to achieve without the warm specimen—I well recollect my despairing answer—

"The fact is, I would rather face a panther on the bound, than shoot a mocking bird. I hope God will forgive me, but as I see clearly it must be done, it *shall* be done!"

This was said with a tragic earnest that must have been comical; for my wife said, with a quiet smile: "Well, now, hero as you think you are, I do not believe you *can* do it!" This conveyed an implication upon my marksmanship, of which I am, by the way, excessively proud, and also upon the firmness of my nerves, which could by no means be endured; so, with a sovereign wave of the hand and an extra straitening of my person, I left the room saying: "You shall see, madam, that my *will* can accomplish *anything* that is necessary!"

Fifteen minutes afterwards we were embarked in a light buggy, attended by a bright mulatto boy, bound for the outskirts of the city—I with gun in hand, and my wife with a most provoking look of archness upon her child-like face. I was going forth slaying and to slay, and vowed that I had as soon kill a Bird of Paradise as a mouse, when the interests of science required it, and persisted—like the boy whistling in the dark—in convincing her that I should certainly shoot for her the finest specimen of a mocking bird that we could find. Indeed, for the purpose of re-assuring her smiling incredulity, I went on to remind her that she had seen me perform miracles with the rifle—she had known me even to place six bullets in successive shots upon the space of my thumb nail—which I thrust forward to show her was not a *very* large one! "Oh yes!"—she knew I was "a good rifle shot—a wonderful rifle shot, if I insisted upon it—but shooting at buffalo, deer, or even Camanches, was *not*, strictly speaking, shooting at mocking birds!"

"Nonsense! If a man knows how to hit one thing, he knows how to hit another!"

I felt somehow funny, I must confess, at this persistent dubiousness. It could not be that she thought that because I had become accustomed to shooting at large objects, that therefore I should miss the small ones as a matter of course. What could the woman be driving at?—why, I could shoot a bird on the wing a great deal easier with the shot-gun, than a deer on the run with the rifle, which requires you, in order to bring him down, to place a single ball in a much smaller space than even the snipe would cover with its wing on its flight. She cannot mean that I am not a good marksman, for that she knows I am!

Hah! there is a mocking bird, well known in all this region as a magnificent singer. See him bounding up from the top of that pear tree inside the garden. The people will all curse me, I know, for slaying the angel of song in their neighborhood; but then I hope to make peace with them in explaining to them that it was a necessity of science and its accompanying art.

The buggy was stopped, and out I sprang. He was but a short distance off, swimming and bounding on "the billows of sweet sound." My wife said, as I left her:

"Be sure you get him, he is a splendid creature, just the specimen that I want."

"Yes, you shall see!" said I, faintly. I walked up towards him. He did not observe me, he was too much absorbed in his hymn. I was now within twenty paces of the low pear tree, yet he soared and floated unobservant of the stalking murder in his front; he knew no evil in this hospitable land, and music had been "plate of mail" to him. I pointed my gun at him three times, but always I would never see the end of the barrel, for my eyes grew thick with tears. I could not see him, he was—"hidden in the light"—of music.

I tried, in the desperation of my *will*, to pull the trigger in that *direction*, but the gun would not go off. I could not make it go, and found that somehow, it was only on half-cock. Even then, after it was on full-cock, and the beautiful creature undauntedly floated and sang, I found another pretext for dodging my boasted inexorableness. I saw the female fly into the same tree, though lower down, and came to the instantaneous conclusion that as they must be building there, it would be an unpardonable profanity for me to shoot the male under such circumstances. I went back to the buggy, and although my wife attempted hysterically, to keep up her bantering tone, and vowed that if I did not shoot her a mocking bird, she would do it herself, because "she *must* have it!" yet I felt that her voice trembled in this assertion of the inevitable requisitions of art, and not another word was spoken between us as we drove back to our hotel.

A week had passed, and still her studies made it more apparent that we *must* have a fresh slain specimen, to enable her to complete the drawing contemplated.

At last, upon one of my *well days*, we were transported to the edge of an extensive woodland, intersected here and there by large old fields or commons which had been deserted for years. These were the most likely places to find the highest specimens of the Southern mocking bird. After leaving the buggy, we traversed on foot some quarter of a mile of foot-path, over an undulating upland, we suddenly found ourselves introduced to a small meadow, on the bank of a feeble rivulet.

This had many years ago been a farm, but had for some cause been deserted. I saw at once, it was the place for mocking birds, and we accordingly sat down beneath the shade of a heavy pine to watch the aspects of the scene.

In a little while, we saw in the meadow below us two mocking birds flitting to and fro, as if this was their familiar home. The male was a splendid specimen, and although I shot at it with, as I supposed, my nerves worked up to the last degree of tension, I never hit it, although within astonishingly short distances. At last, as my wife had brought out paper and pencils for drawing, and wires for fixing the bird in position, I was compelled to shoot one of the pair in spite of myself. It was fixed upon the wires immediately, and she commenced making the drawing beneath the shade of a pine.

I left her, saying—"I am convinced that these birds have a nest in this meadow; you continue your drawing, while I go to look for it."

I wandered around the meadow, looking into every isolated clump or thicket without distinction. Every secret place had been searched, and as the mate came along, I, in a splenetic mood, brought it down also. But then the idea haunted me—they have a nest of young in this meadow, and now that I have done murder upon their natural protectors, my business is to protect the callow children of song.

There was a small clump of blackberry vines mingled with more vigorous shrubs, and more luxuriant foliage, which occupied the central place of this old field, and into which I had glanced an hundred times in passing. The foliage was impervious to sight, but at last it occurred to me to thrust my cane into the difficult bosom of the brake, and turning aside the thorns gently, I saw, sure enough, as I had suspected, four yellow mouths gaping out of shadow, to the stir which reached only the darkened sense of their sealed vision. Carefully through the environed thorns I lifted the dim family, and bore it to my wife.

"What can we do with them?" said she, despondingly.

"Never mind; we have the English wood thrush, Brownie the Second, and rest assured he will take care of these callow younglings."

Well, we got the little things home, and "Brownie the Second" behaved very much as Brownie the First had behaved.

He exhibited the same tender solicitude as Brownie the First. After we placed the nest in his cage, he continued for an hour or so to jump around, with a wonderful expression of wonder and uncertainty, until the little creatures began to gap their mouths with hunger, and utter a feeble cry for help; then came our valorous Song Thrush, and with just the same movements which I have described in the conduct of "Brownie the First" towards the dismal kelpie, he established an immediate sympathy with the forlorn little ones.

He fed the young mockers at once, and sedulously cultivated them into respectability, and it was very amusing to notice, as the young birds grew up, how insolently they attempted, (as in the case of the blue birds mentioned in my second chapter,) to assert their supremacy. They could make nothing out of the "Song Thrush."

What he did was a *sentiment.* Let your insolent autocrat of song say what he might, in splendid diction, but he never yet dared to emulate my song! I am the voice of love—his of ambition! so let us stand; and thus they stood, so far as their future relations were concerned.

When the young mocking birds which he had cultivated, became obstreperous, and presumed to peck--with their usual selfish and ungrateful propensity—at the very head, and eyes, and heart that had nourished them, he would keep quiet until patience was utterly exhausted, and then turn about and give them a tremendous drubbing. I have seen the Song Thrush in many associations, but I never saw it fail to thrash the mocking bird, and every other bird of its family, when they had carried their aggressions up to a certain point. This bird will not fight if it can help it, but when it does, it fights like a desperado, and always wins. Both the American and English varieties are equally quiet in this respect, and never commit aggressions upon their neighbors, but resent them with the same fierceness.

There is a curious book called "The Natural History of Cage Birds, by J. M. Bechstein, M. D., &c., of Waltershausen, in Saxony," which furnishes many interesting particulars in regard to the habits of the Song Thrush. We shall proceed to give them as being somewhat rare to American and general readers. He says: "we might with Brisson"—he speaks of the Song Thrush—"name this bird the *small missel thrush*, so much does it resemble the preceding in form, plumage, abode, manners and gait. Its length is only eight inches and a half, three and a half of which belong to the tail; the beak is three-quarters of an inch, horn brown, the under part yellowish at the base and yellow within; the iris is nut brown, and shanks are an inch high and of a dingy lead color. All of the upper part of the body is olive brown. The throat is yellowish white, with a black line on each side, the sides of the neck and breast are of a pale reddish white, variegated with dark brown spots shaped like a heart reversed; the belly is white, and covered with more oval spots."

Here we have the usual inaccuracy of old authors, but let us hear them:

"When wild, this species is spread all over Europe, frequenting woods near streams, and meadows. As soon as the autumnal fogs appear, they collect in large flights to seek a warmer climate.* The principal time of passage is from the 15th of September to the 15th of October, and of return, about the middle or end of March ; each pair then returns to its own district, and the male warbles his hymn to spring from the same tree where he had sung the preceding year.

"In confinement, this bird is lodged like the Missel Thrush, and is much more worthy of being kept, as its voice is more beautiful, its song more varied, and it being smaller it makes less dirt.

"This species generally build on the lower branches of trees, the nest being pretty large and formed of moss mixed with earth or cow-dung. The hen lays twice a year, from three to six green eggs, speckled with large and small dark brown spots. The first brood is ready to fly by the end of April. The upper part of the body in the young ones is speckled with white. By taking them from the nest when half-grown, they may be easily reared on white bread soaked in boiled milk, and they are easily taught to perform airs. As this thrush builds by preference in the neighborhood of water, the nest may be easily found by seeking it in the woods beside a stream, and near it the male will be heard singing.

"Of all the birds for which snares are laid, those for the thrush are most successful. A perch with a limed twig is the best method for catching a fine-toned male. In September and October, these birds may be caught in the water traps, where they repair at sunrise and sunset, and sometimes so late that they cannot be seen, and the ear is the only guide. When they enter the water, haste must be avoided, because they like to bathe in company, and assemble sometimes to the number of ten or twelve at once, by means of a particular call. The first which finds a convenient stream, and wishes to go to it, cries in a tone of surprise or joy—'*sik, sik, sik, siki, tsac, tsac, tsac*'—immediately all the neighborhood reply together, and repair to the place. They enter the bath, however, with much circumspection, and seldom venture till they have seen a red-breast bathe without danger; but the first which ventures is soon followed by the others, which begin to quarrel if the place is not large enough for all the bathers. In order to attract them, it is a good plan to have a tame bird running and fluttering on the banks of a stream."

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* In Britain they remain all the year.

So it is with the gentle and affectionate natures of humanity; they are easily caught by the "limed twigs" of pretence. But here is what the German says of the European bird:

"The Song Thrush is the great charm of our woods, which it enlivens by the beauty of its song. The rival of the Nightingale—it announces in varied accents the return of spring, and continues its delightful notes during all the summer months, particularly at morning and evening twilight."

The habits of the English or European Song Thrush agree so perfectly with those of the American bird, that we are almost tempted to pronounce them identical, except that we have heard their songs. One is brilliant, keen and cold as hawthorn hedge rows and a systematized civilization could require; the other, wild, bold, liquid and free as the very breath of harmonious liberty could demand.

At all events, the English bird is true *to sentiment*, and that is all we demand. We cannot help, however, before leaving the subject of English and European song-birds, recurring to what this same European has said in regard to the famous Nightingale. Bechstein says:

"The male is particularly endowed with so very striking a musical talent, that in this respect he surpasses all birds, and has acquired the name of the king of songsters. The strength of his vocal organ is indeed wonderful, and it has been found that the muscles of his lungs are much more powerful than those of any other bird. But it is less the strength, than the compass, flexibility, prodigious variety and harmony of his voice, which makes it so admired by all lovers of the beautiful. Sometimes dwelling for minutes on a strain composed of only two or three melancholy tones, he begins in an under tone, and swelling it gradually by the most superb crescendo, to the highest point of strength, he ends it by a dying cadence; or it consists of a rapid succession of more brilliant sounds, terminated, like many other strains of his song, by some detached note. Twenty-four different strains or couplets may be reckoned in the song of a fine Nightingale, without including its delicate little variations, for among these, as among other musicians, there are some great performers and many middling ones. This song is so articulate, so speaking, that it may be very well written. The following is a trial which I have made on that of a Nightingale in my neighborhood, which passes for a very capital singer:

> "Tioû, tioû, tioû, tioû.
> Spe, tiou, squa.
> Tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô.
> Coutio, coutio, coutio, coutio.
> Squô, squô, squô, squô.
> Tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzi.
> Corro, tiou, squa, pipiqui.
> Zozozozozozozozozozozozo, zirrhading!
> Tsissisi, tsissisisisisisisisis.
> Dzorre, dzorre, dzorre, dzorre, hi.
> Tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, dzi.
> Dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo.
> Quio, tr rrrrrrrr itz.
> Lu, lu, lu, lu, ly, ly, ly, ly, liê, liê, liê, liê.*
> Quio, didl li lulylie.
> Hagurr, gurr guipio.
> Coui, coui, coui, coui, qui, qui, qui, qui, gui, gui, gui, gui.†
> Goll, goll, goll, goll, quia hadadoi.
> Couiqui, horr, ha diadia dill si!

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* I possess a nightingale which repeats these brawling, melancholy notes, often thirty or even fifty times. Many pronounce *qu*, *quy*, *qui*, and others, *qu quy gui*.

† These syllables are pronounced in a sharper, clearer manner than the preceding *lu*, *lu*, *&c.*—AUTHOR.

Hezezezezezezezezezezezezezezezezeze couar ho dze hoi.
Quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, ti.
Ki, ki, ki, ïo, ïo, ïo, ioioioio ki.
Lu ly li le lai la leu lo, didl ïo quia.
Kigaigaigaigaigaigaigai guiagaigaigai couior dzio dzio pi.*

"If we could understand the sense of their words, we should doubtless discover the expression of the sensations of this delightful songster. It is true that the nightingale of all countries, the South as well as the North, appears to sing in this same manner; there is, however, as has been already observed, so great a difference in the degree of perfection, that we cannot help acknowledging the one has great superiority over another."

Now if any one will take the trouble to whistle or hum over this song, they will find it to resemble, in all respects except intensity, the natural song of our mocking bird. The splendor and power of the new monarch cannot be expressed in syllables, its infinite variety is beyond the command of the gamut.

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* However difficult or even impossible it may be to express this song upon an instrument, (excepting, however, the jay call, made of tin, on which is placed a piece of birch cut in a cross, and which is held between the tongue and palate,) yet it is very true that the accompaniment of a good piano produces the most agreeable effect.—AUTHOR.

CHAPTER X.

BORDER LIFE IN THE WEST.

AN ADVENTURE NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE OHIO RIVER.

THE neighborhood of that amphibious city known as Cairo, has never been remarkable for either the hospitable or any other virtues of its inhabitants, especially those on the Indiana side.

I had a most satisfactory opportunity of testing this on an occasion which I shall relate.

Some twelve or thirteen years since, while on my return to my native town in Kentucky, after a long sojourn amidst the wilds of the Texas border, I accidentally fell in, at Lexington, with the father of an old and intimate friend of my own, who had, too, been an adventurer through the same regions and scenes which I had just left, but had now settled down, for the time at least, in charge of a new plantation he was opening on the Kentucky side of the Ohio, some fifteen miles above Cairo.

The father, Mr. H——, was now on his way to pay a visit to his son, and invited me—as it would be but a slight deviation from a direct course home—to accompany him, and pay a passing visit to his son Dick, who would be anxious to hear all the news I could give him concerning the late field of his adventures. We took water at Louisville, expecting, as the new plantation was only a mile from the banks of the Ohio, that we would be put ashore by the steamboat on the Kentucky side, and have no difficulty in reaching the house.

But the river was falling fast when we left Louisville, and we found great difficulty on that account, in the way of our navigation; and indeed, when we reached the point of landing, just at the head of the rapids, which was not until eleven o'clock of a dark night, we found to our great dismay, that the captain could not be induced to land on the Kentucky side by any entreaties. He said that at such a stage of the water, landing on that side was entirely unsafe, and that he would not risk the safety of his boat and other passengers for the accommodation of one or two—but as he offered to land us on the Indiana side, where there was a small wood-yard and cabin, in which we could take shelter until morning, we were bound to feel satisfied.

However great this obligation was, my elderly companion did not seem by any means to appreciate it with sufficient gratitude. When he found that the captain was brutally determined upon his course, he said nothing more, but seemed reconciled to put the best possible face upon the matter. I could see, though, from his manner, that there was something behind the studied coolness with which he accepted the alternative; what it meant I could not comprehend, for I had been too long absent from the country to be at all aware of the then infamous reputation of that portion of the Indiana border. The boat stopped in the middle of the stream, and the yawl was manned to put us, with our baggage, on shore, when, as we were entering, we found ourselves about to be joined by a third party, whose "traps" had been handed forward, and had been passed down. First came four square boxes of cherry-wood, highly varnished, and ostentatiously mounted with silver—German silver, I suppose—and which proved very weighty; so much so, that the "hands" indulged in many mysterious jokes about them, enjoining each other to be careful not to let them fall, for if they "bust" open and "spilt anything," it might be too much "for a man to stand," &c. Then came several large and heavy black trunks.

"In Heaven's name, man!" said Mr. H——, turning up his eyes with a look in which the serio-comic horror seemed struggling with pity; "do you know where you are taking all this baggage?"

The new passenger, as revealed to us for a moment in the torch-light, seemed a sturdy, thick-set, rosy cheeked, but rather greenish-looking Yankee. He sprang down into the boat, and took his place by our side, saying, with the greatest *nonchalance*, "Ya-es, I guess I do!"

"Well," growled my friend—for the boat was now in motion—"I should rather *guess* you *don't*—we'll see!"

The self-confident Yankee took no notice of this speech, but settled himself as coolly as possible for his own comfort, and with, of course, no regard to ours, upon the seat he had thus unceremoniously occupied, and stretching out his legs, seemed preparing for a snooze, while our boat shot out through the almost impenetrable darkness towards the distant shore. A light, which was now swinging to and fro at the wood-yard, was our only guide and beacon, for the shore was entirely invisible. It had been raining through the day, and the night, which was now darkly clouded, promised to be still boisterous and stormy.

When we reached the shore, a rough-looking fellow met us with his pine-knot torch, and proved very obsequious in helping us land. When the hands had put our baggage ashore and the boat had pushed off, this accommodating gentleman with the torch proceeded complacently to assure us that the baggage would be entirely safe where it lay—that there was nobody here to trouble it for the very good reason that no person lived within ten miles, on this side of the river, of his solitary cabin—into which he pressed us to walk and "make ourselves at home." But innocent as this proposition seemed, I was too much of a traveller to leave *anything* at risk, even when only my own humble personalities—which, by the way, I believe were then contained in a pair of saddle-bags—were considered, so I resisted this philanthropic proposition at once, and was instantly seconded by my friend H——, who was himself a wary and experienced traveller. A comparative stranger to this whole region, I had no definite suspicion, and for all I knew to the contrary, this proposition might have been as unsophisticated and simply unmeaning as any expression of the security of property that might have fallen from the lips of a piping shepherd peasant of Arcadia. But of a sooth, I had somehow learned to distrust Arcadias in general, and river-shore Arcadias in particular. To be sure, my friend's manner had not been unnoted; but as he had not chosen to tender an explanation, I did not choose to ask one, and besides, there was in the manner of this man of the torch, whom I had closely watched, a something which I did not understand—in the way in which he tried the weight of those unfortunate silver-mounted boxes as they were passed on to him by the boat's crew, for him to keep in a convenient place upon the shore! Our Yankee, whom self-sufficiency had evidently—as we say in the West—"struck with the blind staggers," could not help making the matter worse by joking with the fellow about them.

"Aint they very heavy?" asked he, with a shrewd wink at us. "They had oughter have somethin' in 'em, I guess!"

Therewith he snapped his eyes, shrugged his shoulders, licked out his tongue and guffawed obstreperously. The fellow said—"Yes, they is!"—and looking up with a furtive glance, he too laughed—but it was with a strange laugh—"*You* seem to be all right!"

I noticed this incident and it threw me at once into the imperative mood, and seizing one end of the trunk of my friend, which I knew to contain a large amount of valuables, I ordered the fellow to take the other, and whispering to H——, as I passed him, said,

"Stay here; I will watch in the cabin!"

The cabin of our compulsory host was about fifty paces from the landing, and to reach it we had to pass through piles of cord-wood, which left only a narrow alley between them and the hut which they partially obscured.

It was the usual square pen of logs, with only one room and a wide fire-place, in which now burned a dim blaze. When we sat the trunk down on the side nearest the door, the man commenced talking in what I thought a somewhat insolent tone, about how unnecessary it was for us to be troubled with lugging in all those heavy trunks, when they were perfectly safe on the bank. I very quietly answered that, as the night promised to be stormy, we preferred having our baggage under shelter, and directed him to go back and assist my friends in bringing the remainder in. The fellow went off sulkily, and very soon he and the Yankee returned, bending under the weight of one of that respectable proficient's mysterious black trunks. My friend had remained behind to guard the rest of the baggage. I felt uneasy that he should be left there in the dark alone, for I knew that he as well as myself was unarmed, and unable to restrain my impatience, I said to him, as coolly as possible, in an undertone—

"See here, my green one. You had better look out for yourself. You are not in old Connecticut now!"

"Waal now, I guess I will. They don't cheat me out of nothin'!"

Seeing that the fellow was incorrigible I left him, dragging the man of the wood-yard after me, as I hurried back to the side of my friend, fearing vaguely that something might have occurred. I found him, however, walking back and forth, with folded arms, before the baggage, and with an expression of uneasiness that so precisely corresponded with my own feelings as to assure me that there must surely be something wrong one way or another.

The baggage was now housed as quickly as possible by our united efforts. As my older friend had not yet said anything which implied the slightest distrust of our present position and relations, I, as the younger man, was compelled to take it for granted that he saw nothing which would justify any apprehensions on our part. I knew that he had been an incessant traveller like myself, but an older one by double the age, and therefore, in spite of my misgivings, had to fall into his manner of treating things.

After we were all fairly housed, bag and baggage, I accordingly left the cue to him. I knew that the greater portion of the wealth he possessed, which was very considerable, was contained in that rusty-looking, travel-stained trunk, upon which he quietly sat down; and being aware of all he had at stake, could not help admiring the *sang froid* with which he faced the conditions in which he found himself. He bantered our rough host in all sorts of droll ways, and seemed to be utterly indifferent as to whether he gave offence or not.

Our sappy Yankee, in the meantime, commenced making a great clamor about something to eat and drink, and expressed the wildest astonishment when the man assured him that he had no whiskey in the house, and nothing to eat but a little corn meal.

"Du tell!" shouted the astounded fellow. "Not got nothin' to eat? Why, how du you live out here?"

"On mud-cats, with soap-stone to butter 'em!" interposed my friend, laughing. "But, Yankee, what do you want with anything more to eat to-night? I saw you eat enough for three men at the supper-table, before you left the boat."

"Why, la! what has a fellow got to do but to eat and drink, too? I say, old fellow, git eout your Injun flour; you ain't got no pumkins, ain't you? Wall, let's have your Injun doins—though you be's mighty bad off here, not to have pumkins nor whiskey."

Our host now suddenly became excessively obliging, and immediately paraded his peck of meal, with a spider to cook it in, and even became so prodigal in his desire to gratify the guzzling propensities of our Yankee, as to hint that he *might* be able to get us some whiskey.

Yankee was hugely overjoyed at the idea, while I was intensely vexed and annoyed.

The moment the man was beyond ear-shot, I turned to Yankee, and said sharply, "Look you, my good fellow, if you don't beware how you use that whiskey, you may chance to wake up with your throat cut before you are done with it."

The fellow only laughed out coarsely, and asserted, with a sly wink toward my friend—

"That he wan't afraid of whiskey's cutting his throat, and wondered if *I* was afraid?"

I turned from him in disgust, remarking, "I see you've got to learn a great deal about the West yet."

In a moment after our host entered the door, and to our no little astonishment, accompanied by a train of powerful, ruffianly-looking fellows, which numbered, along with himself, six in all, and made a by no means grateful addition to our company.

A suspicion, which, as I have observed, continued to gain ground upon me, that we had fallen upon evil times here, and certainly into evil company; for I never remembered chancing upon a more villainous group than this which now gathered about us.

I was fully roused to the feeling of doubt and insecurity, as I carefully watched the movements of these fellows. I perceived in a moment that they were armed with knives as well as whiskey bottles. A look immediately passed between my friend and myself, and my course was determined upon for we were both, so far as I knew, unarmed, and I saw while they gathered more closely around us, with rough but over friendly greetings, that each man of them carried his knife with but a clumsy pretext of concealment underneath his shirt. I now felt at once what was the course proper to be pursued. That as we were in their power but too evidently, our only available course for the present, was in temporizing, and I saw too that it would be utterly useless for us to make any calculations upon the Yankee, who received them with a boisterous greeting. They immediately offered him the whiskey-bottle. He snatched it eagerly.

"Ha! ha! That's great—du tell now, boys, where'd you all cum from? Good old Rye, hey?" and in spite of all my efforts to telegraph a warning to him against drinking it, down went a deep draught at once. I felt convinced that the liquor had been drugged, and when the bottle was passed to me, I turned my head towards my friend, and while I pretended to be taking even a longer and deeper potation than that in which the unconscious Yankee indulged, my eye met his, and a look of peculiar significance was exchanged. I moved the muscles of my throat as if swallowing rapidly, though I forced the villainous decoction out of the corners of my mouth.

I saw that I was closely watched, but I had turned my back upon the faint light of the fire, and thus managed to escape detection in this manœuvre—for although the fellow to whom I returned the bottle, held it before the light for an instant to satisfy himself whether a sufficient quantity had disappeared to justify the extraordinary length of the suction I had seemingly indulged—I had taken care of that, and had smacked my lips with such extraordinary relish, that he turned away with a leer of unmistakable gratification. Villian! thought I, you missed your aim this time, clear enough!

I felt a momentary uneasiness as I saw them now gather about him, from the fear of the possibility that my friend might not have taken the hint fully. Suddenly becoming jovial, I laughed out as they presented the bottle to him.

"Oh no, boys, it's no use—he never drinks; besides, don't you see how sleepy he is?" My friend had suddenly grown drowsy, and was leaning his head back against the log wall, with eyes nearly closed. But they seemed determined he should be dosed at any rate, and although he shook his head and drawled out in a half articulate way, that he was too sleepy to drink, they continued to urge upon him to rouse up and "take something."

I interrupted these hospitable designs, by insisting that they should come and drink with Yankee and myself, assuring them with a somewhat roystering manner—

"I tell you, my good fellows, the old man will be sound asleep—yes, dead asleep—for I know him of old! How he sleeps! Why, you might fire a pistol in his ear when he once gets at it, and he would never hear it."

A low, broad-shouldered fellow with wiry muscular frame, a throat hairy as a grizzly bear's with a black tangled shag upon his head, mean, narrow wrinkled forehead, and thick, inky brows that sat above his vulture beak, and shaded a pair of small black eyes, the cunning and remorseless ferocity of the expression of which I never saw surpassed in man or beast—now turned upon me with a sharp suspicious look, as if he questioned my meaning in this last speech, but the expression of maudlin jollity into which my features had fallen, seemed to satisfy him.

The Yankee now too came to my rescue, and produced a diversion of attention also from my friend and myself, by obstreperous displays of the convivial spirit which were altogether too unmistakable for even lingering suspicion.

The bottle was once more passed to him, but when they did me the honor to pay me the same favor, after pretending to drink again, I insisted that they should also drink with us, "in compliment," not as a pledge of hospitality, which appeal as I knew among men of loyalty, however rude, would have been considered sacred, but among such as those into whose power we seemed to have fallen, would only have been regarded as indicating suspicion on my part.

They all made a noisy parade of their readiness to drink with the "gentleman," but each one of them, as he received the bottle, turned his back upon us while he drank, or, as I was convinced, pretended to drink.

The fellows continued to grow very familiar and obstreperous, especially when the Yankee, in an astonishingly short time, began to give satisfactory indication of having got his full "dose." His eyelids became exceedingly heavy, while his gait wavered, and his tongue stuttered.

Now the revel ran high apparently, although he was the only person in that cabin room who had drank a drop of the accursed mixture. The creature's evidently besotted condition had proved a capital foil to the game played by myself, for with such proof of the success of the villainous trick upon one of the party, it was very natural for them to suppose, when they saw my friend H—— with his head thrown back, his mouth wide apart, breathing heavily, as if in a sound sleep, upon his trunk, and found, too, that I, a rather boyish looking somebody at the best, seemed to have fallen so readily into their gull-trap—would soon fall into the same condition towards which Yankee was fast verging.

I took good care to contribute to this charitable expectation as far as possible, and the fellows now became more unguarded. One of them deliberately sat down upon the heap of the Yankee's baggage, picked up one of the ill-omened cherry-wood boxes, deliberately weighed it in his hands, and replaced it, looking up at the same time with a broad wink, a nod, and a chuckle into the faces of those nearest to him. I pretended not to notice this. I had so frequently noticed one and another of them as they pretended to stumble over these boxes, pause to weigh them with their feet, that this insolent manœuvre only served to remind me of the greater imminence of our position, and, if possible, to open my eyes the wider. Things looked very dark to me, it must be confessed. Yankee, it was clear enough, was under the influence of some soporific potion, to a degree that rendered him utterly helpless—it might be that H—— was really sound asleep—at all events, he certainly counterfeited it so well as to leave me in absolute doubt—and I, a slight youth, left alone to guard these two lives and all this property, of the amount of which I could scarcely conjecture, and I surrounded by six powerful ruffians, with knives in their bosoms, who were growing every moment more insolent with what they supposed to be the entire promise of impunity in crime, which the existing circumstances afforded—all this! and I without a weapon, except the arms God gave me, which would be snapped like reeds in the grasp of these stalwart men!

For a moment, a dark shadow passed over me and I saw myself embrowned and haggard, returning after years of wild vicissitudes amidst the avowed and constant perils of an Indian and guerilla-ravaged frontier, in what was then a foreign and unreclaimed territory—where my rifle and pistols had been considered by me as necessary to the extension of my daily life as my lungs and heart—to find myself here on my weary returning to the repose of civilization and home, when I had gladly thrown aside those weapons, the very sight of which had become painful to me, suddenly entrapped in the surroundings of a new peril, perhaps more formidable than any I had met in my wanderings, and that too without a weapon to my hand.

The most terrible position in which you can place those who habitually rely upon the use of weapons as an equivalent for that physical prowess which they have failed to cultivate, is to deprive them of them in circumstances of danger, which otherwise they would have faced without hesitation! It is horrible. As it was, I was only more sharpened and intensified in every faculty.

In a reckless way I suddenly exclaimed—

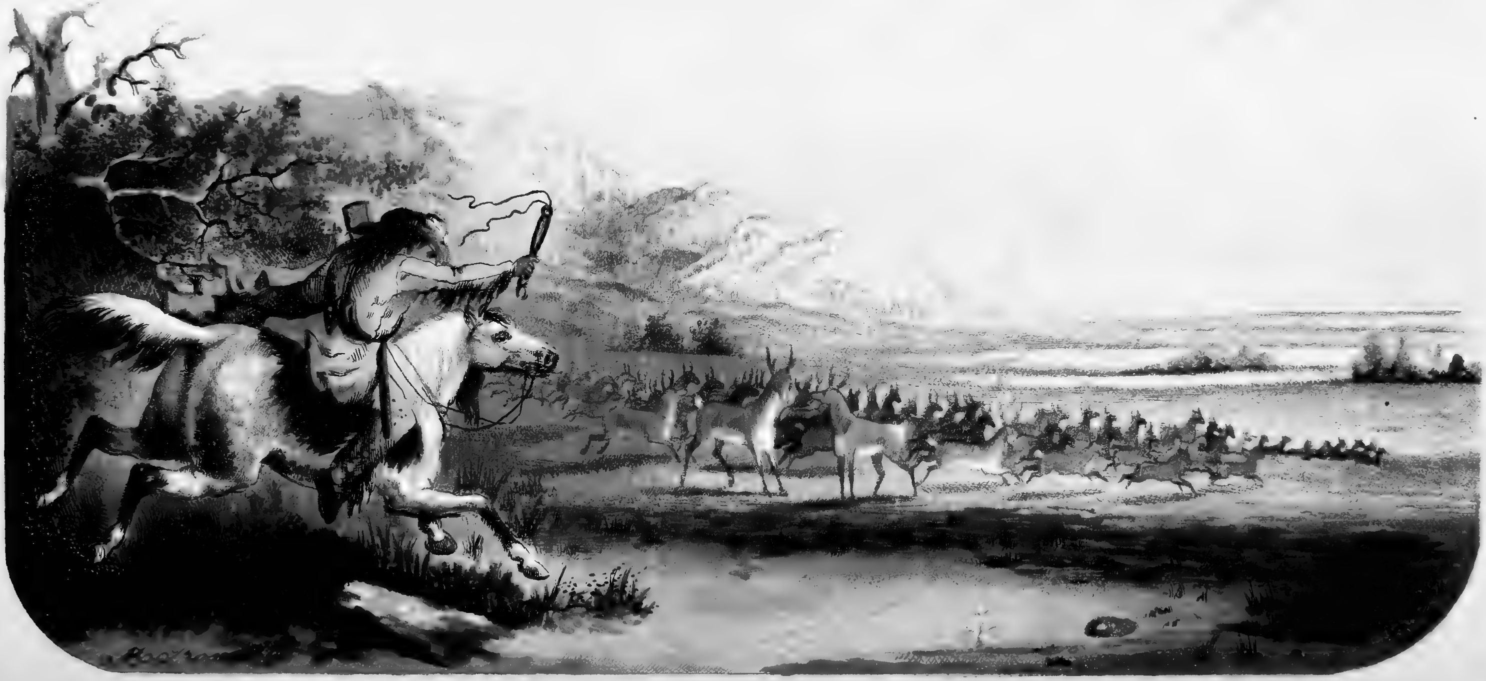
" Boys, I love hunting. I have come down here to hunt! You must have plenty of game around you here, for you've got woods enough! I've a notion to stay with you for a day or two on this side, if there's any chance for game."

" Plenty of it here, sir! Plenty of it here!"

" What is it? Bear and deer, of course?"

" O yes, bear and deer plenty—wild cats—painters and all that!"

" Well, I'm with you. That's the game for me. I won't go over with the old man there," pointing to my sleeping friend. " You look like good fellows—he wants me to go over to the other side and fish with his boys, but I don't like fishing when there's bear and wild-cat about—it's a



Miller pinx.

L. N. Rosenthal's Cromo Lith. Philad^{a}.

ANTELOPE CHASE.

bore. I like to 'rough it' for my part." Turning quickly to my red-haired host I said,

"You all hunt of course—bold boys like you?"

"Ye-e-es, we all hunts in course."

"You have a fine-looking, old-fashioned, long-barreled rifle up there over the door, I perceive!" and before any of them had time to think, I staggered roughly through them, and had the rifle down from its buck-horn hooks. Its massive barrel was a terrible weapon, even if unloaded, for I had marked it from the first, and it was its possession I had been coveting, though altogether uncertain as to its being charged.

This movement had been so unexpected, that they were entirely unprepared for it, and I had time to cock the rifle, and with a thrill of ungovernable joy, perceived that it was freshly capped.

The muzzle had been instantly brought down to the "present," as I placed my back against the corner of the cabin. There had been a slight movement among them, as if for a simultaneous rush upon me. It was only a scarcely perceptible wave—but that wave fell back before the formidable muzzle which stared them in the face with its one dark, unfathomable orb.

"Ah! I see it is loaded—a fine rifle no doubt! I love rifles, and, Mr. Host, I shall take the liberty of examining this for awhile!" and I walked through them as they stood gaping at me in mute astonishment, and took a seat near my sleeping friend.

The tables were now effectually changed, and as I sat down on one of the trunks of H——, I felt it to be unnecessary longer to counterfeit drunkenness, for I had earned experience enough of ruffians already to understand that they were all cowards, and incapable, unless armed with similar weapons, and in overpowering numbers, of facing a resolute man with a loaded fire-arm. I had possessed myself, by a *coup de main*, of the weapon of my villainous, inhospitable host, and determined to make him the first target of its aim in the event of contingencies. Assuming at once an imperative tone, I demanded of the fellow, with his own rifle lying across my knees, cocked—my finger in the guard and the barrel levelled at his bosom—

"Where did you get that whiskey from?"

"Got it up here in the woods," he answered sulkily.

"Where, up in the woods, my good fellow? Did you not represent, when we landed here, that there were no persons living within ten miles of your cabin, and that therefore it was a needless precaution for us to bring our baggage in? Where do all these fellows come from—up in the woods, I suppose, where the whiskey came from?"

"Yes, the boys have got a shanty up there."

"Well, it must be precious liquor you sell among you! Look at that man there who has been fool enough to drink of your poisoned whiskey!" I pointed to Yankee, who had by this time fallen helplessly across his ill-fated cherry-wood boxes, with all the relaxed expression of the abandon of repose peculiar to those suffering under the effect of strong narcotics. The fellow only grunted out—

"The fool is drunk! The whiskey is good enough!" and sundry mutterings and murmurings ran around the circle. I had noticed a slight stir of my friend's body during this conversation, and suddenly there was a faint jingling—the heavy sleeper had fallen upon his knees before his trunk—the lock snapped, and in a twinkling a pair of nine-inch barrel ounce-ball pistols were exhumed, clicking as they came forth, and shutting down the lid of his trunk, with a pistol in each hand, the drowsy gentleman assumed the old attitude of profound sleep, with his fingers cautiously resting on the outside of the hair-trigger guard. This was too rich. I laughed outright.

"You can't come it, my boys," said I, as I threw myself back in a guarded ecstasy of mirth.

"Can't come what?" said the beetle-browed ruffian.

"Oh, nothing," said I, "except that you had better walk out of that door, the whole of you, and if you want something to do, you may bring me some wood, for our fire is all, or nearly exhausted!"

The fellows had been completely cowed by the unexpected demonstration of my sleepy friend. They pretended to consider this command as a mere joke, and all started towards the door with so much alacrity, that my constitutional caution was aroused, and I suddenly remembered that during the jargon of talk that had occurred between us, under the pretence of mutual exhilaration, I had gathered the fact that they had a small boat tied to the river bank near the wood-yard—and that in this boat I had announced that I intended so soon as the storm that still raged had subsided, to embark with my friend and undertake the passage of the river, for I wished as soon as possible to place it between us and this inhospitable shore. It flashed across me now, from their over-ready manner, that they meant to get possession of this boat, and shut off all prospect of our early escape, with the purpose of gaining time to bring together a stronger party, who might with fire-arms cope with the unexpected advantages of which we had placed ourselves in possession. These woods had suddenly become astonishingly populous already, and there was no telling what might come forth from their dark shadows!

I at once determined that they should not go out alone—that I would watch with my own eyes every movement.

"Hilloa, boys!—I will go with you."

"Oh! will you?" chuckled the black-browed fellow—"come ahead—who's afraid of the dark!"

"Well, I, for one, in some company; so you will please march *ahead of me!*"

"By no means, nor nothing—gentlemen's goes ahead!"

"Beg your pardon; I am a *man*, for the present—so you will please walk in front of me, and I will go down to the river bank with you for wood."

Nothing more was said between us, and the party launched out into the darkness, in single file, followed by myself, with my host's own rifle on half-cock and at the present. The rain had ceased, but a strong wind was still blowing that troubled the broad waters of the Ohio with a strange tumult. There seemed a dusky portent in the swiftly-drifting clouds and wail of the departing storm, that truly comported with the bleak characteristics of the gloomily-pictured scene. The forest in the back ground, a lofty mass of impenetrable blackness; the small opening in which stood the cabin and the petty wood-yard, faintly *felt* rather than defined to the vision; the great river roaring and lashed upon the shelving bank, seen dimly, as we see visions through deep mists that go fading through the uttermost abyss: the bad, ferocious men about me, and no star in all the funereal heavens!—such a sense of God-forsaken desolation as came over me on the first moments in which I stepped out into this scene, had never before in my whole life overtaken me amidst all its turbulent exigencies.

But that I had no time for sentimentalizing, soon became apparent; for, I found that these fellows were all the time attempting to surround, or get behind me. It required all my resolution and wariness to prevent this; but, as I always stood apart from them, and always carried the rifle in one significant position, they were content, after having dragged the boat up to a point which I had marked out as one that could be commanded from a narrow port-hole in the cabin, which they called a window—to pick up the splinters of cord-wood and drift which lined the shore, and carry them in the same order of procession back to the cabin.

I never before until this night, realized what the struggle of will with the Demon of massacre meant! Such tense-strung nerve, such vigilant strain of sense would exhaust the very Lucifer himself, if long protracted. The instinct of murder is the most dull-lipped and dogged of all those extravagant passions that beset mankind. The Wolf is the prototype of murder. It never tires: watchful always, it trails despair to death: confessedly a coward, it shrinks before the open eye of will, but ever follows, follows, follows!—whither? until the weary stagger, and can no longer strive—then they become brave, then they tear his bones with gnashings, and toss upward open, brainless, eyeless skulls, in the exultings of a bloody satiety!

I now surveyed the whole ground carefully, so far as the imperfect light would permit, as I followed these men back to the cabin, thinking how to get rid of the whole set as soon as possible. I marched them in before me; kept a close account of their numbers, and had a blazing fire immediately lit. I had no idea of trusting to twilight with such comrades! Everything now seemed to promise quiet for the time.

The men became, or pretended to become, sleepy at once, when we got back to the cabin—our red-haired host in special, who seemed suddenly overtaken in hot haste by the pursuing Morpheus—threw himself across the dirty platform that he called a bed, which stood in the corner, mounted on forked posts, and covered with skins and greasy blankets, and forthwith commenced snoring away most sonorously. He was joined by another of the fellows, who floundered down by his side, while the others began to arrange themselves, some with their heads upon the coveted boxes, and others upon carpet-bags, &c.

My benevolent-looking friend with the black brows stretched himself on the floor across the hearth, with his back to the fire, while poor I was content with seating myself upon a trunk just underneath the port-hole. I saw what must be the object of this manœuvre. By pretending to be asleep themselves, they hoped to throw us off our guard, calculating that towards day-break we might be come wearied out, and sink into sleep too; but I had determined not to be cajoled, and kept wary watch upon them through the corner of my apparently closed eyes. I felt well assured that my astute friend of the nine-inch barrels was doing the same thing, although he seemed to be sound asleep, and his face appeared as stolid as any wooden effigy. The sneaking rascals could not even play the game of this flimsy deception well. During an hour the silence was terrible—for the roar and creaking wails of the stormy winds through the deep forest outside, and the mournful beat of the lashed waters, were the only sounds: since the voices of the wild creatures of the darkness and the wilds were all stilled—while within, the deep, irregular breathing of the simulating ruffians constituted a depressing under-tone. I grew excessively nervous—the presence of these wretches was a fearful incubus in connection with our other surroundings, and the discomfort of our general position was not a little increased when, after this interminable hour, I perceived—for I had kept my eye most constantly fixed upon the black-browed fellow as the most dangerous of the party—that he changed his position so as to command a full view of me, and as I drew my slightly-separated lashes nearer together, I could feel the cold, glittering point from his half-open, furtive glance, questioning my face. There was something so essentially wolfish in this trick, that I involuntarily shuddered, and was just in the act of springing to my feet, with the purpose of making an end of this uncertainty, by a *coup de main* of some sort, when I noticed a movement from the bed in the corner, which induced me to wait and see if they would begin an active demonstration on *their* part.

My red-headed host had also turned over, and I saw that he, too, was watching H—— and myself through his half-opened eye. Rest assured those of you who may, by any contingency, be placed in suspicious relations to the predatory man—that he always acts most upon the animal instincts—that, in a word, he is a wild beast of prey! and that if you have studied the habits of the wild beast well, you will know the tricks, the feints, and the modes of plunder and murder most likely to be adopted by the human wolf, wild-cat, panther, tiger, lion or bear. Only make up your mind to regard him as more the brute than the man, and you will find that your studies in natural history have not been thrown away.

These wretches were wolves, and I had often seen this animal exhibit this counterfeit sleep before in actual nature, and therefore knew what it meant. The joke was, though, that my friend had actually out-wolfed the wolves at their own game of counterfeit, and to all appearances I had been nearly as successful, for they began now to stir rather simultaneously.

The sleep of Yankee had continued as profound as from the first; my friend's face seemed as stolid as ever, and I suppose I too must have *looked* the sleeper better than the wolf could counterfeit it, for they clearly took it for granted that I was sound asleep—since they commenced telegraphing to each other now through the silence by gestures!

"Suddenly there came a rapping" at the thin plank door; the fellows did not stir, nor did we! Now came knocks louder and more frequent, which left us both without any pretext for remaining quiet any longer, so we sprang to our feet simultaneously, and as if really awakening from a deep sleep, and asked, "What is the matter?—what does this mean?"

The men deliberately and sluggishly arose, and the host opened the door, while I threw on an additional piece of bark to the fire.

Out from the cavernous dark emerged the most grotesque form that ever Retsch figured as the lank-haired goblin of some haunted fountain, creeping up to stare upon the light, and fright its fated victim.

He was dripping from every stringy lock, and each tatter streamed with its separate stream. His face, ghostly cadaverous and thin, seemed from its hollow eyes to stare the jaundiced famine of a sick vulture—sickened on the green sance of slime, amidst which its offal prey had floated. Too rich!—too rich! for even such a stomach.

It was indeed a horrible creature—possessing a life the most strangely incomprehensible that can be conceived, and the only parallels to which, in the disguise of humanity, that are to be found among us, exist in the buzzard race of rag-picking gutter-rakers, which the dreadful distortions of European life have weekly vomited upon our shores.

The creature was what is called a boat or river thief—one who lived by petty thieving—a prowler along the desolate river shore, from small settlement to settlement—a comparative harmless wretch, appropriating everything he could lay his hands upon in the shape of movable or convertable property; boats, poultry, pigs and groceries, left exposed one night upon the landings. He had evidently received a severe striping lately—most probably for some petty theft—as I could see the blue whelks and blood-crusted scars plainly enough through the loop-holes of his tattered shirt.

It was droll indeed to witness the airs of "indignant virtue" forthwith assumed by the delectable and "chosen" innocents who constituted the inmates of the hut. They rose at once upon the poor miserable devil, as the wolf snarls through white tusks at the feeble carrion crow, or at the slow-winged, obscene *aura*, that comes flapping in slow glide above a promised feast. He begged for food in vain, and before he had time to whine out his pitiful story, they seized and hurled him out into the darkness from whence he had emerged, floating on a drift-log down the fretful river. I felt as if the time had come when I must act, if ever. So standing behind these virtuous gentry, just as they had succeeded in turning out the poor river-thief, by their united efforts, my friend and myself presented ourselves at the door with weapons cocked, and ordered them peremptorily off, telling them that we knew them to be far worse and more dangerous scoundrels than the poor creature they had thrown into night.

"Now!" said I, "we understand you fully for a set of cut-throats and robbers, and we give you fair warning that the first man of you who touches the boat which is fastened to the river shore down there, I will shoot, and with an aim that *never misses*—remember that."

The rascals slunk away into the dark along with the repudiated Kelpie of the desolate river, and we were quickly left alone.

To barricade the door with trunks and all the cord-wood we had at command, was the first movement, and then to take my position as sentinel at the port-hole window, which overlooked the place of the boat, was the next. Not a word passed between my friend and myself. He resumed his seat next the door upon his trunk, and there he continued stolidly to sit.

The long rifle of which I had considered myself justified in depriving my treacherous host, lay rested upon the port-hole, and bearing upon the precious boat which was to rescue us from this terrible isolation amidst ruffianism in the morning.

Oh, a long, long time passed—God only knows how long it was!—and still I was standing watching the poor little canoe—for I could yet distinguish that frail craft—the position of which I had jealously marked, having directed that it should be at the foot of a tall sepulchral sycamore, that stood out with its white bark as a relief against the dreary gloom.

At last, I saw two shadows creeping along the dim shore, the cold, misty twilight, as the sombre morning crept onwards, making them more vague.

I had shivered and stood uncertain, anxious and distrustful so long, through this weary night, that everything seemed at last—now that nature was giving out—unreal, and when I saw palpably before my eyes two men enter this boat, and heard immediately the beat of oars or paddles, what could I do other than fire at the objects in the boat? A shriek told all the story, and the boat was instantly whirled down the stream.

The only immediate consolation that I ever received from this scene, was that the very fellow whom I considered the most dangerous of the group—and who was the black-browed scoundrel that I have particularized—was the person who received in his own breast the ball which I suppose he had intended should strike the "river chicken-thief," as he had immediately endeavored to throw himself in the bottom of the boat. But the ball had been too swift for him!

We afterwards heard that this man was a horribly notorious boat-robber and murderer, and richly deserved his fate, for when this den was broken up, a month or two subsequent, we ascertained that they had sent off for help and guns, and stealing the boat was the preliminary movement to an attempt to fire and storm the cabin and murder us in order to get possession of the boxes of specie, as they considered those unlucky cherry-wood cases of surveying instruments which our Yankee was engaged in peddling about the West, and which had so aroused their cupidity.

We got across next morning, of course, for the sons of my friend having heard the boat stop during the night, were on the alert, and taking my rifle-shot for a signal, were soon across in a boat to our rescue.

We left Yankee blubbering on the bank—for he had now slept off his stupefaction—but as there was a steamboat in sight, we thought ourselves justified in leaving him to his terrors for awhile. He deserved the lesson; and yet, as we moved off, the meek Song Thrush sang as sweet a song from out the dark shadows of that old wood, as if murder had never prowled there!

CHAPTER XI.

EAGLES AND ART.

MINNIE'S LAND, the residence of the late Mr. Audubon, the illustrious ornithologist, was situated near the high-water level of the Hudson, at the foot of a deep range of shelving hills, which form the Manhattan shore, and commence nearly opposite the foot of the noted Palisades.

Here, in the midst of a grove of native forest trees, and at some fifty paces from the water's edge, stood, embowered in characteristic seclusion, like the nest of one of his own favorite, solitude-haunting wild-birds, the simple and tasteful family mansion of the great illustrator of the feathered tribes.

You entered this hospitable home by a wide hall, which, opening upon a spacious portico fronting the river, divided the lower apartments into two ranges of rooms—those on the right hand consisting of atelier, library, and museum of specimens—those on the left being, with a beautiful propriety, dedicated to the rights of hospitality—dining-room, parlors, etc.

The main hall of entrance was hung on both sides with pictures; among them all that most attracted my attention in frequent visits, were two large oil paintings, one an original Salvator Rosa—terrible as all that I had ever dreamed of that drear and mighty genius of desolation. A leaden, clouded sky, hurled by the drifting storm against the sharp peaks of pinnacled cliffs, seemed falling, shattered in huge eddied flakes about the head of a poor wayfarer, whose thin cloak and long hair streaming beyond, made his figure seem the very counterpart of a blasted tree in the foreground, the only green limb upon which seemed to have just been partly torn from the trunk, and streamed, too, on the savage blast. I shall never forget that picture of desolation!

The other was a noble picture—pronounced by Christopher North, the noblest of all executed by Audubon—of a Golden Eagle, the full size of life, which, from a lofty crag of the White Mountains, was in the act of carrying off a lamb upon which it had just pounced, and which was clearly a vagrant from the white flock browsing peacefully beneath, which could be dimly seen through a break in the whirling chaos of vapor, which nearly compassed about the sun-lit rock, upon the grassy edges of which it had been tempted to feed.

With all this simplicity of elements, there was something indescribably majestic in the picture. In addition to the general effect, there was a degree of microscopic detail in the finish of the two figures of the eagle and the lamb, which has ever since left upon my mind an impression as of an actual scene.

Alas! for white-wooled innocence! it pleads in vain for mercy with the merciless. The full-winged tyrant is an hungered and athirst, and hath no bowels of compassion now that can be moved by piteous bleatings.

It is very nice, poor lamb! to have a snowy fleece, and such large, bright, gentle eyes, with such a meek appeal in them as might soften a heart of veriest adamant—very nice indeed! and one would think that of all creatures, it was least possible that thou couldst come to harm, even in a sinful world like this of ours!

But sad enough, these have all been in vain! A single crime has rendered the Ægis of purity powerless for thee, and forced thee to realize that, indeed,

"Some innocents 'scape not the thunderbolt!"—

for with a roar of sudden wings and gleam of a golden burnish, came it not down upon thee out of the still air—that fearful retribution—thou undutiful truant?

In the giddiness of thy wanton youth, didst thou not wander away from that fond and anxious sheep, which was to thee a mother? Regardless of the agonized bleatings by which she sought to recall thee to her dugs, didst thou not continue to climb the mountain-side, and in heedless aggravation of her tearful woe, frisk upon the perilous verge of bleakest rocks, where the strong winds made the grass to sing underneath thy hoofs?

In the blindness of thy obdurate pride of place, thou couldst not see the danger; but in a fell swoop it is upon thee now! Ay, it is too late to shrink! too late to turn back thy repentant heart to that poor deserted parent, whose prolonged and plaintive ba-a-a fills all the valley—too late!

Ah, rash ambition, it is ever thus! Thou Phæton, thou Icarus of lambkins! why could not the lowly plain content thee? "The aspiration in thy heel" has been sad for thee; it has but brought thee to thy downfall!

Poor lamb! there is a vivid life here that makes thy pangs seem real, and we almost shudder while those terrible talons burn into the tender flesh; and while the aërial robber pauses with mighty wings outstretched, we can see the yellow shine of ravin in its eye, glow as pitiless as if we stood near the fierce bird alive, when it had just stooped from amidst the cloudy crags of the White Mountains upon some vagrant firstling of a New Hampshire farmer's flock.

This is no mere fable, but is a breathing and living truth out of the natural world; at least its life in form and colors is like breathing. It is more than the old fable, for our modern Æsop is the artist, who tells his story with the pencil and the burin rather than the wagging tongue.

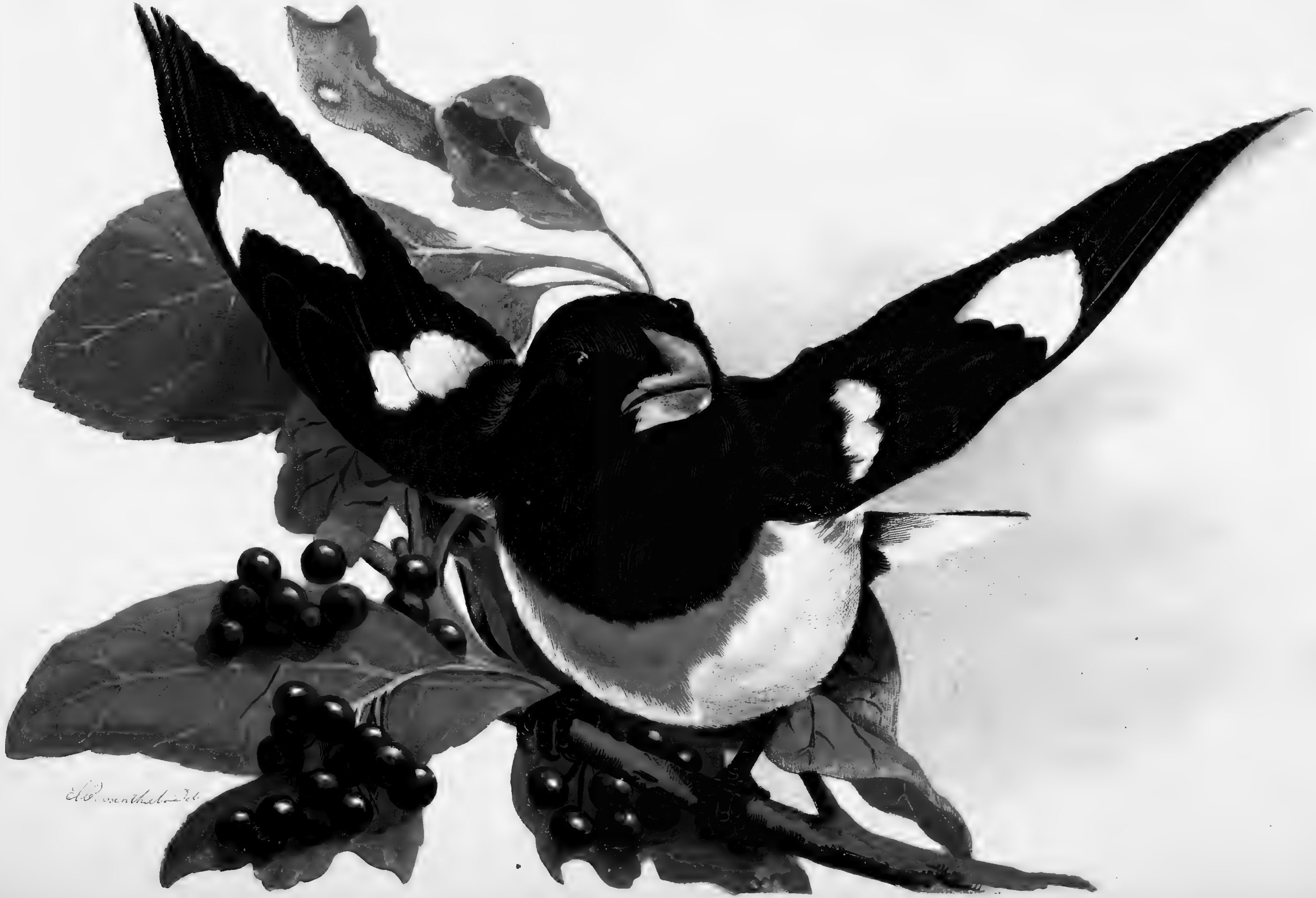
If he make bird and beast speak together, as they used to for our childhood in that old book, it is not by the unnatural use of human speech, but in action, real presentations of their own physical expression! Thus we can have not only an allegory told, but an historical truth as well, and in a living language.

We can clearly remember how ludicrous it seemed even to our unsophisticated childhood, that these brute creatures should talk to one another "like people," and yet, we were intensely interested in what they said, because the rude wood-cuts of our copy gave the forms of each, and were more suggestive sometimes than the fable itself. With our faith thus helped along, we become reconciled to the reality, but we are sure it was through the wood-cuts more than the language of these fables that they have accompanied us all our life since; a whole folio of practical ethics was imbedded into our memory with each of those crude, but graphic pictures.

We doubt very much, if any child was ever very greatly impressed by the fables of Æsop, whose first copy was without the illustrations!

How very natural, when we remember that the first language which greets the awakening sense of infancy, is that of the mother earth—of form, color and action—and therefore it must continue to be most significant to the man. Who has not marked the antics of a baby over the first picture-book? how he sprawls upon it in a destructive ecstasy of sputtering delight? Look, too, at the first slate of the unwilling school-boy, covered with rude figures of bird and beast rather than with numerals or pot-hooks. He is struggling for the most direct mode of expression, just as the savage or natural man is doing through his hieroglyphics.

This is not all, for extremes meet, and the language of infants and of angels is the same, if we may trust to certain of the Old Fathers and the revelations of modern clairvoyance. These unite in representing that such spiritual beings have no occasion for the use of speech after the manner of man, but that they possess such eloquence of look and form, as to communicate through these alone; every motion being



ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

a sign of thought or feeling more significant far than our imperfect articulation. Shakspeare seems to have the same idea when describing one of his god-like men:

> "——— What a mental power
> This eye shoots forth! how big imagination
> Moves this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture
> One might interpret———"

Images and metaphors constantly recurring in the common parlance of mankind, show how universally the peculiar significance of this dumb speech is recognized. The intenser expressions of passion and the more awful presence of the spiritual in man, cannot be translated by the spoken language, but must be conveyed by attitudes and looks. This leads, of a necessity, to picture-writing, as the true mode of perpetuating emotion and thought—and painting is also said to be the written language of the angels. Who knows but that painting or picture-writing may be the natural and higher language of a developed humanity?

It looks very much as if there might be some truth in such a conjecture, when we consider what has just been said, in connexion with the tendency of these times toward an illustrated literature. The advance of this taste has been so gradual, yet swift, that we are scarcely prepared to realize its amazing extent at the present hour; yet observe, almost everything issued by the press now, of whatever grade, is in some style illustrated.

Then what an immense stride in the character of illustration, which is becoming popularized, is exhibited in a contrast of such pictures as this of the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak—articulate of joy and song, which we give as a modern specimen of this dumb speech, in special, among our others—and the rude wood-cuts of that child's book of fables, dating thirty years back! It may be among the many revolutions in the midst of which our age moves on, that this, though not so palpable, is as sure an indication as any of the motion being in the right direction!

However uncivilized the expression of such an opinion may sound—we love to be heterodox occasionally!—it has certainly seemed to us always a very strained, round-about and up-hill sort of work, this mode we mortals have of conveying our emotions and thoughts through merely arbitrary signs, which stand for sounds. Of one thing we are sure, and that is, that it was not thus our Mother Earth talked to our infancy, nor thus she talks to us now, and we have a notion that she is exceeding eloquent in her way. We address each other only through a single sense, while she communes with us through them all, and we could never perceive that she made herself any the less perfectly understood for that.

Be this as it may, all time has been filled with the glory of the revelations she has made to her children, and the Artist is her favorite child! He addresses himself to his brothers of mankind as nearly as he can, after her manner—not alone through one sense, by "directions," but through all "by indirections" works he out this charmed and magical communion—for does he not through the sight *suggest* whatever else of feeling, odor, taste and sound there may be wanting to actual creation.

Thus, in the *suggestiveness* of his skill consists the necromancy of the Artist, who, if he does not create absolutely as God may, a new life in his work, creates at least a new sense—a real presence—in the mind of his brother, which will always find a natural language. Thus we hear this inner, Art-born sense, when moved before a picture of God-like passion speaking for itself long ago, in an unconscious kind of way—

> "Such sweet observance in this work was had,
> That one might *see* those *far off* eyes *look* sad."

And again it prattles, in "mere simplicity," concerning another something of a different sort—a picture of the Old Man Nestor,

> "In speech it *seemed* his beard all silver white
> *Wagged up und down*, and from his lips did fly
> Thin winding breath, which *purled up* to the sky."

Here is a miracle the Artist has surely wrought after some secret and strange manner, for we can plainly see that a new life has come to light through him, and whether it be in the object he has formed, or in the mind of the observer, it is not the less to be thought of with wondering question. Whence cometh this high control within the spiritual world, that he can thus throw down the shadow of an awe upon us from his own creations?

Nor do we wonder less when the Artist has gone forth into the outer world; for we have seen in what an heroical language he can speak to us of the physical life through its ruder objects and more humble forms, since to him they are all glorious, and by him they are glorified to us! In the Art-born sense they are no longer humble, but for the truth that is in them, are felt to be alive by the warmth about the heart which they bring with them; therefore they are welcomed with loving eagerness as a new birth, and for the manner of their conception and their coming, it needs not that the Artist should be questioned.

Do not our pictures tell the story for him of themselves? And does not this of the Golden Eagle? The Art-born sense can see it all; how, when in its home among the mountains he found the Golden Eagle, he watched it every morning sail out from the fastnesses of wintry peaks, and on nice-poised pinions, wheel round and about through the pink-tipped clouds, shrieking now and then a hungry cry that is just to be heard far down in the peaceful valley, to startle the white, browsing flocks with a sense of dread that knoweth not its object; how he watched it thus in every mood until he made its tameless life to be all his own, and at last, by this strange spell in his eye, called down the tyrant in the strength of its "unconquerable wings," and fixed it moveless on the canvas, but alive in all the joy of fierceness and glister of its golden plumes, amidst the clouds, the rocks, the shadows and the sunshine of that native scene!

Ah, does it not seem a weird gift the Artist has, this power "to do strange deeds upon the clouds?" this power to bring in to our firesides, as a familiar guest, the solemn presence of a Primeval earth, the cool dews of her fresh strength yet glistening on her green unshaken hair, with her wild creatures stilled upon her bosom in their passionate freedom, like silent images of beauty and of action within the brooding thought of "Eldest Saturn!"

Does it not seem very marvellous that these things should be; that this humble Artist, this poor worm of the dust should perform such transcendent deeds with his own unassisted hand?

It must be that he is inspired, that some noble and holy promptings exalt him thus above his fellows; for concerning his relations to this sublunary planet and all things therein contained, has not the Artist, of necessity, a creed and faith of his own? As it comes to him spontaneously, it has never troubled him to inquire in what manner the black letter learning classifies this faith of his—whether as primitive or modern, common or peculiar—though it has seemed so natural to him, and suffices so entirely to his own pleasures and peace, that he has, in a manner, taken it for granted, as common to all men. His faith requires no mystical or pompous name to make its meaning more clear to vulgar apprehension, since it is simply the faith of love! universal love! For as it is defined in his litany,

"——— Common as light is Love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever;
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God!"

With such a heathenish faith as this, what wonder then that his ideas of beauty should be somewhat heterodox, and that he should even look upon the rude and ancient countenance of Earth with favor? Nay, since this Love is a great revelator and beautifier of all things, should even regard it as very fair, and fresh, and lovely.

But though marvellous, it is nevertheless so; and we judge the truth to be, that it is because he is no stranger upon her bosom, and is troubled with no such exaltation of spiritual mightiness, that he disdains the ground he treads upon. In his simplicity he has probably found out, while she warmed him in her nourishing embrace, that he was bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh; ay, and has even felt that the throbbings of her great heart were heaved with the pulses of his own!

What wonder, then, since he thus looks out upon Earth as a child of the earth, that

> "Beated and chapped with tanned antiquity,"

as she may seem to others, she should yet appear fair and young to him? What wonder that he loves her too, and smiles in unconscious pity when the Learned Ninny talks in pompous humiliation of "our humble origin," and with face averted from his Old Mother, rants spiritual heroics at the stars?

What wonder, indeed, if in his innocence he should laugh at the emasculated wretch?—As if Earth, too, were not a Star, sister of the Planets, bride of the Sun, and a daughter of the Most High God!

What wonder, if his jealous love should be indignant at the insult, when he sees that a chafiing-dish would be sun enough for the world and heart of the blue-lipped haughty Pedant, and that yet, standing isolated upon heaped-up tomes—a world of man's creating—he dares, with outstretched shaky finger, like a shrunk and withered brat, to be imperious with his Ancient Mother—to summons her to yield her potent secrets up to the compelling of his frosty breath! But ha! ha! it seems a melancholy farce indeed to the gentle Artist; for well he knows she must have warmth for warmth, sympathy for sympathy, and that her great heart bloometh only for her own!

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" and she cometh near to her Child, revealing herself in manifold ways with most miraculous organ he alone may understand. To the insolent Pedant, her words of mild and mighty wisdom must be as an unknown tongue, since he has forgotten that earliest language in which she spoke to the dawn of sense in him. But her own Child has not—he has kept the first meaning of the many signs of the strange forms of things, of the many sounds of most sweet voices that came together when light from her flowed into darkness unto him!

Still, when the morning comes, answers he to her calling, "Here am I!"—for still, awakening is like birth to him, and upon the renewed glories of her coming do his eyes open with the stare of wondering infancy just born; still amidst splendor in music, and with pomp does the glad and sweet surprise of being burst through oblivion upon him!—for Death and Sleep seem one! Thus he rises ever from her bosom as the strong man refreshed, and the energies of her eternal youth are in the wisdom that she teaches him.

While he listens to her, he never can grow old;—for though he cannot stay the flight of Time, he does not care to, since they become play-fellows, and even when amidst their sportings Time brushes the gloss from off his golden hair with frosty wings, he laughs with him!

The gentle, happy Artist!—time-frost cannot touch the life within:

"————— it is a paradise
Which everlasting Spring has made its own,
And while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought and flowers fresh blown
Are there! ———————————"

What then if he be thus light of heart, and should go forth each day rojoicing?—is not his heritage unutterably rich and wondrous fair, that he may take delight therein? And what if in the overflowing of his joy his heart break forth in singing by the way?—it was thus the Old-Time Poet—who was the Child-Artist—did, and we can yet hear the cheerful echoes of the songs he sung!

Yes, Poetry was the earliest expression of the yearnings of Art, and

> "Those brave sublunary things the first poets had,"

were its young dreams, which strove in them for form and for the light, and found it only in the word-painting of their imperfect song. Thus the Poet's speech is that of the childhood of our race, while the Artist is the Poet grown, speaking like a god the majestic language of creations! Thus the Poet was the first interpreter of Earth to her ruder children; and while he sang aloud to his brothers, you might hear the Old Mother crooning a mysterious undertone to him. He was the Prophet-child of Art, and in his unconsciousness, standing beside that

> "——— mighty portal,
> Like a volcano's meteor-breathing cavern,
> Whence the oracular vapor is hurled up,
> Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,"

he scattered abroad, in the wild utterance of that madness, its most precious myths fragmented among the nations. The Artist, in his maturer strength, grasped these shining hints, that amidst the upheaving chaos of a Daedal thought glittered like broken points, and when, with mighty energies, he dragged them from the thick darkness forth, the world saw that mute white shapes of a Titanic grandeur towered beneath his plastic hand.

When thus, from the child-like, unregarded mutterings of

Homeric Dreams, Praxitelian forms rose up with awful frowns, men felt at last the prophecy that had been in them. So out of the inspiration of the earliest Hebrew Poetry, the solemn magnificence of old Italian Art came forth, embodying its vaguely shadowed visions in an enduring real!

And thus in the youth of mankind it has mostly been, that the Poet has suggested while the Artist created. But then Art too was young—young in models and in modes—and the power and freedom of the Artist trammelled by the need of exhausting drudgery through crude methods. Now Art has all its triumphant past upon which to build new triumphs, and now the Artist may be free. Before he was a slave, that might not feel the full exultings of a procreative joy—the bliss of the conception as well as the happy ecstasy of birth—but now he may; now he may be the free-limbed, joyous Poet and conquering Artist all in one!

But above all things else it is as the favored child of his old Mother Earth that our Poet-Artist can be happy and free. Ay, and when he is living ever near to her, it seems that he is almost a god!—for then there is none of all with whom he is surrounded to be his equal in the strength and power of wisdom he derives from her. She speaks to him as a familiar theme, concerning those high mysteries of life before which the Magii trembled.

She makes bare to him herself, and shows him the wonder and the majesty of his own being as it is amplified in hers. How all things own a common nature ascending in gradations up to him—how he is sovereign unit and lives through her and she through him, and how, on the mighty scroll of her primeval story, his past is spread before him, revealing the process of his own elaboration in God's creative thought.

Here he reads, how that from huge shapes floundering blindly through the mud of chaos, just warmed by the engendering look of God, he came forth a vital embryo, to ascend through many grades of form, each organized more nobly than the last, until his own—man the consummation, had been reached!

Then he sees how too this consummate shape, by reason of its perfection, became the habitation of an angel—blossomed into the spiritual, as the bud blossoms into splendor and perfume!—for the life which came from God having passed through all the sensuous grades below, returned now on the eternal circle towards its source, to meet perfection in himself—

> "Just on the borders of the Spirit-land!"

Then the full flower was blown, and the divine aroma which had been developed within the secret foldings of the bud filled all the world!

This Divine aroma is that Love of which we spoke, and which is all-embracing in its mild and fostering sympathies; for with the angel thus born within him, the exalted man becomes ruler over all in right of this spiritual birth. And not alone is he thus lord over all creatures, but by right of a sensuous birth in common with him they are his lowlier brothers.

In the mild beneficence of this fraternal Faith, all living things are sacred to the Artist. In each creature he sees not alone a fixed memento left behind him of one grade more in the ascent of his progression, but as well an antitype of some one attribute of his own nature living in its original form. Thus, be blind and wilful as he may, he cannot escape from himself—go utterly away from the truth of the simple virtues!

He is a lonely wayfarer, and going forth on an unending pilgrimage into the wild and silent homes of the wild bird and beast, he can hear his mother speak with him, for the voices of her creatures make her silence. Here, in the holy calm of stillest contemplation, she teaches him to study his own life in each of these—as in gigantic extension of himself to see his passions, emotions and thoughts creep, walk, run and fly in embodied shapes. He sees that these are not to be studied amidst the dwarfed forms and abject vices of the human distortion thronging in cities—but here, amidst the freshness of green solitudes, he can readily read the simple passions separately in the Lion, Eagle, Wolf, Vulture, Hart and Dove—while their laws would be studied through infinite complexities were they sought for when the same passions are combined in the diseased social man.

It is his mission to reform his race by exalting it; and to do this, he must create for it the noblest models. The old mother leads him thus apart, to teach him that he cannot paint these passions without a knowledge of their original laws—until he has traced them through their simple forms up to their complex and blended expression in man.

Thus in crystallization, she shows him the primitive symmetries—the first natural arrangement of particles into harmonious forms—in stratification the natural arrangement of these primitive forms in the structure of Earth, metals and the universe, as determined by the law of forces or gravitation—in vegetation the ancient story of man, the passive embryo, in the Arboreal form which the plastic energy assumes first, and holds forever as the order of life—in the reptile, man slowly warming into vital activity, blind amidst the huge vegetation of a semifluid chaos—in the fish, man advanced to a purer, but still gross element, obeying the electric impulse of the vital fluid in straight lines—in the insect, the state and struggle of transitions—in the animal, perfection of physical organization with the circulating fluid reddened by the intensity of vital or generative heat—man, the earth-crawler, and the brute!—in the bird, this earth-crawling animal on wings—a spurner of limits, a dweller of the pure ether, soaring towards the stars, and propelled in curved lines, to typify the ascent on the Eternal Circle, towards the Life of God, which the man has now made in his new birth of wings!

Thus she teaches him that it is not as organization resembles his own, that the creature in reality becomes most near to him—but as it typifies some higher attribute of his compounded being! Thus he sees that the monkey is not really so near to him as the elephant, the lion or the Eagle—while, if he were only an organized unit, as a crude philosophy defines him, this monkey would be nearest. Mere organization cannot define relations to a triune being, such as his—though it might to the physical unit.

But he is more fearfully and wonderfully made—this material form, first vitalized by a plastic spirit in common with the earth and all her creatures, holds within that spirit, as air is held in water, a soul, in common with angelic being, which illuminates and warms with love and wisdom the grosser element. Thus his mother shows him that the *apparent* approximation is not the *real*—while the Pedant, reasoning through books concerning her " vestiges," finds only the *apparent*, and stops there!

The Artist can be deceived by no vain juggle of the words of a dead human learning; the truth that has made him strong is a vital truth, and its words are alive. They teach him to see in the lion a distinct antitype of magnanimous courage, and in the type, the heroic man, he traces the *real* approximation through physiognomy, in a resemblance apparent, not alone in the features of the face, but in the huge chest, the heavy limbs, the gentleness of bearing in repose, and terrible fierceness when aroused.

The elephant he sees to be the antitype of judgment and sagacity, and in the type, the philosopher and sage, he traces the reposeful heaviness of feature and limbs, the simplicity and harmlessness of temper, the calm, bright eye and moveless will, which belong to that creature. The monkey he sees to be only the antitype of that most humble faculty, imitation; and in the type, the clown or idiot, he sees all the monkey in meanness of feature and of nature! The Artist smiles to think that this creature can yet be nearer to the angelic man, than is the Eagle which stands his supremest antitype.

In a word, the Artist sees in this Eagle, not a long-winged fowl, but the expression of what is most glorious in the action of the physical—the living, swift embodiment of all sublimest energies in his own soul, taunting its inaction forth to know the joy of rushing wings in fields of boundless air.

Looking on its "powerful grace," a proud emulation stirs his life of lives, he feels "the aspiration in him breeding wings," and with the tense vision of a will aroused, he'll now "out-stare the lightning!" Deeds of Epic grandeur swell within his clear, keen thought, and action follows as quick, in merciless promptitude, as the fell swoop of the bird! He becomes inspired into the Eagle-man; and if he do not conquer nations, the bloodless triumphs that he wins to Art are far more glorious. His piercing vision glancing down the past, everywhere recognizes in its heroes Eagle-men. With alert heads, the vaulting beak-like nose, and round, stern eye, the mightiest of the world's masters even in the sculptured marble, seem as if upon the stoop to soar again among the clouds with conquering cries.

Well may the Artist shout "Eureka" now, for the vital clue of art has been revealed to him. He has found that he can follow the antitype up from the animal to its type in man, and trace it in him with assurance, through certain absolute features of physical resemblance.

Thus, in the vaulted nose he sees the Eagle, but soon discovers that all birds or men with vaulted beaks are not Eagles; that some are silly parrots, and others filthy carrion-loving vultures! That one short step between the sublime and the ridiculous is illustrated to him here, in the ease with which a facial line peculiar to the greatest of men may be confounded with that belonging to the meanest.

The Parrot-man is often mistaken for the Eagle-man; but the Artist observes, that in the face of the driveller the line of the nose vaults abruptly like the beak of the parrot, while the mouth and chin retreat feebly beneath the nut-cracking hook, giving all the appearance of strength in the face to the upper mandible, as if it were intended for the fool to hang himself up to roost by, after the manner of the bird.

The vault of the Eagle's beak, on the contrary, is very gradual, while the lower mandible, which expresses will and energy, is extended out nearer to a line with the top of the head. Close beneath this line and to the base of the nostrils, the eyes are placed, giving at once an expression of fierce alertness, very different from those of the parrot's, which are set near the middle of the head.

Tracing this facial line down from the conqueror through all the grades of men, he finds it everywhere associated with aspiration and daring temper—with the impulses of the hero, if not with heroic deeds! Though the headstrong fool with his parrot-bill, approaches this line closely on one side, and the vulture-beaked Jew hungering for offal on the other, yet the careful Artist is not confused thereby. He sees that in the pawn-broker and old-clothes man, the line is that of the vulture—depressed near the "downward eye," and vaulting nearer the end which lingers prolonged into a hungry curve that seems formed to tear a way into the vitals.

How loathsome the vulture-man, as the Artist sees him—with his wrinkled, scaly, scavenger look—true to the antitype, in base brow and beak, cunning eye, and even to the thin and recurved bristles on the back of the skinny neck and head!

The straight, Grecian profile expresses to him a perfect harmony of the moral, or spiritual and physical lives in the human. A slight deviation from this line expresses therefore a vast deal. Whenever this vaults into the arch, it infallibly expresses energy, unreasoning or viciously aggressive, just in proportion as the arch departs violently on either side from this symmetrical line.

Thus the parrot's vaulting out beyond this line quickly, expresses idiotic obstinacy and indomitable propensities for mischief—while the vulture's, which is first recurved below and then in the vault only about comes up to that line, expresses subversive viciousness in the alarming ravin for gold exhibited by the Vulture-man. On the other hand, he sees that as this line is only faintly broken at the brow, and arched in the centre of the nose, as in the profile of the Eagle's head and beak, it expresses that highest combination of the intellectual and physical daring which we find in the mighty Conquerors—as in the head of Napoleon.

While in the head of—it may be—a marshal, who was comparatively the mere executive soldier—the man of headlong action—we have the arch more decided—retaining all the dignity of the Eagle, but with something of the vulture's bloody thirst, indicated in the prolongation of the vault.

Thus he sees that while the vaulting line indicates vaulting energies, the purpose and direction of these energies is either ignoble, about in proportion as the line approximates that of the baser birds, or fierce as it approaches that of the Eagle.

The rise of the arch in the Eagle's beak is very slight for some distance from the base, like that of Napoleon's nose—then the hook is remarkably sudden, almost square. As it is simply in the higher lines of profile—those indicating its approach to a square—that these resemblances can be indicated—that between Napoleon and the Eagle ceases at the plane of the nose, to re-commence in the mouth, which is brought out with a corresponding expression of strength in the chin, almost square to the line of the brow and nose. Thus we have the tower-like weight of brain lifted above the granite-seamed mouth, and moveless base of will in the powerful lower jaw.

The marshal is the man to swoop in relentless fierceness down upon the prey the Eagle wing and eye has found; therefore the Eagle and the Vulture are combined in his profile. The Imperial Conqueror knew this well—and for this reason he was accustomed to say that for men of vast energies in action, he rather choose those with Roman noses and large nostrils. This form of speech—Roman noses—comes of course from the historical identity of the arched nose of the Romans with their daring and iron firmness of will.

Thus the Artist has found that conquerors, warriors, reformers, discoverers carry the sign of the Eagle in their profiles, indicating the aggressive and victorious impulses they display—while in contrast he perceives that the more passive natures—those which are strong to endure, which are the prudent, the sagacious and the contemplative—do not carry this vaulting sign. These take the signs they bear rather from the depressed lines of the lion and the elephant Such is peculiarly the face of the Scotch people, who are famous the world over for courage, prudence and sagacity. Thus while the arched line in the Eagle-face expresses aggressive daring and sublimity of purpose, the depressed line in the lion-face, expresses courage, caution and endurance.

The Artist in conceiving the face of a daring but savage conqueror, like Attila, Charles the Bold, or Charles XII.—of a bitter and stern fanatic, like the reformer Knox, must think

> "————of Eagles on their rocks
> With straining feet and that fierce mouth and drear,
> Answering the strain with downward drag austere ;"

for to him such an association is irresistible, and by its aid he is enabled readily to embody a just conception of either. If, on the other hand, he would sculpture the head of the patient and courageous sage, as that of Socrates—one

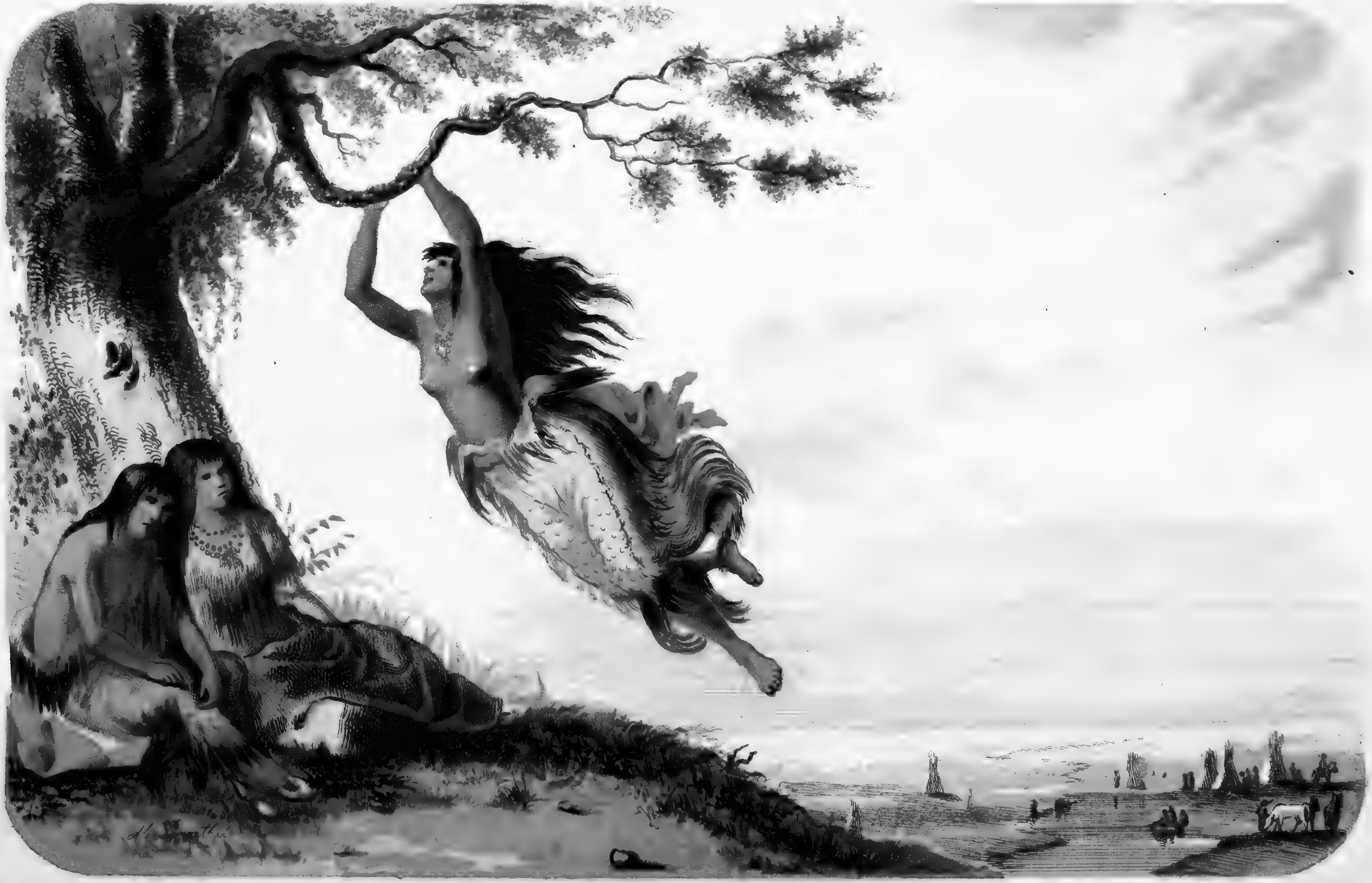
> "Who ponders high and deep, and in whose face
> We see astonied, that severe content
> Which comes of thought and musing,"

he recurs back unconsciously to the face of the lion for suggestion of outline, while the expression is modified by certain characteristics suggested from that of the elephant.

But the Eagle has many other expressions beside this "downward drag austere," and therefore is it necessary for the Artist to study all its modes and habits, since it is through such perfect familiarity he can best understand the Eagle-man, and of course express him creatively. The Old Mother makes him see that these resemblances between the higher man and his antitype, are far from being limited to such mere physical coincidences—that there are a thousand other traits of nature and of habit, which bring the bird nearer to the spiritual. Thus it has wings, and like the imagination triumphs over time and space.

Then if the joy of elements, of wings, of sunshine, of waters and of singing, be characteristic of all other birds, how much more are they so of Eagles, except the singing and the swimming: for verily the harsh clarion of the Eagle's scream cannot be called dulcet singing; and the supreme bird of the empyrean holds in such aristocratic scorn the baser element, that he never condescends to be aware of its existence, except in an occasional foraging descent into its surface, from which he struggles up as if from contagion, upon hurrying wings, which spurn its drops from off their glistening fibres.

Ah! if the air-king had but "the gift of the" harmonious "gab," how on his strong wings he might out-soar the lark, and hold entrancing converse with the morning stars—then, indeed, earth and the univere would "sing together," even to our "gross unpurged sense!" But withal, such a wish is somewhat sentimental, for the bird of battle and of storms would be rather a curious looking customer perched in "ladies' bower," to carry chorus, warbling sweet ditties with the "love-lorn nightingale"—Cupid, asleep with his cheek upon the roses, would be very apt to dream i' faith that his "loved philomel" had caught a dreadful cold. Though this idea of a singing Eagle is not so far from probability as might be—by considerable. There is a singing Falcon, which is well known to naturalists—the habitat of which is in the more elevated districts of the coast-borders of Africa. This curious



Miller pinx.

L. N Rosenthal's Cromo-Lith Phil^{a}.

INDIAN GIRL SWINGING

bird when in perfect repose emits a series of sounds resembling considerably those produced by musical glasses under the finger—it is strange to find this trait in the harsh family of Raptorese—but it is not the less consistent with the unity in apparent discord prevailing throughout Nature. These savage despots of the air have all a harmony of their own!

Aye, in his solitary wandering the Artist makes the discovery, that in the fitness of things the Eagle even may be considered a musical bird. His estimate of harmonious sounds is comparative by necessity. When standing beside Niagara, or when amidst savage mountains he scales the slippery rocks that tremble to the sullen thunder-bass of cataracts, leaping down dark-mouthed, jagged-gorges; then if he hear the Eagle shout its shrill war-cry from out the spray-mist, doth his heart leap up within him, for here those dissonant notes best harmonize the dissonance!

Here, too, one glimpse of its warrior form as it comes forth suddenly to view on steadied wings, cutting the span of the perpetual iris in one imperial gleaming sweep of arrowy flight, the Artist sees to be worth a life full of common sights!—that the Old Mother has no grand show beyond this one! The creature seems the embodied spirit of the place —a winged desolation, born amidst the angry roar of mighty forces, to spring forth glorious in fierce beauty from the mists of their collision.

Of the stern wildness of all pathless solitudes the Eagle is a part, and the Artist knows that in painting such scenes his highest and noblest effects are produced by its presence. Hence, apart from the necessity he has found for studying it as the antitype of grandeur in humanity, he must do so as the most perfect consummation of the wild sublime in landscape—in the moods, humors and conditions presented by his mother.

Now, therefore, has he at length learned of her to look upon the Eagle, not as the mere object of a technical curiosity, as an ornithological specimen, to be measured, skinned, stuffed and classified, but dead or alive, as the subject of profoundest and unwearying study, illustrating the most majestic themes and capabilities of Art.

Of necessity he is a naturalist likewise, and whether he be a technical commentator, he has been an accurate observer; for nothing is too minute to escape the microscopic vision of the true Artist.

To him each feather has both its separate form and its blended expression; each claw, beak, hair and scale, its own identity! The distinctions of sex and age he recognizes by a glance at plumage and size. Every note, posture and action, conveys to him a meaning—is significant of passion or purpose. All that can be known of habits and haunts, he makes familiar to himself in his lonely explorations

Thus it is when he comes to paint these creatures, that he is enabled to make his pictures historical—to illuminate his figures with the heated light of life—to give its sparkle to their joy, its glow to their repose, and darkened glare to their anger. The same fine intuitions of "*effect*" which guide him in grouping demi-god and hero, are exercised upon these pictures—with the same unerring tact he selects time, occasion, place, that the passion, incident and scene most characteristic may be exhibited at a glance—telling the story in full. The accessories of landscape are taken from its known and favorite haunts, including the grasses, shrubs or trees it most affects, for food or nidification—the incident—perhaps battle with a natural enemy, or seizure of its prey—is just that which displays its finest traits of action, and in which varied views of form and plumage can be afforded—while the distinctions of size and markings which grow out of sex and age, are furnished in the grouping.

The magical work is done! The unregarded denizens of unhoused wilds are seen all at once to be sharers with proud humanity of its passions, sentiments and even humors, and to express these in action far more free and noble for its simplicity! Then man is not alone upon the earth to think, to suffer, to rejoice, to love, to hate, to murder!—the wise Artist has taught him in his marvellous pictures that these humble creatures he has despised, do all such fantastic tricks likewise "before high heaven," quite as earnestly as he, and much more gracefully.

It is thus, then, by a loving apotheosis, that all things are dignified in the recognition of the true Art which places in a like, but graduated category of respect,

"——— creeping forms and insects rainbow-winged
And birds and beasts and fish and human shapes."

It is thus, then, that the Artist wins his power and right from the Old Mother "to do strange deeds;"—it is through such processes that the strength and wisdom of the creative energy in him has been elaborated. Now, in truth, the fruition of his probation has arrived!—

"And what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Diving on fiery wings to Nature's throne
Checks the Great Mother stooping to caress her,
And cries, give me thy Child Dominion?"—

in him, dominion she will have, for we have seen how he has won it well!

In his wide and solitary wanderings, our Art-Naturalist has made companionship with the most tameless creatures. He knows through many affectionate remembrances on his own part of varying pleasures they have afforded him here and there, in his pilgrimage, not alone each family, but as well every member thereof.

Thus he knows the Golden Eagle too well not to recognize its young one too, and because it is called "the ring-tailed Eagle of Authors," that does not make it with and to him a new species. He has watched the dingy and awkward Eaglet up through all its blundering defects, until he saw it on the fourth year, right gloriously arrayed, go forth on shining wings to conquest. He has found, too, that in choice of localities, its individualities are strongly expressed.

Its home is among the mountains, and it loveth most "the shadow of a great rock;" not in the United States only, but over nearly the whole world its occasional presence makes a feature of the most savage desolations. It builds its great nest of heaped-up boughs and brambles high upon the inaccessible crag-side, overlooking some wide valley, and perched upon the pinnacle-rocks above, its wonderful eye glancing over all beneath detects its prey at immense distances. This keenness of vision compensates beautifully for the want of sufficient power of flight to enable it, like the White-headed Eagles, or even falcons, to overtake its prey on the wing by sheer speed. It takes advantage of the momentum gained by a descent through the air.

Selecting habitually a lofty perch, or sailing slowly at a great height among the clouds, this power of sight reveals to it even the small objects below. When the lamb, the fawn, the hare, or wild turkey appears, one of these, it pauses in its flight, immediately over for an instant, seemingly to steady its unerring aim, and then with wings half closed and outspread tail, falls with the swiftness of a meteor upon the victim.

Now let us see in direct contrast with much of this, the habits of the White-headed Eagle, which the naturalist has found to be a low-land bird, in choice of localities, though the loftiest-flighted hunter that wears wings. It loves rather the valleys along the courses of our great rivers, the shores of lakes, estuaries and the sea. Its nest is on some lofty tree, instead of a mountain crag. It pursues its prey up and through the air instead of descending upon it. In the daring confidence of its unequalled flight, it asserts sole empire in that element, overtaking all or any of its denizens with ease.

A characteristic scene is thus described in the Biography of Birds. Audubon, the Art-Naturalist, says: "Permit me to place you on the Mississippi, on which you may float gently along, while approaching winter brings millions of water-fowl on whistling wings, from the countries of the north, to seek a milder climate in which to sojourn for a season. The Eagle is seen perched in an erect attitude, on the highest summit of the tallest tree, by the margin of the broad stream. His glistening but stern eye looks over the vast expanse. He listens attentively to every sound that comes to his quick ear from afar, glancing now and then on the earth beneath, lest even the light tread of the fawn may pass unheard. His mate is perched on the opposite side, and should all be tranquil and silent, warns him by a cry to continue patient. At this well-known call, the male partly opens his broad wings, inclines his body a little downwards, and answers to her voice in tones not unlike the laugh of a maniac. The next moment he resumes his erect attitude, and again all around is silent. Ducks of many species, the teal, the widgeon, the mallard and others, are seen passing with great rapidity, and following the course of the current; but the Eagle heeds them not: they are at that time beneath his attention. The next moment, however, the wild, trumpet-like sound of a yet distant but approaching swan is heard. A shriek from the female Eagle comes across the stream—for, kind reader, she is fully as alert as her mate. The latter suddenly shakes the whole of his body, and with a few touches of his bill, aided by the action of his cuticular muscles, arranges his plumage in an instant. The snow-white bird is now in sight: her long neck is stretched forward, her eye is on the watch, vigilant as that of her enemy; her large wings seem with difficulty to support the weight of her body, although they flap incessantly. So irksome do her exertions seem, that her very legs are spread beneath her tail, to aid her in her flight. She approaches, however. The Eagle has marked her for his prey. As the swan is passing the dreaded pair, starts from his perch, in full preparation for the chase, the male bird, with an awful scream, that to the swan's ear brings more terror than the report of the large duck-gun.

"Now is the moment to witness the display of the Eagle's powers. He glides through the air like a falling star, and, like a flash of lightning, comes upon the timorous quarry, which now, in agony and despair, seeks, by various manœuvres to elude the grasp of his cruel talons. It mounts, doubles, and willingly would plunge into the stream, were it not prevented by the Eagle, which, long possessed of the knowledge that by such a stratagem the swan might escape him, forces it to remain in the air by attempting to strike it with his talons from beneath. The hope of escape is soon given up by the swan. It has already become much weakened, and its strength fails at the sight of the courage and swiftness of its antagonist. Its last gasp is about to escape, when the ferocious Eagle strikes with his talons the under side of its wing, and with unresisted power forces the bird to fall in a slanting direction upon the nearest shore."

The female that has watched from her perch all the vicissitudes of this fierce, swift struggle with a full assurance of the result, now sails at her ease to join the conqueror in a bloody feast. Every one will remember, too, Wilson's fine description of the manner in which this selfish but dashing oppressor robs the fish-hawk of its hard-earned spoils.

The Golden Eagle is more common in the mountainous districts of Europe and Great Britain than anywhere in the New World; while the White-headed Eagle, which is unknown abroad, may be said to be peculiar to this continent. The Golden Eagle is the bird of poetry, since it is from its sublime haunts and majestic bearing that the numberless images and associations are derived in which the whole family have been idealized through the literature of the old countries.

It is peculiarly from its habits of lofty flight, and perching among the cloud-piercing pinnacles of mountain-chains, where the fiercest tempests rage, amidst the drifted whirling glooms of snow and sleet, that Eagles have become in poetry the symbol of that tumultuous energy and storm-guiding prowess which characterize the Eagle-man. The sometime-fate of such a being—a Jupiter dethroned, or a Napoleon defeated —is therefore most aptly imaged:—

> " An Eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
> On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
> Extended in the whirlwind, and his eyes
> Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
> By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
> Beats on, his struggling, which sinks at length,
> Prone, and the aërial ice clings over it!"

We can see, too, that its stately port makes it the fit emblem of a feudal pride and isolation, which, like the bird, perched its huge eyries in castellated grandeur on the cliff-tops. There are full as many stories of wild and perilous daring growing out of the attempts to reach and rob the strong home of the bird, as of the baron. They were both themselves robbers, who scorned the lowlands which lay beneath their searching gaze, and as often swooped down upon them in sudden foray. They have loved the bird rather from a feeling of the affinities between them, and have adopted it always as the emblem of rapacity and conquest, not of freedom.

It was for this reason Shelley hated the bird. He saw in it the analogue of evil triumphing over good, which crawls among the nations, changed by its immortal foe

> " ———— From starry shape beauteous and mild,
> To a dire snake with man and beast unreconciled!"

But the contest between the two powers—" Twin Genii,"—is renewed again after each defeat, and thus it is that

> " When the last hope of trampled France had failed,"

this prophet child of Art painted one of the most magnificent pictures ever done on air in words, when he saw

> " An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight."

Here we have the Golden Eagle of course, for "golden feather" tells an unmistakable story of its own. Regarding it from the point of view of the Art-Naturalist, this certainly seems one of the closest approximations to the absolute creativeness of Art to be found in all poetry.

But the Golden Eagle did not furnish a symbol of freedom to mankind—with all the grandeur of ancient association, this the grandest and most noble has been yet denied. Although a most magnificent bird it is too sluggish on the wing—seeking with its feudal type "advantage of position" for its swoop!—to be the satisfactory expression of that universality of fiery, keen and boundless energy which belongs to the swift spirit of freedom, which has found its home here in the New World! Of this the White-headed Eagle is the true emblem! He asserts an empire of the Empyrean with the ruthless pride of a prodigal, indomitable strength in pinion, beak and claw! To it there are no formulas of flight—no fixed modes of taking prey—all comes alike to its inexorable appetite and quick overcoming wings. Hear Audubon's description of its varied powers of flight:

"The flight of the White-headed Eagle is strong, generally uniform, and protracted to any distance, at pleasure. Whilst travelling, it is entirely supported by equal easy flappings, without any intermission, in as far as I have observed it, by following it with the eye or the assistance of a glass. When looking for prey, it sails with extended wings, at right angles to its body, now and then allowing its legs to hang at their full length. Whilst sailing, it has the power of ascending in circular sweeps, without a single flap of the wings, or any apparent motion either of them or of the tail; and in this manner it often rises until it disappears from the view, the white tail remaining longer visible than the rest of the body. At other times, it rises only a few hundred feet in the air, and sails off in a direct line, and with rapidity. Again, when thus elevated, it partially closes its wings, and glides downwards for a considerable space, when, as if disappointed, it checks its career, and reassumes its former steady flight. When at an immense height, and as if observing an object on the ground, it closes its wings, and glides through the air with such rapidity as to cause a loud rustling sound, not unlike that produced by a violent gust of wind passing amongst the branches of trees. Its fall towards the earth can scarcely be followed by the eye on such occasions, the more particularly that these falls or glidings through the air usually take place when they are least expected."

Nothing can exceed the cool audacity and overbearing vehemence of this bird, except perhaps the spirit of the country it symbols. In powers of adaptation, versatility of resource and sublimity of action, the resemblance is no less complete, than in a mutual unscrupulousness and omnivorous rapacity.

Mr. Audubon quotes, with often-expressed approbation, an opinion of Dr. Franklin in which the Sage expresses his regret that the White-headed Eagle had been chosen as the representative of our country, on the ground that it is a plundering and dishonest bird. We, too, regret the fact—not that it has been chosen, but that it was most fit and appropriate that it should have been. It is too late in the day now for us to mince matters and talk of regret that the tyrannical Robber of the Fish-Hawk should be emblazoned on our national standard when our armies have but just returned from following that standard to the dismemberment of Mexico—to call it by its mildest name!—and when each year it waves above a new line of military out-posts guarding new territory, of which we have dispossessed the aboriginal owners.

Plundering Fish-Hawks indeed!—we come of a race of Robbers, and the Anglo-Norman wild-fire yet riots in our veins. The only consolation is, that in most instances we, in obeying this predatory instinct, have acted magnificently—as our Eagles rob.

This feat of robbing the Fish-Hawk, when you consider the comparative size, strength and power of pinion of the two Birds, is one of the sublimest to be witnessed in the action of the natural world, and though you may regret the fierce greediness of the audacious Cloud-King, and be very far from defending the morality of the proceeding, yet you cannot restrain an admiration of the manner. You may regret that poor Fish-Hawks have to be robbed, and rejoice with a hearty sympathy when you see them combine as they sometimes do for the purpose of castigating their oppressor, yet you cannot help feeling that since the Eagles are incorrigible and beyond the reach of your exhortations to reform, it is far better and finer to have them do what is inevitable from their natures grandly, than to do it ignobly.

So with regard to the spirit of "acquisition," or "extension," as it is politely termed—we regret that it should be so strongly displayed in the national character, but see no use, so long as there is any more territory left in the Hemisphere to tempt this acquisitiveness, in putting up a poor mouth about it. The fact is, we cannot expect to tame the Eagle—to feed on milksops, or meekly and musically "roar like any sucking dove!" The war-cry is its natural note, and while there be storms to gather up the sky we may expect to hear it shouted from amidst the rack thereof! It is a Warrior-Bird—fit emblem, with all its rapacity, of a warlike people, and of a vigorous freedom that should have

"An Eagle's wings for scope and speediness."

Franklin repeats the stale slander concerning it, of cowardice—because a comparatively small creature, like the King-Bird or Bee-Martin, can drive it off! As to that, the Humming-Bird is far more dreaded by it, and we have seen the waspish little wretch dart in between the wings of a flying Eagle, fasten upon the top of its head, and work away with long sharp bill and claws until the floating feathers streamed after the flight of the great Bird, which would seem from its darting, irregular movements, to be almost maddened by the petty torture! But what wonder!—A Lion would turn tail upon an angry Hornet, and a Hector or an Ajax himself be routed by a hungry Flea beneath his armor! With every other sin upon its head, the bird is not a coward—for the incident which Mr. Audubon gives further in proof of this, is not, as we conceive, altogether a fair case in point. The liability to panic, when suddenly aroused by any new and extraordinary presentation, is a well-known weakness of the mere physical courage.

He says, "When these birds are suddenly and unexpectedly approached or surprised, they exhibit a great degree of cowardice. They rise at once and fly off very low in zig-zag lines to some distance, uttering a hissing noise, not at all like their usual disagreeable imitation of a laugh."

This is not by any means our interpretation of this incident. The zig-zag line in flying off, seems to us rather to express the instinctive caution of rapacious creatures, who, when aroused—perhaps from secure slumbers—see in the unusual object, of course, a formidable enemy, and with the prompt suggestiveness of that most alert of the instincts, dart hither and yon, to distract any murderous aim which may pursue it—while the hissing sound as they go off, is the earliest expression of angry defiance, the combative impulse of the Eaglet in the eyrie knew. It is rather a case of panic than of cowardice, and the history of many of the most fearless warriors the world has known, will furnish similar instances!

No, the White-headed Eagle is not a coward. The charge has as little base upon consistencies and the nature of things as a similar one so frequently urged against Napoleon—though while the daring of the Eagle is physical, that of the Eagle-man is spiritual.

Shelley, at all events, saw it to be sufficient as an emblem of the exulting energies of Freedom. That Freedom he had watched with many yearnings grow apace in youthful lustihood, subjugating the savage wildernesses of the New World into mild and plenteous homes for the freed millions of the Old—in a Future, he foresaw—until his full heart burst forth in prophetic utterance:—

"That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom;
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People: as the sands shalt thou become;
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade."

This magnificent image fixes the Apotheosis of the Eagle of our standard, and settles all mooted questions of appropriateness, etc., forever, as we conceive! In spite of all the indignities heaped upon the noble bird by the presumptuous familiarities of Sophomore Eloquence in Fourth-of-July orations, or the fledgling muse of Patriotism in Heroic Odes, it will nevertheless continue to be the proud synonyme and emblem of Liberty! Street's noble Ode to "The Gray Forest Eagle," is, however, anything but a fledgling!

The Mexican Eagle is a true carrion bird, as filthy as it is cowardly; and our southern neighbors may really be considered as having some ground for sensitiveness in regard to the character of their Standard, but we certainly have none. It is hardly magnanimous to insult a fallen foe by instituting a comparison, naturally suggested, between the character of that bird and the people of which it is the National Emblem; it is sufficient that for the present it has cowered beneath the higher flight, the stronger beak, and fiercer daring of our own grand bird!

We have this Caracara, or Brazilian Eagle of the Mexican standard, also as a resident of Texas and the Floridas, where it is regarded with the mingled aversion and contempt which all men feel for the vultures. But we have, as an offset to this, the most magnificent Eagle in the world—"The Bird of Washington," as it has been most appropriately called by Mr. Audubon, its discoverer. We shall not speak farther of this majestic creature for the present. When we are no longer an immature nation, then, perhaps, it might be well to place this grand and stately bird upon our standard!

The White-headed Eagle is a true Yankee, and does everything after a fashion of its own, without any regard to family precedents. It is very uncommon for other Eagles to hunt in pairs; indeed they never do it at any rate, except at extraordinary times, in the breeding season. This Eagle, however, seems to be entirely utilitarian, and to be guided, in this particular, by the necessities of the case. They seldom feed apart, and if the habits of the prey most convenient to them render it necessary, they combine for its pursuit without consulting formulas of propriety. Mr. Audubon describes a well-known instance of this sort:

"When these Eagles, sailing in search of prey, discover a Goose, a Duck, or a Swan, that has alighted on the water, they accomplish its destruction in a manner that is worthy of your attention. The Eagles, well aware that water-fowl have it in their power to dive at their approach, and thereby elude their attempts upon them, ascend in the air in opposite directions over the lake or river, on which they have observed the object which they are desirous of possessing. Both Eagles reach a certain height, immediately after which one of them glides with great swiftness towards the prey; the latter, meantime, aware of the Eagle's intention, dives the moment before he reaches the spot. The pursuer then rises in the air, and is met by its mate, which glides toward the water-bird, that has just emerged to breathe, and forces it to plunge again beneath the surface, to escape the talons of this second assailant. The first Eagle is now poising itself in the place where its mate formerly was, and rushes anew to force the quarry to make another plunge. By thus alternately gliding, in rapid and often repeated rushes, over the ill-fated bird, they soon fatigue it, when it stretches out its neck, swims deeply, and makes for the shore, in the hope of concealing itself among the rank weeds. But this is of no avail, for the Eagles follow it in all its motions, and the moment it approaches the margin, one of them darts upon it, and kills it in an instant, after which they divide the spoil."

The hunters and Indians say that a pair of these birds will sometimes attack, with success, a deer or antelope, upon the prairies. They select some animal which, being wounded or for other cause, has separated itself from the herd. They assault it from above, something after the manner just described, striking in swift dives at the eyes with beak and talons, until the speed of the agonized creature is gradually checked, and reeling blindly along for a little while, it falls, to be torn an easy prey. The same fact is related concerning the Great Vulture of the East and the Condor of South America, both of which are known in this way to destroy large animals that have been ever so slightly wounded—being stimulated to the unusual assault by the smell of blood.

The vital power of the Eagle is most amazing. In addition to the surprising fact, that it has been known to live as many as twenty days without food, and exhibit little apparent distress therefrom, it has been found to be about invulnerable to poisons, both gaseous and mineral, that are surely fatal to other creatures. Two instances in point are mentioned in the Biography of Birds. In the first, a White-headed Eagle was sentenced to contribute to a cabinet of natural history, etc.

" A variety of experiments was made with a view to destroy him without injuring his plumage, and a number of mineral poisons were successively given him in large doses, but without effect. At length a drachm of corrosive sublimate of mercury was inclosed in a small fish, and given him to eat. After swallowing the whole of this, he continued to appearance perfectly well, and free from inconvenience.

The next day an equal quantity of white arsenic was given him, without any greater effect; so that in the end the refractory bird was obliged to be put to death by mechanical means."

In the second, a Golden Eagle was the victim. It had been taken in a fox-trap, on the White Mountains, and was procured alive and in fine condition, by Mr. Audubon, who found it necessary to take its life that he might paint its portrait. The passage, though long for our space, is so characteristic that we cannot refrain from giving it entire. He says:—"I occupied myself a whole day in watching his movements; on the next I came to a determination as to the position in which I might best represent him; and on the third thought of how I could take away his life with the least pain to him. I consulted several persons on the subject, and among others my most worthy and generous friend, GEORGE PARKMAN, Esq., M.D., who kindly visited my family every day. He spoke of suffocating him by means of burning charcoal, of killing him by electricity, &c., and we both concluded that the first method would probably be the easiest for ourselves, and the least painful to him. Accordingly the bird was removed in his prison into a very small room, and closely covered with blankets, into which was introduced a pan of lighted charcoal, when the windows and doors were fastened, and the blankets tucked in beneath the cage. I waited, expecting every moment to hear him fall down from his perch; but after listening for *hours*, I opened the door, raised the blankets, and peeped under them amidst a mass of suffocating fumes. There stood the Eagle on his perch, with his bright unflinching eye turned towards me, and as lively and vigorous as ever! Instantly reclosing every aperture, I resumed my station at the door, and towards midnight, not having heard the least noise, I again took a peep at my victim. He was still uninjured, although the air of the closet was insupportable to my son and myself, and that of the adjoining apartment began to feel unpleasant. I persevered, however, ten hours in all, when finding that the charcoal fumes would not produce the desired effect, I retired to rest wearied and disappointed.

"Early next morning I tried the charcoal anew, adding to it a quantity of sulphur, but we were nearly driven from our home in a few hours by the stifling vapors, while the noble bird continued to stand erect, and to look defiance at us whenever we approached his post of martyrdom. His fierce demeanor precluded all internal application, and at last I was compelled to resort to a method always used as the last expedient, and a most effectual one. I thrust a long-pointed piece of steel through his heart, when my proud prisoner instantly fell dead, without even ruffling a feather.

"I sat up nearly the whole of another night to outline him, and worked so constantly at the drawing, that it nearly cost me my life. I was suddenly seized with a spasmodic affection, that much alarmed my family, and completely prostrated me for some days; but, thanks to my heavenly Preserver, and the immediate and unremitting attention of my most worthy friends, Drs. PARKMAN, SHATTUCK, and WARREN, I was soon restored to health, and enabled to pursue my labors. The drawing of this Eagle took me fourteen days, and I had never before labored so incessantly excepting at that of the Wild Turkey."

Ah, what an insight have we here of the patient, careful processes and unsparing self-devotion of the Art-Naturalist! Think!—fourteen days of such ardent and unceasing labor as to bring the strong man near to the grave!—and all to draw a single bird. Ye stupid contemners of such "lowly themes" as the Art-Naturalist chose, think of this!—and remember it was thus he won his illustrious name among the Eagle-men of Earth!

This incessant and hurried labor was rendered necessary by the fact, that the plumage and skin of the dead specimen rapidly lose both color and gloss! What an image of seemingly unconquerable vitality is that of the Eagle on its perch, with bright unflinching eye, after thus breathing that deadly gas for hours! And now let us add, from the same source, another sketch, that of the Old Eagle, illustrating this same point.

"It is supposed that Eagles live to a very great age,—some persons have ventured to say even a hundred years. On this subject, I can only observe, that I once found one of these birds, which, on being killed, proved to be a female, and which, judging by its appearance, must have been very old. Its tail and wing-feathers were so worn out, and of such a rusty color, that I imagined the bird had lost the power of moulting. The legs and feet were covered with large warts, the claws and bill were much blunted, it could scarcely fly more than a hundred yards at a time, and this it did with a heaviness and unsteadiness of motion such as I never witnessed in any other bird of the species. The body was poor and very tough. The eye was the only part which appeared to have sustained no injury. It remained sparkling and full of animation, and even after death seemed to have lost little of its lustre. No wounds were perceivable on its body."

Think of the gem-like glittering of that tameless glance beneath the deepening shadows of the gathered years!—it seems as if the glorious bird would die into a diamond to shine on, night-piercing and defiant there forever!—as if the light of that fierce life the storms have fed, would remain a thing imperishable within that eyelet-hole, although the skull should fall away to dust—the bloody beak leave but a hooked line where it went out—and plumes that have been ruffled by the thunder, float away impalpable upon a breath of air!

What changes has not that century-piercing vision witnessed? The young Eagle, in its brown plumage, sailed above silent woods, along the valleys of our great rivers in the West, and there was nothing to make it afraid in the shades beneath, except the whistling arrow of the Red-man, when it passed above his wigwam, or rustled, brushing by his still form, watching with sinew-strung bow amidst pathless solitudes. When it had donned the blanched insignia of Eagle-hood, and on steadier wings with swifter rushing flight, spread its white tail and threw its white head far back to utter resounding war-cries, then, with a shock, upsprung in answer, the sharp ring of the rifle, and the hissing bullet told that a more fearful foe had come! And now it became more wary and learned to fear for its wild empire; for from afar the gradual hum of an approaching civilization swelled upon the ancient silence, until the belching roar of a Steamboat roused the startled echoes to reverberate on distant hills as it passed up the quiet-gliding river! Then in fire, in thunder, and in smoke, the mysterious and terrible Advent was announced to all the creatures of a wilderness which was henceforth to own a new dominion, and with sullen flappings the Eagle passed away towards the West, above falling forests and uprising cities, to find the unviolated solitudes.

There again the same sights and sounds would follow it apace, until at last the Steam Horse, snorting flames, came tearing through the bowels of the old solemn hills, to fill the wide valleys beyond with the iron clangor of its hurtling speed, and then the astounded guardian of Earth's Primeval sleep whirled away on hurried wings, deeper yet deeper towards the West! Still the inexorable pursuers came upon its track, and still it passed on before, in shortening flights, until at last its earliest foe no longer answered with the war-whoop to its scream, and the forests seemed oppressed with the silence of a pause, as if it but awaited, breathlessly, the terrible coming!

And here the swift-winged bird first felt that it was weary! The steel-hinged pinions that had "sheared the subtile ayre" so long, seemed to have lost their free, triumphing spring, and it went heavily upon its way. Now its savage pride becomes reconciled in a degree to the tumults and strange sounds from which it fled at first in fiercest wrath, because it finds the lambs, pigs, geese and turkeys of the farm-yard to be easier prey to its decaying powers than the wild creatures it had proudly conquered in the earlier lustrums of the century it is living to a close.

Now the Royal Eagle sinks into a petty plunderer, and the final decadence of its grandeur is, when, from the last patch of its forest-home it launches out on stiffened wings above the villages on some "Independence morning," and hears, as it wheels slowly over the gathered crowds, wild shouts of patriotic recognition as the youthful Orator points aloft to the omen of Liberty!—Shouts that but frighten the superannuated Cloud-King, which rushes on to the nearest covert to hide, until the warty barnacles of age overtake it, and its rusty plumes no longer lift it to the clouds!

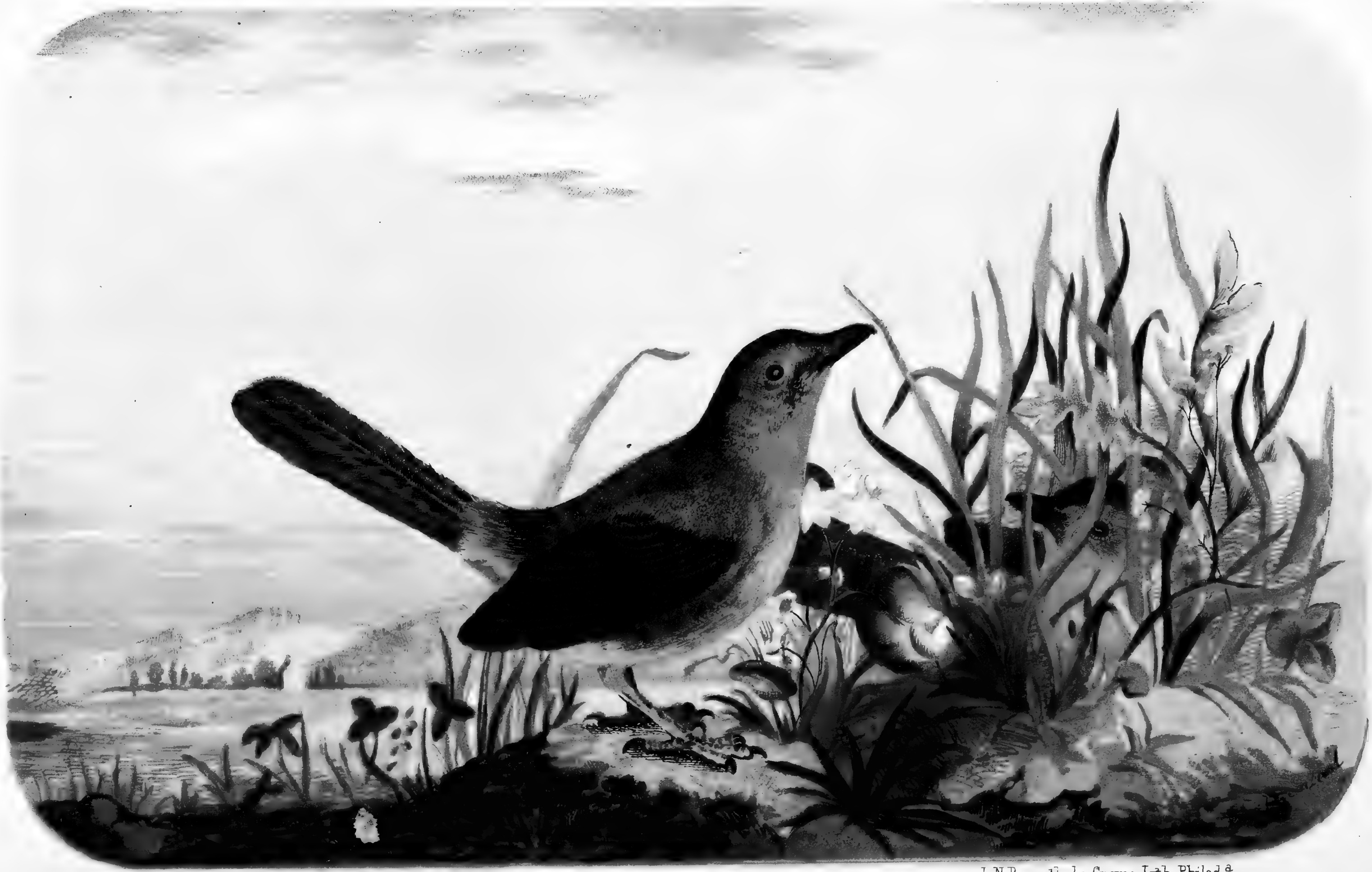
CHAPTER XII.

MY WIFE'S STORY OF HER PET CAT-BIRD, "GENERAL BEM."

Two years ago we were residing in C——. We had very few friends near us, and sometimes the days seemed very dreary and long to us, for our pet Brownie had been dead many months, and we had said we could never have another such pet; to lose him had grieved us too much, and we would not have our hearts so nearly broken again.

Still we could not but admire the taste of our new acquaintance, W——, who kept his bachelor establishment solely for the accommodation of pet song-birds, and that his own love and genius for music might be nourished by this association of all our most charming songsters. We spent many an hour in his "bird rooms," listening to the gay mimicry of mocking birds, the clear, musical piping of his English black birds, and the loud, enchanting whistle of the cardinal birds, carrying us dreamily deep into the shadow of wild-woods, where other sounds faded from the ear, and all our senses merged towards one centre, where gleamed the glowing breast of the cardinal bird, lifted above the bare branches, which stood gauntly out from the green, embosoming leaves which would have shut him from the sunlight had he descended.

The lark leaping upward, chaunted his song with a saddened tone that made us weep, while we felt how even the presence of those gay companions was no compensation for the clear sky, which had filled his eye with such liquid light,



Mrs C.W. Webber pinx.

L.N. Rosenthal's Cromo Lith. Philad^a.

CAT BIRDS. "WHERE IS 'BEM?"

which had sunk into his soul, and so filled it with melody as he beat the still air with his gentle wings.

Then hid away among the bushes which filled one corner, we could sometimes catch a glimpse of Bob White, as he called his "wife" back from her inquisitive peering at us, and the little shore larks who were so shy and gliding, looking ever as if some still wave from the sea was chasing them higher on the sands, and as if they must in a moment take wing, while we gaze steadily to distinguish their rapid quivering flight in the sunshine, from the dash of glittering spray.

But what have we here? What a lovely figure—what perfect plumage! What do you call this gentleman who seems to be protector general of all that crowd of canaries? See! the scamp has pounced upon that large mocking bird, and has sent him screaming in rage across the room. And how cool he is; he evidently does not consider *that* a great feat. What a knowing air he has!—how, he determines to make our acquaintance—to retort to our questionings. We beg the honor of an introduction to this extremely nonchalant gentleman. No! do not tell me he is called simple "Master Cat-Bird"—let me confer upon him his rightful title. Henceforth we shall know him as "General Bem"—the brave general—the magnanimous, the impulsive though calm, the handsome, our favorite General Bem. Come here, and take this berry in proof that your honors are real, not visionary, as the world too often makes them. Henceforth thou art Bem! Great Bem—we take thee to our heart and—may we be permitted to take him to our home!

Well, General Bem went home with us at once, and was immediately given his liberty, which he made use of by peering into every closet, examining and dragging everything from its proper place, which he could manage, pecking and squalling, dashing hither and thither, until at night he quietly went into his cage as if he was nearly or quite positive that he must commence a new career on the morrow; it was evident that he had to begin the world over again, yet, as he was not superannuated, and was, withal, ambitious, his case was still not a desperate one, although we had assured him most positively, that we would not fall in love with him—we had only invited him there to help us pass the time.

Bem looked wise at the assertion, but said nothing. The next morning we gave him water for a bath, which he immediately used, and then sprang upon my head very much to my surprise; then he darted to the window, then back to my head, screaming all the time most vociferously, until finally I went to the window, for peace sake, and stood in the sunshine while Bem composedly dressed his feathers, standing on my head first on one foot, then on the other, evidently using my scalp as a sort of foot-stove, and my head for a movable pedestal for his impudent generalship to perch on when he felt disposed to be comfortably elevated; and had clearly come to the conclusion—as I was so fond of transporting him from his native land—that I should serve as a convenient craft to bear him where his moods commanded. In a word, he had determined to turn tyrant; if I had had the deliberate purpose of using him as a mere toy, he had at least the coolness to make me available, and from that time I became the victim of the most unequalled tyranny. Did I neglect his morning bath beyond the instant, my ears were assailed with screams and cries till I was forced to my duty; I must bear him into the sunshine or my hair was pulled; I must bring him his breakfast or he pecked my cheeks and lips; in fine, I was compelled to become his constant attendant, while, in the meantime, he most diligently assailed my heart by endearing confidences. He would sit upon my arm and sleep, he would get into my work-box, and while I watched that he did not pilfer a little, he would quietly seat himself on its edge, and in a low, sweet voice, lull my suspicions by such tender melodies, that finally I could no longer say—"I will not love you, Bem!"—but gave him the satisfactory assurance that he was not quite so much of a tease as I had tried to think him; and he now received my daily offering of small spiders and worms with gestures of evident pleasure. These were always presented to him enveloped in white paper, which he carefully opened and secured then his prey before it could escape, even although it was sometimes a difficult task to keep his vigilant eye upon so many apparently escapading—when I was called to the field, and appointing me a station, I was expected to give the alarm when one attempted to get away on my side, which he immediately killed and dropped, and then darted after those on the outskirts of the field of action.

At last, one day, Mr. Webber brought for my sister a wood thrush, which was very wild and savage, and was, besides, extremely ugly, but had the reputation of being a good singer, which made us forgive his sullen temper and hope to win him back to more gentle ways, when he should see that we would be his friends and that he should be almost free; besides, Gen. Bem was evidently much inclined to make his acquaintance, and took the first occasion to pay him a visit in his cage-house. This the stranger did not fancy, and drove him out. Bem resented this, by turning on the threshold and pouring forth a torrent of screams and mewings which came near distracting the poor thrush, who darted at him and chased him to the bed, under which Bem darted, and was secure for the present. But from that time there were no more overtures of friendship—they were sworn enemies; the thrush, from detestation of the impudent fellow who invaded his residence, and finally appropriated it, to the entire desertion of his own, which, by-the-bye, was much larger, and with which the thrush eventually consoled himself, and Bem continued to occupy, because it amused him to pester the ill-natured fellow which he had set down the thrush to be. Many were the quaint scenes which now daily occurred. If Bem desired to take a bathe, the thrush would endeavor to push him out; but Bem was not to be ousted in that style if he could prevent it, and commonly sent the poor thrush away in consternation, his musical ear stunned by such direful din as threatened to rend his delicate heart as well as tympanum. Never shall I forget one droll scene. One day, Bem found on the floor a white grape which he seemed to be disposed comfortably to discuss, after having rolled it out into the broad sunshine. Just at this moment the thrush stepped up in a cool and dignified manner, and carried the grape off—dropped it in the shade, and deliberately drawing up one foot among his feathers, seemed to say: "I claim this grape as my own, I stand on the defensive, come and get it if you dare!"—so closed the "off" eye, and looked as if the matter was settled to his entire satisfaction.

Bem had been in the very act of pecking the grape when it was so unceremoniously withdrawn; he drew himself up on tip-toe fairly with astonishment, his eye seemed to grow larger and rounder, the feathers on his head stood alternately erect and clung close to the scalp; he stood a moment or two, and then with a loud "mew," darted forward to re-capture the stolen fruit, but the thrush coolly and silently met him with open mouth and body thrown forward, yet still covering the grape. Bem's wit returned to him—he quietly turned off, as if it was a small matter anyhow. We were astonished--was Bem a coward after all? would he permit this bird, even if he was larger, to impose upon him in this fashion, and he able to whip mocking birds at that? We shook our heads; if Bem does that we shall withdraw his laurels. But see! he comes cautiously about the thrush—what does he mean? ah, we perceive; Bem has sagaciously only changed his tactics, we will watch him; he thinks the thrush will want some dinner pretty soon, and then, as Bem disdains to be called quarrelsome, he will quietly appropriate his treasure. Four hours things retained this position, the thrush never moving more than six inches from his post, though evidently becoming hungry and weary, while Bem silently wandered about the room, feasting in the most provokingly cool way in both cages, and continually making inadvertent incursions in the neighborhood of his enemy, as if for the purpose of throwing him off his guard. At last, Bem was on the other side of the room, the thrush had been eyeing a dainty morsel *which Bem had dropped* about two feet from him. He looked, Bem was too much engaged to notice him, he could easily venture—he would—he did. Bem, whose keen eye had seen all, darted like lightning, and before the thrush could turn about and seize again the contested treasure, Bem had alighted on the centre of the bed—the only place in the room where the thrush would not follow him—and there quietly tore the grape to pieces and left it.

But, alas! we had to send our brave, sagacious Bem home again. We were to make a long journey to the South, and he must stay behind. Ah, the poor fellow knew as well as we, that we were bidding him adieu. He pecked our fingers in great distress, and bit our lips till the blood came, in the energy of his farewell—while he uttered such sad low cries as made us mourn for many a day in the remembrance.

During our absence we wrote frequently inquiring of Bem, and many an injunction to him, to live and die, if need be, the same brave general we had known him. We never expected to see him again; but, after a year of wanderings, we did return to our old home. At once we went to see the general, little dreaming that we should be remembered. What was our surprise, then, when we called " Bem! Bem! General Bem!" to see our dear friend and pet dart down to us from his hiding-place, and most evidently recognize us—his eye sparkling, his scalp feathers raised, his wings drooping, and that same low cry which had haunted us so long, greeting us again. Our happiness was real—and when we offered him the white paper, he instantly darted upon it, and tore it asunder to get the well-remembered treasure he had always found within.

Again Bem went home with us—this time to fill our hearts with affection by his quaint impish ways and gentle waywardness. Now, he became a privileged character; my paint-box was his especial admiration—he treated it with great veneration, having discovered that birds grew out of the little square pebbles, as he doubtless considered them—until one day he perceived that I objected to his lifting from its case a black-looking, ill-shaped piece of paint, that I was even decidedly opposed to his meddling with it; from that moment that particular piece became a treasure—its value so great to him, that hide where I might, it had ever an invisible glitter, which to his eyes was brighter than any gem; he would find and hide it from me, and thus I had at least once every day to search the room over for this indispensable color. No matter that I threatened him, he coolly dressed his feathers and commenced so dreamy a song as to soothe my rage at once. He became my constant companion, he bathed with me in the morning, he took his dinners with me from my plate, and perched at night close to my head. He sat on my shoulder or head when I worked, and seemed to express his opinion in regard to my progress in bird-making, with quite a connoisseuring air. He grew to be profoundly jealous of all other birds, and if I talked to a fine mocking bird, whose cage hung in my room, he would become so enraged and finally depressed, that I became alarmed—I feared he would die. One day I had given this bird some water, my hand was in the cage, the mocking bird was pecking at my fingers, when with a loud and vicious scream, General Bem dashed from the floor up into the cage, and commenced a violent assault upon the inmate. The struggle was but for a moment—he dashed out and I shut the cage door—while Bem, mounted on the bed-post, sent forth such yells of fury as I never heard from bird's lungs before. I could not pacify him for a long time—several hours—he hid in the shade of the furniture, and would not be induced to come out. The next day the mocker was flying about the room, Bem assailed him, and the fight became so desperate, that I was obliged to send the mocking bird away, while my poor Bem was seized with convulsions, and I thought him dead after a few moments. But his time had not yet come, he lived to pass through many such scenes of painful suffering.

I had about the same time a Painted Finch. This was the most quarrelsome little rogue in the world, and continually invited Bem to a trial of skill. But Bem refused, with the most decisive manner, to have anything to do with him, and although the Finch was the most tyrannical companion, preventing Bem from entering his own cage, driving him from certain parts of the room, and really making himself intensely disagreeable at times, yet Bem magnanimously refused to become provoked into a quarrel with his petite enemy, and seemed rather to be amused, never even condescending to become jealous of the pretty Finch.

One cold day, the Finch concluded to take a flight among the bare branches of the trees in the garden. The window was down about two inches, and he went out. We had much difficulty in catching the fellow, and only succeeded when he had become numbed with the cold. When we returned from our chase after him, what was our consternation at finding that both doors and windows had been left open. Bem must be gone—he had gone away from W—— on every possible occasion, and the town time after time had been thrown into confusion by the hue and cry, "Bem has escaped! come to the rescue!"

Had I any hope? would he be more likely to stay now than when snow was on the ground? He had gone! My eyes were too dim with tears to search for him. I called with fearful voice: "Bem! Bem! where are you, my bird?" A soft chirp, and Bem hopped from the perch he had made, and looked so confidingly at me and kissed me so prettily, that I felt quite assured that he would never leave me. Yet he often after teased me by hiding when I went away, as if he enjoyed, coquettishly, the pain he gave me.

He now refused to allow anybody to caress him except us, and seemed to imagine that he was sent to be my especial protector. One day, early in the spring, we had been walking in the fields and had caught from the grass some fragments of burr. These W—— was brushing off from my dress, when we were attracted by a singular hissing sound, resembling that made by a snake. We turned, Bem stood upon a stick of fire-wood, one of several which lay in the corner, his body straightened almost horizontally with the stick, his feathers erect on his whole body, the wings drooping below his feet, his eyes distended and glistening with the fire and animosity of a snake, the bill turned slightly upward and partially open, while the hissing continued, increasing in vehemence with every movement made by W——. If he approached him with his hand, Bem would dart at it and peck at it with the greatest violence, and seemed to think W—— had not only caused me to absent myself from him, but had now become my foe, consequently he must protect me. Ever after, he treated W—— with the most malignant expressions of dislike, never permitting him to touch me in any possible way. Yet he afterwards, when our friend J. W. F—— visited us, exhibited towards him all the confidential affection with which he treated us—making it a point to visit him in his room every morning, to inspect his toilet, and going to sleep on his shoulder or head at night.

But Bem became too human, his little body could not be expected long to enshroud the soul which had been developing in him. His eye had grown too large, and his intelligence fearful. He had to suffer too much as men do, and we loved him too much. Who could have resisted him? Sometimes, when I grew sick or sad, and would throw myself on a lounge and weep childishly, as I will sometimes, then my poor Bem would come to me and peck gently at my fingers, gradually increasing the force of his blow until I noticed and spoke to him. One day I would not speak to him—his efforts were all unheeded—I would not be roused. His distress was pitiable, his rage unbounded; he imagined that something behind me was injuring me, he scolded and beat the cushions with his wings and bill; he caressed me by gently pecking my face and hands, and tried to make me speak by tugging at my dress; he sang to me a meek, loving song, so softly in my ear, as he sat on my shoulder, that I could not wickedly resist the good angel—my precious Bem!

There was yet another charming trait of our pet which I must mention. He was, of course, always astir very early in the morning, and then, after flitting about the room impatiently for some time, he would alight upon one or the other of our foreheads, and begin to peck at our eye-lashes and lids until he had succeeded in waking us both fully, then he would dart away and commence singing in great glee. He had grown tired of loneliness, and had no toleration for the thought of wasting his sweetness!

His faith in our friendship was so charming. One night Mr. Webber was sitting at the window, I on my knees, gazing out into the gathering twilight; Bem forsook his ordinary perch for the night, and alit upon my shoulder, nestling closer and closer to my cheek, until his warm breast and throat were pressed close to my cheek. How we loved the dear little fellow! Oh, to think that I should have lost my sweet pet the very next day. That, that was to be his last caress! My heart feels very sad and lonely when I recall that night—when I remember the last farewell of my pet Bem!

The next morning I went from my room into another—the door was left open—Bem followed in search—became finally alarmed, and darted from an upper window into the wilderness of leaves below. He found his way back, and would have been my own again, but a wicked woman who had less soul than a *wild* cat-bird, startled him again and again, until, panic-stricken, he fled. That evening came a terrible storm, and my poor, poor Bem never returned.

I leave this "ower true tale" to tell for itself the story of this branch of the illustrious family of the Turdinæ, as it appears when so strangely humanized by being thrown into intimate relations to the higher spiritualities of our race.

Wilson and Audubon have both some touching passages, which go so strikingly to illustrate the exceeding amiability and sympathetic tenderness of this most gentle but persecuted creature, that I cannot refrain from giving them as a plea on its behalf.

Wilson says: "In passing through the woods in summer, I have sometimes amused myself with imitating the violent chirping or squeaking of young birds, in order to observe what different species were around—for such sounds, at such a season, in the woods, are no less alarming to the feathered tenants of the bushes, than the cry of fire or murder in the streets is to the inhabitants of a large and populous city.

"On such occasions of alarm and consternation, the cat-bird is the first to make his appearance, not singly, but sometimes half-a-dozen at a time, flying from different quarters to the spot. At this time, those who are disposed to play with his feelings may almost throw him into fits, his emotion and agitation are so great at the distressing cries of what he supposes to be his suffering young.

"Other birds are variously affected, but none show symptoms of such extreme suffering. He hurries backwards and forwards, with hanging wings and open mouth, calling out louder and faster, and actually screaming with distress, till he appears hoarse with his exertions. He attempts no offensive means, but he bewails, he implores in the most pathetic terms with which nature has supplied him, and with an agony of feeling which is truly affecting. Every feathered neighbor within hearing hastens to the place, to learn the cause of the alarm, peeping about with looks of consternation and sympathy. But their own powerful parental duties and domestic concerns soon oblige each to withdraw. At other seasons, the most perfect imitations have no effect whatever upon him."

Wilson, also, in a note from Mr. Bartram, gives a fine instance of the courage of the cat-bird in defending its nest, and even the very neighborhood thereof. I have witnessed many such instances of its devoted valor, in battling with snakes and cats.

"Yesterday," says Mr. Bartram, "I observed a conflict or contest between a cat-bird and a snake. It took place in a gravel walk in the garden, near a dry wall of stone. I was within a few yards of the combatants. The bird pounced or darted upon the snake, snapping his bill; the snake would then draw himself quickly into a coil, ready for a blow, but the bird would cautiously circumvent him at a little distance, now and then running up to and snapping at him, but keeping at a sufficient distance to avoid a blow. After some minutes it became a running fight, the snake retreating, and at last he took shelter in the wall. The cat-bird had young ones in the bushes near the field of battle."

Audubon also bears ample testimony to the unhesitating self-devotion of this charming little songster, when once its sympathies have been aroused, as well as to the attractive character of its song, and its sagacious estimate of the motives and character of those who approach its nest:

"No sooner has the cat-bird made its appearance in the country of its choice, than its song is heard from the topmost branches of the trees around, in the dawn of the morning. This song is a compound of many of the gentler trills and sweet modulations of our various woodland choristers, delivered with apparent caution, and with all the attention and softness necessary to enable the performer to please the ear of his mate. Each cadence passes on without faltering, and if you are acquainted with the songs of the birds he so sweetly imitates, you are sure to recognize the manner of the different species. When the warmth of his loving bosom engages him to make choice of the notes of our best songsters, he brings forth sounds as mellow and as powerful as those of the thrasher and mocking bird. These medleys, when heard in the calm and balmy hours of retiring day, always seem to possess a double power, and he must have a dull ear indeed, and little relish for the simple melodies of nature, who can listen to them without delight.

"The manners of this species are lively, and at intervals border on the grotesque. It is extremely sensitive, and will follow an intruder to a considerable distance, wailing and mewing as it passes from one tree to another, its tail now jerked and thrown from side to side, its wings drooping and its breast deeply inclined. On such occasions it would fain peck at your hand; but these exhibitions of irritated feeling seldom take place after the young are sufficiently grown to be able to take care of themselves. In some instances, I have known this bird to recognize at once its friend from its foe, and to suffer the former even to handle the treasure deposited in its nest, with all the marked assurance of the knowledge it possessed of its safety; when, on the contrary, the latter had to bear all its anger. The sight of a dog seldom irritates it, while a single glance at the wily cat excites the most painful paroxysms of alarm. It never neglects to attack a snake with fury, although it often happens that it becomes the sufferer for its temerity."

Now if any one who reads all that we have already given in its behalf, still feels his or her sympathies untouched in favor of our loving and heroic Cat-Bird, we would, to such, make one other last appeal in a short passage more from Audubon. Those who can resist such traits as we find here depicted, must weep hailstones for tears, if they ever do weep.

"The attachment which the cat-bird shows towards its eggs or young, is affecting. It even possesses a humanity, or rather a generosity and gentleness worthy of being more elevated in the scale of nature. It has been known to nurse, feed and raise the young of other species, for which no room could be afforded in their nests. It will sit on its eggs after the nest has been displaced, or even after it has been carried from one bush to another."

CHAPTER XIII.

WASHINGTON EAGLE AND FISH HAWK

WE must premise in speaking of the "Bird of Washington," that the existence of any such distinct species, as to entitle it to a new name, is still regarded by the majority of American naturalists, at least, as hypothetical. Indeed, the savans of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia utterly repudiate the existence of any such species, persisting that it is merely the great Cinerious, or Sea-Eagle, which Mr. Audubon has mistaken for a new variety. This bird, *Falco Albicilla*, even Mr. Audubon acknowledges to bear so strong a resemblance to the Bird of Washington, *Falco Washingtoniis*, as to be easily confounded with it by a superficial observer. Now the Philadelphia Academicians assert that the specimen referred to by Audubon as having been deposited for the Washington Eagle, by Dr. Richard Harlan, in their collection, is nothing more nor less than a very large Sea-Eagle, and that the drawing by Audubon himself is clearly of a bird of the same species. Here doctors disagree, to be sure, and I am not entirely certain that the Philadelphians are not in some degree right; but that there is a new eagle, which has not yet been figured, or described, peculiar to the North American continent, I am perfectly sure, and that this eagle is the one noticed by Mr. Audubon, who saw it several times on the wing, I am equally certain, even although the particular bird *figured* by him may have been a Sea-Eagle. In a word, though there can be no doubt that he several times saw a new eagle on the wing, there may be some doubt about the particular specimen shot by him at Henderson being the same bird. I shall first, although having previously furnished a portion of these extracts in my first volume, give his description of the discovery by him of the Washington Eagle, feeling myself fully justified by the importance of the subject, in quoting them entire, before I proceed to explain my reasons for the seemingly paradoxical opinion given here.

Mr. Audubon says:

"It was in the month of February, 1814, that I obtained the first sight of this noble bird, and never shall I forget the delight which it gave me. Not even Herschel, when he discovered the planet which bears his name, could have experienced more rapturous feelings. We were on a trading voyage, ascending the Upper Mississippi. The keen wintry blasts whistled around us, and the cold from which I suffered had, in a great degree, extinguished the deep interest which, at other seasons, this magnificent sight has been wont to wake in me. I lay stretched beside our patroon. The safety of the cargo was forgotten, and the only thing that called my attention was the multitude of ducks of different species, accompanied by vast flocks of swans, which from time to time passed us. My patroon, a Canadian, had been years engaged in the fur trade. He was a man of much intelligence; and, perceiving that these birds had engaged my curiosity, seemed anxious to find some new object to divert me. An eagle flew over us. 'How fortunate!' he exclaimed, 'this is what I could have wished. Look, sir, the Great Eagle, and the only one I have seen since I left the lakes.' I was instantly on my feet, and having observed it attentively, concluded, as I lost it in the distance, that it was a species quite new to me. My patroon assured me that such birds were indeed rare; that they sometimes followed the hunters, to feed on the entrails of the animals which they had killed when the lakes were frozen over; but that when the lakes were open, they would dive in the day-time after fish, and snatch them up in the manner of the fish-hawk; and that they roosted generally on the shelves of the rocks, where they built their nests, of which he had discovered several by the quantity of white dung scattered below.

"Convinced that the bird was unknown to naturalists, I felt particularly anxious to learn its habits, and to discover in what particulars it differed from the rest of its genus. My next meeting with this bird was a few years afterward, whilst engaged in collecting cray-fish on one of those flats which border and divide Green river, in Kentucky, near its junction with the Ohio. The river is there bordered by a range of high cliffs, which, for some distance, follow its windings. I observed on the rocks, which, at that place, are nearly perpendicular, a quantity of white ordure, which I attributed to owls, that might have resorted thither. I mentioned the circumstance to my companions, when one of them, who lived within a mile and a half of the place, told me it was from the nest of the Brown Eagle, meaning the White-headed Eagle (*Falco Leucocephalus*), in its immature state. I assured him this could not be, and remarked, that neither the old nor the young birds of that species ever build in such places, but always in trees. Although he could not answer my objection, he stoutly maintained that a Brown Eagle of some kind, above the usual size, had built there; and added, that he had espied the nest some days before, and had seen one of the old birds dive and catch a fish. This he thought strange, having, till then, always observed that both Brown Eagles and Bald Eagles procured this kind of food by robbing the fish-hawks. He said, that if I felt particularly anxious to know what nest it was, I might soon satisfy myself, as the old birds would come and feed their young with fish, for he had seen them do so before.

"In high expectation, I seated myself about a hundred yards from the foot of the rock. Never did time pass more slowly. I could not help betraying the most impatient curiosity, for my hopes whispered it was a Sea Eagle's nest. Two long hours elapsed before the old bird made his appearance, which was announced to us by the loud hissings of the two young ones, which crawled to the extremity of the hole to receive a fine fish. I had a perfect view of this noble bird as he held himself to the edging rock, hanging like the barn bank, or social swallow, his tail spread, and his wings partly so. I trembled lest a word should escape my companions. The slightest murmur had been treason from them. They entered into my feelings, and, though little interested, gazed with me. In a few minutes the other parent joined her mate; and, from the difference in size (the female of rapacious birds being much larger), we knew this to be the mother bird. She also brought a fish; but more cautious than her mate, she glanced her quick and piercing eye around, and instantly perceived that her abode had been discovered. She dropped her prey, with a loud shriek communicated the alarm to the male, and, hovering with him over our heads, kept up a growling cry, to intimidate us from our suspected design. This watchful solicitude I have ever found peculiar to the female—must I be understood to speak only of birds?

"The young having concealed themselves, we went and picked up the fish which the mother had let fall. It was a white perch, weighing about five and a half pounds. The upper part of the head was broken in, and the back torn by the talons of the eagle. We had plainly seen her bearing it in the manner of the fish-hawk.

"This day's sport being at an end, we journeyed homeward, we agreed to return the next morning, with the view of obtaining both the old and young birds; but rainy and tempestuous weather setting in, it became necessary to defer the expedition till the third day following, when, with guns and men all in readiness, we reached the rock. Some posted themselves at the foot, others upon it, but in vain. We passed the entire day without either seeing or hearing an eagle, the sagacious birds, no doubt, having anticipated an invasion, and removed their young to new quarters.

" I come at last to the day which I had so often and so ardently desired. Two years had gone by since the discovery of the nest, in fruitless excursions; but my wishes were no longer to remain ungratified. In returning from the little village of Henderson, to the house of Dr. Rankin, about a mile distant, I saw an eagle rise from a small inclosure, not a hundred yards before me, where the doctor had, a few days before, slaughtered some hogs, and alight upon a low tree branching over the road. I prepared my double-barrelled piece, which I constantly carry, and went slowly and cautiously toward him. Quite fearlessly he awaited my approach, looking on me with undaunted eye. I fired, and he fell. Before I reached him he was dead. With what delight did I survey the magnificent bird! Had the finest salmon ever pleased him, as he did me? Never. I ran and presented him to my friend with a pride which they alone feel who, like me, have devoted themselves from their earliest childhood to such persuits, and who have derived from them their first pleasures. To others, I must seem to 'prattle out of fashion.' The doctor, who was an experienced hunter, examined the bird with much satisfaction, and frankly acknowledged he had never before seen or heard of it.

" The name which I have chosen for this new species of eagle—the Bird of Washington—may, by some, be considered as preposterous and unfit; but as it is, indisputably, the noblest bird of its genus that has yet been discovered in the United States, I trust I shall be allowed to honor it with the name of one yet nobler, who was the savior of his country, and whose name will ever be dear to it. To those who may be curious to know my reasons, I can only say that, as the new world gave me birth and liberty, the great man who insured its independence is next my heart. He had a nobility of mind and a generosity of soul, such as are seldom possessed. He was brave, so is the eagle; like it, too, he was the terror of his foes; and his fame, extending from pole to pole, resembles the majestic soaring of the mightiest of the feathered tribe If America has reason to be proud of her Washington, so has she to be proud of her great eagle.

"In the month of January following, I saw a pair of these eagles flying over the falls of the Ohio, one in pursuit of the other. The next day I saw them again. The female had relaxed her severity, and laid aside her coyness, and to a favorite tree they continually resorted. I pursued them unsuccessfully for several days, when they forsook the place.

"The flight of this bird is very different from that of the White-headed Eagle. The former encircles a greater space whilst sailing, keeps nearer to the land and the surface of the water, and when about to dive for fish, falls in a spiral manner, as if with the intention of checking any retreating movement which its prey might attempt, darting upon it only when a few yards distant. The Fish-Hawk often does the same. When rising with a fish, the Bird of Washington flies to a considerable distance, forming, in its line of course, a very acute angle with the surface line of the water. My last opportunity of seeing this bird, was on the 15th of November, 1821, a few miles above the mouth of the Ohio, when two passed over our boat, moving down the river with a gentle motion. In a letter from a kind relative, Mr. W. Bakewell, dated "Falls of the Ohio, July, 1819," and containing particulars relative to the swallow-tailed hawk (*Falco furcatus*), that gentleman says: 'Yesterday, for the first time, I had an opportunity of viewing one of these magnificent birds, which you call the Sea Eagle, as it passed low over me, whilst fishing. I shall be really glad when I can again have the pleasure of seeing your drawing of it.'"

I can mention but one instance in my life—and it has been no inactive one—in which I have seen what I knew to be this or a similar new species. Nearly fifteen years, ago when standing on the deck of a steamer, in which I was ascending the Upper Mississippi, beyond Galena, I saw pass over us, flying very low, an immense eagle which I instantly new to be a new bird, and conjectured must be the Bird of Washington—but conjectures won't do in science. I distinctly remember the strangeness of the sensation—the wild thrill—half awe and wonder—with which I looked up when the strange bird stirred the dim evening with the rush of mighty pinions just above me. With what an eager eye I followed up its slow and far recession—with what tumultuous images of fierce exulting freedom, boundless wilds and hidden miracles of strength and beauty, I was filled! O, the power and splendor of the world that weareth wings! How should our tyrannous will have known the infinite and conquered space, but that these winged eagles taught us—how tamed the elements, but that storm-cleaving pinions learned us first defiance?

But this is scarcely to the point of our narrative. I have fortunately seen the new bird *vis-a-vis*, within a few months, and now know beyond conjecture that it does exist. During a short stay in Louisville, in February of this year, '53, I was informed by some kind friends of mine, of the existence of a large specimen of eagles in the neighborhood—at Cave-Hill Cemetery—which had been raised from a fledging by a gentleman who has charge of the grounds. My friends asserted confidently that it was the Bird of Washington, and I, with great eagerness, immediately proposed a visit to the cemetery. A small party of us accordingly rode out the next morning. We were courteously received by the gentleman owning the bird, and forthwith conducted to its barred prison. There I found perched, to my great delight, a magnificent eagle, of greater size than any with which I was familiar, in full and perfect health and splendid plumage. The owner assured me that he had held the bird in his possession for five years.

Having heard through some correspondent of his, that there was a pair of large Fishing Eagles frequenting certain bluffs along the shores of Lake Huron, he wrote to him immediately to endeavor to find its eyrie and send him one of the young.

His friend had been successful, and sent him this young bird; stating, at the same time, that the location of the nest and the general habits of the old birds, entirely corresponded with the description Mr. Audubon had given of his discovery and observation of the nest and habits of the Bird of Washington, in the cliffs of Green River, Kentucky.

I had no copy of Audubon's plate at hand, to compare the drawing with the living bird; but perceiving surely that it was entirely new, I concluded hastily that it must be the veritable "*Falco Washingtonii*"—especially as its owner stated that he had several times had this specimen compared with Audubon's original plate, and found its markings to agree fully. Still I had some little doubt, fearing that my memory might have deceived me, and therefore requested my wife—as the period of our stay had now nearly closed—to at least take an accurate sketch of the head of this fine specimen in pencil. She did so, and I was particularly careful to note the proportions. I know these to be perfectly accurate, and on comparing them when I returned to Philadelphia, both with the drawing of Audubon and the specimens in the Academy of Natural Sciences, so much talked of, I became convinced that this was a different species from either, and that, too, in characteristics admitting of no close correspondence.

In Audubon's plate the correspondence is not accurate by any means, in coloring of the plumage in the first place—and then the outlines of the head and form of the beak are in too many respects dissimilar to admit of the possibility of so accurate an artist having been guilty of such omissions in a subject so important to his reputation. He had clearly seen the new bird on the wing, and not having as yet chanced to meet with the great Cinerious Eagle in his wanderings, he has unguardedly confounded it with the new bird which he had seen before on the wing, and which he meant to name

"The Bird of Washington"—and which beside has quite as positive existence as any winged aërial monarch of them all. Though Audubon may have failed in figuring the right subject—still the observation of this new variety—ay, and its discovery, ever belongs to him, the Eagle-eyed! He knew his mates, though they were strangers fleeting and swift as broadest wings could make them! He may have erred, but then the great Sea Eagle is a bird of mighty scope of wing—a continent to him is but a narrow Isthmus of full flight. He drops here and there as at "mine inn" along the zones, and finds new hemispheres to perch!

It surely may be reconciled to ordinary coincidences of this class when we have the singular fact that the "*Jer* Falcon," which is well known as a habitant of the Northern and Polar regions of our Continent, was shot within a few miles of Louisville, Kentucky, a year or two since. I had an opportunity of examining the splendid specimen of this bird, which had been carefully stuffed and mounted, and found it to be much finer than any I had yet seen in the Academies and Museums of the North and East. How came it there? What storm had been resistless enough to drift its unconquerable wings thus far inland? It was one of Nature's mysteries. But there it was—the veritable *Jer Falcon*, with its broad breast and swallow-like wings—its keen beak and powerful claws! Some tornado must have caught it in its gusts, and whirled it, dizzied and blind, amidst the huge turmoil of space—away! away in baffled battling into unfamiliar realms. That the bird was both weary and confounded was evidenced in the fact, that the most vigilant, wary and ferocious of all the falcons could be approached and killed by a boy, with a small fowling-piece, loaded with bird-shot.

Could the great Cinerious Eagle, shot by Mr. Audubon, have been, too, astray? At all events, the bird I saw is not identical with Audubon's Bird of Washington, *as figured!* Of this I am equally certain, as he supposed himself to be in the figuring and identification of the species, and hope to give in my next volume of the Hunter Naturalist, a correct figure, under the artistic hand of my wife.

We have, too, a great Sea-Eagle, which nearly agrees in its proportions with that described as the Bird of Washington, and which inhabits the British possessions on the Pacific coast, north of Oregon. This bird, *Haliaëtus pelagicus*, has been figured for the new work of John Cassin, Esq., and will appear in his second number. This work is supplementary to that of Mr. Audubon, and will contain the latest discoveries of ornithological species since his publication. Mr. Audubon says further, in relation to his discovery:

"Whilst in Philadelphia, about twelve months ago, I had the gratification of seeing a fine specimen of this eagle at Mr. Brano's Museum. It was a male, in fine plumage, and beautifully preserved. I wished to purchase it, with a view to carry it to Europe, but the price put upon it was above my means.

"My excellent friend, Richard Harlan, M.D., of that city, speaking of this bird, in a letter, dated "Philadelphia, August 19th, 1830," says, "That fine specimen of the Washington Eagle, which you noticed in Brano's Museum, is at present in my possession. I have deposited it in the academy, where it will most likely remain." I saw the specimen alluded to, which, as far as I could observe, agreed in size and markings exactly with my drawing; to which, however, I could not at the time refer, as it was, with the whole of my collection, deposited in the British Museum, under the care of my ever kind and esteemed friend, O. G. Children, Esq., of that Institution.

"The glands, containing the oil used for the purpose of anointing the surface of the plumage, are extremely large. Their contents have the appearance of hog's lard which had been melted and become rancid. This bird makes more copious use of that substance than the White-headed Eagle, or any of the tribe to which it belongs, except the Fish-Hawk, the whole plumage looking, upon close examination, as if it had received a general coating of a thin dilution of gum-arabic, and presenting less of the downy gloss exhibited in the upper part of the White-headed Eagle's plumage. The male bird weighs fourteen and a half pounds avoirdupois, and measures three feet seven inches in length, and ten feet two inches in extent."

This completes Mr. Audubon's account of what he always considered his greatest discovery, the Bird of Washington. We remarked, that the fact of its being a discovery at all has been warmly disputed by the highest American authorities. The name is, however, too good a one to be lost; and if Mr. Audubon has made a mistake in figuring the wrong bird, he certainly has made none in regard to the fact of a new species. It must be a very scarce one of course, as specimens have been so difficult to obtain. He, himself, in the long years of wandering which made up the sum of his vigilant and active life, met with only one which it proved possible for him to obtain, though he mentions several instances of its having been seen on the wing.

The Fish-hawk or Osprey seems to be most naturally regarded as the transition species between the eagles, the falcons proper, and the hawks. Partaking, as it does, of many of the leading characteristics of these groups, it is yet clearly entitled to a separate and distinct classification as the Osprey. Indeed the dispute concerning the separate place and absolute identification of this bird, has, from the earliest period of which we have any accounts of its being noticed, given rise to an infinite series of humorous complexities between the sense of Cabinet Naturalists, ancient and more modern, and the clear demonstrations of the practical Field Naturalist of the present day. Alexander Wilson has set this forth with such admirable tact that we cannot forbear quoting him here—though it not the less illustrates the slow progress of science towards truth, for me to mention that the extract occurs in an article upon the Sea-Eagle, (*Falco Ossifragus*,) which he has thus classified, yet with a saving expression of doubt, whether it may not still prove to be the young of the Bald Eagle, (*Falco Leucocephalus,*) and which strong doubt of his has since been proven beyond question, to have suggested the truth. Wilson says:

"We were disposed after the manner of some, to substitute, for plain matters of fact, all the narratives, conjectures and fanciful theories of travellers, voyagers, compilers, etc., relative to the history of the eagle; the volumes of these writers, from Aristotle down to his admirer, the Count de Buffon, would furnish abundant materials for this purpose. But the author of the present work feels no ambition to excite surprise and astonishment at the expense of truth, or to attempt to elevate and embellish his subject beyond the plain realities of nature. On this account he cannot assent to the assertion, however eloquently made in the celebrated parallel drawn by the French Naturalist between the lion and the eagle, viz.: that the eagle, like the lion, 'disdains the possession of that property which is not the fruit of his own industry, and rejects, with contempt, the prey which is not procured by his own exertions;' since the very reverse of this is the case, in the conduct of the Bald and Sea-Eagle, who, during the summer months, are the constant robbers and plunderers of the Osprey or Fish-Hawk, by whose industry alone both are fed. Nor that, '*though famished for want of prey, he disdains to feed on carrion;*' since we have ourselves seen the Bald Eagle, while seated on the dead carcass of a horse, keep a whole flock of vultures at a respectful distance, until he has fully sated his own appetite The Count has also taken great pains to expose the ridiculous opinion of Pliny, who conceived that the Ospreys formed no separate race, and that they proceeded from the intermixture of different species of eagles, the young of which were not Ospreys, only sea eagles: '*which sea eagles,*' says he, '*breed small vultures, which engender great vultures, that have not the power of propagation.*' But, while laboring to confute these absurdities, the Count himself in his belief on an occasional intercourse between the Osprey and the Sea-Eagle, contradicts all actual observation, and one of the most common and fixed laws of nature; for it may be safely asserted, that there is no habit more universal among the feathered race, in their natural state, than that chastity of attachment which confines the amours of individuals to those of their own species only.

"That perversion of nature, produced by domestication, is nothing to the purpose. In no instance have I ever observed the slightest appearance of a contrary conduct. Even in those birds which never build a nest for themselves, nor hatch their young, nor even pair, but live in a state of general concubinage—such as the cuckoo of the old, and the caw-bunting of the new continent—there is no instance of a deviation from this striking habit. I cannot, therefore, avoid considering the opinion above alluded to, that 'the male Osprey, by coupling with the female Sea-Eagle, produces sea eagles; and that the female Osprey, by pairing with the male Sea-Eagle gives birth of Ospreys,' or Fish-Hawks, as altogether unsupported by facts, and contradicted by the constant and universal habits of the whole feathered race, in their state of nature."

Wilson seems to have made the same mistake in regard to *Falco Ossifragus, his sea-eagle*, that Audubon has undoubtedly fallen into in relation to *Falco Washingtonii* and the same bird. Since, as I remarked in my last paper, the specimen figured by him as a specimen of the new bird, is so nearly like to *Falco Albicilla*, as to leave a doubt whether he has not figured a fine accidental example of the latter for a new and unnamed bird which undoubtedly does exist, but the swallow-like wings of which, not to speak of their immense extension and the peculiar beak and head, renders it as yet a comparatively unknown and certainly an unfigured species.

But however it may be in regard to these curious discussions, growing out of the different experiences and sources of information at the command of individual authors belonging to widely-separated periods, we find now and then promulgated among all these contradictions a particular biography of some certain species or individual that seems to constitute a perfect delineation or monograph, which so far as immediate science has progressed, cannot be for the time transcended. Thus it is with Alexander Wilson's description of this Fish-Hawk. Taking it apart, this biography constitutes one of the noblest features of his whole life-work, though so mingled as it is with his story of the *White-headed Eagle*, it yet so fully expresses the characteristics of both, that we must give a scene entire, which has been most universally admired. It is that of the eagle robbing the Fish-Hawk! and is from his paper on the White-headed Eagle:

" Elevated on the high dead limb of some gigantic tree that commands a wide view of the neighboring shore and ocean, he seems calmly to contemplate the motions of the various feathered tribes, that pursue their busy avocations below; the snow-white gulls slowly winnowing the air; the busy tringæ coursing along the sands; trains of ducks streaming over the surface—silent and watchful cranes intent and wading; clamorous crows, and all the winged multitudes that subsist by the bounty of this vast liquid magazine of nature. High over all these hovers one, whose action instantly arrests his whole attention. By his wide curvature of wing, and sudden suspension in air, he knows him to be the Fish-Hawk, settling over some devoted victim of the deep. His eye kindles at the sight, and, balancing himself with half-opened wings on the branch, he watches the result. Down, rapid as an arrow from heaven, descends the distant object of his attention, the roar of its wings reaching the ear as it disappears in the deep, making the surges foam around. At this moment the eager looks of the eagle are all ardor; and levelling his neck for flight, he sees the Fish-Hawk once more emerge, struggling with his prey, and mounting in the air with screams of exultation. These are the signals for our hero, who launching into the air, instantly gives chase, and soon gains upon the Fish-Hawk; each exerts his utmost to mount above the other, displaying in these rencountres, the most elegant and sublime aërial evolutions. The unencumbered eagle rapidly advances, and is just upon the point of reaching his opponent, when, with a sudden scream, probably of despair and honest execration, the latter drops his fish; the eagle poising himself for a moment, as if to take a more certain aim, descends like a whirlwind, snatches it in his grasp ere it reaches the water, and bears his ill-gotten booty silently away to the wood."

As a further illustration of the dashing style of the Bald Eagle when engaged in these audacious robberies, Wilson says:

"I was lately told," continues Mr. Gardiner, "by a man of truth, that he saw an eagle rob a hawk of its fish, and the hawk seemed so enraged as to fly down at the eagle, while the eagle very deliberately, in the air, threw himself partly over on his back, and, while he grasped with one foot the fish, extended the other to threaten or seize the hawk. I have known several hawks unite to attack the eagle; but never knew a single one to do it. The eagle seems to regard the hawk as the hawks do the king-birds, only as teasing, troublesome fellows."

Can even Jonathan's audacity vault higher than this cool specimen of the manner in evil-doing of the bird of his ensign? I have often witnessed similar scenes among the Ariondac mountains at the north, where their vaulting crests throw down huge shadows on the bosom of an hundred sleeping lakes. Crouched in their deep lairs of silence, these lakes and lakelets gleam through their blue depths with many a burnished legion of rare and splendid fish—great salmon-trout and wondrous shoals from mountain-brook, slow inlet and tributary river! Here is the rich feeding-ground of the noble Osprey. Though they are friendly and sociable birds in an eminent degree, you seldom find more than a single pair foraging upon the same lake habitually;

though on the breaking up of spring, when the suckers abound at the inlets, you may frequently see several hovering over the same spot. The Bald Eagle, who is a sort of omnipresent predator wherever the Primeval Nature holds her own upon the continent, makes his appearance sometimes, suddenly, on his wide-visiting wings, amidst these solitudes, that seem rightfully to belong to the Fish-Hawk alone. His hoarse bark startles the deep silence from afar, and every natural sound is mute. Wheeling grandly amidst the dim blue cliffs, he subsides on slow and royal spread upon some blasted pine beside the lake-river, and with quick, short screaming—while he smooths his ruffled plumes—announces to awed nature that its winged monarch has come down to rest. The friendly Fish-Hawks, in silent consternation, dart hither and yon, in vexed, uncertain flight—the tiny songsters dive into deep thickets, and the very cricket underneath dead leaves, pauses for a moment in its cheerful trill, while the shadow of that drear sound passes over all. But now the kingly bird grows quiet, and with many a shift of feet and restless lift of wing—while fierce, far-darting eyes are taking in all the capabilities of his new perch—he sinks into an attitude of deep repose—one yellow-heated eye upturned, watching the evolutions of the startled Fish-Hawks; whose movement becoming less and less irregular as they wheel to and fro, gradually subsides into the measured windings of their habitual flight in seeking prey—while the buzz, the hum, the chirp, the chatter and the carol creep up once again, and nature becomes voiceful in her happy silence.

Now, to witness, as I have done, from the mountain-tops, the Osprey swoop down from the dizzy height, almost level with my feet, and hear the faint whirr of arrowy-falling plumes, and see the cloud-spray dimly flash through the blue steep of distance—ah, that was a sight! And then the strong bird's scream of exultation faintly heard, and the far flash of scales that glitter as he drags his spoil to sunlight, from its dark slumberous home, and on strong vans goes beating up towards the clouds; ah, that too, was a sight!

But then to see deep down, that couchant tyrant deep down below, "levelling his neck for flight" (as the "glorious Weaver" has it)!—his war-crest raised, his wings half spread, pausing for the moment on his stoop, and then, one clamorous shriek of confident savage power, and see him vault—away, up, up, with a swift cleave, conquering gravitation, and go lifted on the spell of wings! Wonderful sight—that upward struggle! The Fish-Hawk has taken warning from the exulting cry of his old enemy, and with yet louder cries, as if for help, goes up and upward, swifter, still with vain beatings that scatter the fleece-forms of cloud, above me and stir them whirling in gyrations. But no, the conqueror, with overcoming wings, is upon him, with fierce buffetings, the stirred chaos cannot hide from me, and the Fisher drops its prey with a despairing shriek, while it goes gleaming headlong toward its ravished home!

Now but an instant's poise while the sunlight can flash off a ray from steadied plumes, and the eagle goes, dimmed with swiftness, roaring down to catch the falling prey, before it reach the wave! Monarch humanity!—with poet's spirit-wing hast thou in all thy hoary annals an image such as this of swift all-conquering prowess! Napoleon is the nearest type of the Bald Eagle the world ever saw!—excepting the Yankee!!

But the Fish-Hawk, although the mildest, the most generous and social of all the *Falconidæ*, still recognizes that point beyond which forbearance is a virtue. When the plundering outrages of the Bald Eagle have been at length carried to an intolerable extreme, in any particular locality, the Fish-Hawks in the neighborhood combine in a common assault upon the tyrannical robber. I have frequently witnessed such scenes along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. They abound in great numbers along the estuaries of its great rivers. I remember particularly to have noted the greatest collection of them at the mouth of the Brazos river, of Texas. Twenty or thirty of them are constantly congregated at this place, during the spring months, to feed upon the great shoals of the luscious red fish which then make their appearance here; though otherwise a barren and uncouth spot it is, constantly enlivened by the aërial gambols of these powerful and graceful flighted birds, and many's the battle between them and the Bald Eagle that I have witnessed among the clouds at this place. They seemed to have formed a sort of colony for mutual protection, and the moment their foe, the eagle, made his appearance among them the cry of alarm was raised, and the vigilant colonists, hurrying from all quarters, attacked the robber without hesitation, and always succeeded in driving him away.

There was always a desperate battle first before the savage monarch could be routed, and I have seen them gathered about him in such numbers—whirling and tumbling amidst a chaos of floating feathers through the air—that it was impossible for a time to distinguish which was the eagle, until having got enough of it amidst such fearful odds, he would fain turn tail, and with most undignified acceleration of flight, would dart toward the covert of the heavy forest to hide his baffled royalty and shake off his pertinacious foes amidst the boughs, as do the smaller hawks when teased by the little King-birds. I was told by the residents of Valasco, at the mouth,—who from sympathy with the Fish-Hawks seemed to greatly relish the scenes—that year after year the eagles made persevering attempts to obtain a lodgment in the neighborhood of this colony, but were always promptly repulsed and finally driven off! This, therefore, formed a secure breeding-place as well as feeding-ground for these mild and amiable birds. There were several of their nests in full view of the river, and many more, I was told, in the surrounding forest.

These birds possess many traits of gentle loyalty which entitle it to the universal sympathy which it commands from mankind. Wilson gives a fine instance in point.

"A pair of these birds, on the south side of Great Egg Harbor river, and near its mouth, were noted for several years. The female, having but one leg, was regularly furnished, while sitting, with fish in such abundance that she seldom left the nest, and never to seek food. This kindness was continued both before and after incubation. Some animals, who claim the name and rationality of man, might blush at the recital of this fact."

Audubon also gives another example of the strength and beautity of this conjugal feeling in his noble paper on this bird. He says:

"The male assists in incubation, during the continuance of which the one bird supplies the other with food, although each in turn goes in quest of some for itself. At such times the male bird is now and then observed rising to an immense height in the air, over the spot where his mate is seated. This he does by ascending almost in a direct line, by means of continued flappings, meeting the breeze with his white breast, and occasionally uttering a cackling kind of note, by which the bystander is enabled to follow him in his progress. When the Fish-Hawk has attained its utmost elevation, which is sometimes such that the eye can no longer perceive him, he utters a loud shriek, and dives smoothly on half-extended wings toward his nest. But before he reaches it, he is seen to expand his wings and tail, and in this manner he glides toward his beloved female, in a beautifully curved line. The female partially raises herself from her eggs, emits a low cry, resumes her former posture, and her delighted partner flies off to the sea, to seek a favorite fish for her whom he loves."

If there was ever anything more tender and graceful than this little scene in the love-making of arrogant humanity, I have it yet to see. The harmlessness of its pursuits and habits, its many traits of fidelity and courage in its family relations, its coming always as the harbinger of spring and fresh abundance in the teeming waters, the persecutions to which it is subjected by the eagle, all combine to render it a favored bird wherever it appears in this country. Its fondness for particular localities increases this feeling greatly. Wilson says that along the Atlantic coast it is frequently as much as a luckless fowler's safety is worth who is detected in shooting the Fish-Hawk. He may congratulate himself on escaping from the rifle of the enraged owner of the property upon which it has been in the habit of building.

We give Alexander Wilson's beautiful welcome to the Fish-Hawk.

THE FISHERMAN'S HYMN.

The osprey sails above the sound,
The geese are gone, the gulls are flying;
The herring shoals swarm thick around,
The nets are launch'd, the boats are plying;
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Raise high the song, and cheerly wish her,
Still as the bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!

She brings us fish—she brings us spring,
Good times, fair weather, warmth and plenty,
Fine store of shad, trout, herring, ling,
Sheepshead and drum, and old woman's dainty;
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Fly every oar, and cheerly wish her,
Still as the bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

She rears her young on yonder tree,
She leaves her faithful mate to mind 'em;
Like us, for fish, she sails the sea,
And plunging, shows us where to find 'em;
Yo ho, my hearts! let's seek the deep,
Ply every oar, and cheerly wish her,
While the slow bending net we sweep,
"God bless the fish-hawk and the fisher!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MY WIFE'S STORY OF HER PET FINCHES.

The loss of our pet, General Bem, was deeply felt. There was a sad vacancy in our home again, which we did not soon expect to have filled. However, one morning, while I yet wept for Bem, W—— came in with a small cage in his hand, containing an English Bullfinch.

"See!" he said, "I have brought a fine Bullfinch to cheer you—he sings very sweetly several German airs, and it will fill Bem's place a little for you!"

"No! no! I cannot let him stay—no bird can take Bem's place. I do not want another bird to love. Take him away."

"Poor little Bobby. I found him in the room of a rough fellow, who did not care for him, and who gladly exchanged the sullen bird, as he called him, for some trinket. A little girl whom I saw there told me how sweetly he sang, and I determined to have him at any rate. Must I take the poor bird away? He will be so startled among my clamorers, that he will not sing to me!"

"Well, let the fellow stay—though, I assure you, I cannot love him!"

So he hung the bird-cage on a nail in my room, and I tried to turn my back upon him. I could not help observing, however, that he seemed to relish the glow of my wood fire, and the warmth of the room, greatly; and was commencing to dress his feathers and to jump about in his little cage with quite a cheerful air.

I thought him at all events a sensible bird, and determined to give him a larger cage during the day. I then discovered that he had been so unfortunate as to lose three of his toes, perhaps in the struggles he had made, when he had been taken prisoner, by means of the deceitful bird-limed twig, so that he was almost incapable of resistance if one chose to catch him while in the cage, for in his efforts to cling to the perch, he was apt to lose his hold and tumble to the bottom of the cage, and then he would only crouch in a corner, and with his bright black eye, and beseeching chirp, pray to be left at peace.

For a week or more I took but little notice of him, only admiring his irresistible song; for he became so cheerful as to sing to us once or twice during the twenty-four hours.

One afternoon, however, I caught myself mimicking the droll whistle, with which he would break his song; and which had precisely the sound we express by the whew—o—o—o! when we make what we know to be some ludicrous mistake.

He instantly repeated it more slowly. I tried again and again, till he seemed satisfied, and commenced the first bar of a strain of German music, and then paused! I looked up. "What, do you mean to teach me your song?"

He repeated the notes, and I essayed to reproduce them; my effort, however, seemed to amuse the young master, for he drew out to its fullest extent his whew—ew—o—o—o—o! But instantly commenced the bar again. By this time I had become thoroughly interested, and not liking to be laughed at, made a more successful effort. This time Bob seemed better satisfied, and added a few more notes. When I had achieved those, he repeated all and put me to the test, and so on through his whole song; every few moments, however, evidently heartily enjoying the fantastic mistakes which I made, and uttering his whistle in the most provokingly sarcastic tone. I was greatly amused, and related the story with great gusto on Mr. Webber's return.

The next morning when I came near the cage, the bird came as near me as he could, and commenced a pleasant chirping, which evidently meant "Good morning to you." This I returned in tones resembling his as nearly as I could, and it finally ended by my taking the young gentleman into my hand, and feeding him. He took his seeds from my fingers from that time, every morning, for two or three weeks. Then we were to leave C—— for some time, and I sent him back to W——, congratulating myself that I was yet heart-whole as far as Bobby was concerned.

In about a month we returned, and we called to see the birds. What was my surprise, when master Bullfinch instantly descended from his perch to the corner of the cage nearest to my face, and after the first chirp of greeting, commenced singing in a sweet undertone, bowing and turning, his feathers lifted, his eye gleaming, and his whole expression one of the most profound admiration for little me! I was quite heartless—only shrugging my shoulders and turning away.

But, I do not know exactly how it came about, in a few weeks I had the Painted Finch and the Bullfinch quite domesticated in my room; and, although I still said I did not love him, yet I talked a great deal to the bird; and as the little fellow grew more and more cheerful, and sang louder and oftener each day, was getting so handsome, I found plenty of reasons for increasing my attentions to him; and then, above all things, he seemed to need my presence quite as much as sunshine, for if I went away, if only to my breakfast, he would utter the most piteous and incessant cries until I returned to him; when, in a breath, his tones were changed, and he sang his most enchanting airs. He made himself most fascinating by his polite adoration: he never considered himself sufficiently well dressed; he was most devoted in his efforts to enchain me by his melodies—art and nature, both were called to his aid, until finally I could no longer refrain from expressing in no measured terms my admiration. He was then satisfied not to cease his attentions, but, to take a step further, he presented me with a straw, and even with increased appearance of adulation.

From that time he claimed me wholly, no one else could approach the cage; he would fight most desperately if any one dared, and if they laid a finger on me, his fury was unbounded; he would dash himself against the bars of his cage and bite the wires, as if he *would* obtain his liberty at all hazards, and thus be enabled to punish the offender.

If I went away now, he would first mourn, then endeavor to win me back by sweet songs. In the morning I was awakened by his cries, and if I but moved my hand, his moans were changed to glad greetings. If I sat too quietly at my drawing, he would become weary, seemingly, and call me to him; if I would not come, he would say in gentle tone, "Come-e-here! come-e-here!" so distinctly, that all my friends recognized the meaning of the accents at once, and then he would sing to me. All the day he would watch me, if I was cheerful,—he sang and was so gay! If I was sad, he would sit by the hour watching every movement, and if I arose from my seat, I was called "Come-e-here," and whenever he could manage it, if the wind blew my hair within his cage, he would cut it off, calling me to help him, as if he thought I had no right to wear anything else than feathers; and if I would have hair, it was only suitable for nest-building! If I let him fly about the room with the Painted Finch, he would follow so close in my footsteps that I was in constant terror that he would be stepped on, or be lost, in following me from the room. At last he came to the conclusion that I could not build a nest. I never seemed to understand what to do with the nice materials he gave me, and when I offered to return them, he threw his body to one side and looked at me so drolly from one eye, that I was quite abashed. From that time he seemed to think I *must* be a very young creature, and most assiduously fed me at stated periods during the day, throwing up from his own stomach the half-digested food for my benefit, precisely in the manner of feeding young birds.

But I did not like this sort of relationship very much, and determined to break it down, and forthwith commenced by coldly refusing to be fed, and as fast as I could bring my hard heart to do it, breaking down all the gentle bonds between us.

The result was sad enough. The poor fellow could not bear it—he sat in wondering grief—he would not eat; at night I took him in my hand and held him to my cheek—he nestled closely and seemed more happy, although his little heart was too full to let him speak. In the morning I scarcely answered his tender love-call, "Come-e-here"—but I sat down to my drawing, thinking if I could be so cold much longer to so gentle and uncomplaining a creature.

I presently arose and went to the cage. Oh! my poor, poor bird! he lay struggling on the floor! I took him out—I tried to call him back to life in every way that I knew, but it was useless, I saw he was dying, his little frame was even then growing cold within my warm palm. I uttered the call he knew so well, he threw back his head, with its yet undimmed eye, and tried to answer—the effort was made with his last breath. His eye glazed as I gazed, and his attitude was never changed! His little heart was broken. I can never forgive myself for my cruelty! Oh, to kill so gentle and pure a love as that!

And now I have left me only the little Painted Finch. He has given up his propensity for quarrelling, and has thrown off the greater part of his proud shy ways—he is still most essentially a Southerner. He is as exclusive and fastidious as the knowledge of good blood and delicate breeding can make him. He has everfelt himself an exile, and has come to consider his cage as his House of Refuge. He seems not at all to desire to leave it, although I frequently invite him out.

He without doubt remembers the orange groves of his native land with all the intense devotion of a true Southerner.

He had been the most obdurate tormenter of my Bullfinch in his own proud way—but, when he was dead, when he could no longer resent his quiet assaults, then he mourned as deeply as we—his cry became distressing, and ever since he has been still and gentle, coming nearer to me, as if he *felt* that we too missed his dead comrade, and as if we too were exiles from some far away home

Once I had the skin of a Painted Finch of full plumage—he recognized it instantly as a countryman—flew down to greet it with the most delicate and plaintive chirpings, his wings rapidly flitting in short movements, his whole soul beaming in ecstasy from his eye—his figure crouching and thrown into curves, all expressing the tender joy which filled his bosom at thus meeting so suddenly a countryman, who had come too in such splendor of costume.

He, poor fellow, had yet to wait many months before he could hope to complete an entire change in his own dress beneath the chary rays of the far away sun of the North.

But he thought not of this, he saw only here, one of his kindred, one who had sung many a midday hour from the topmost branches of some orange tree, with his feathers loosely spread to the warm sunbeams while he sung dreamily in the intervals of his naps, anon bursting forth into clear, shrill notes of defiance, as the voice of a dreamed of rival crept into his slumbrous fancy.

He saw here only one exiled like himself, and his heart was filled with sympathy and love—he came to his side—he pecked gently at his feathers. Ah, what! he will not respond. Poor disappointed Finch. See how he draws his figure up to its utmost height, and gazes at the motionless shape before him. Now he gives a quick thrust with his bill, and uttering a short, shrill note, perches silently in a corner of his cage.

He will not look again at this deceptive emblem of hope and home—his disgust is inexpressible—he thought to take to his heart an embodiment of all the past—he had for a brief moment imagined that all the weary interim was to be as nought, in that he realized the dreams of youth—but what had shocked him back into the cold, sad world of his desolation? What, but that he had taken as the reality only the outward show, all dimmed as it really was, for the brilliant and living soul of those vanished reminiscences.

He must be thrown again upon himself—he must shut his too sensitive eyes, until from the darkness the angels of hope and faith arise, and bear him into strength again, to endure the shock which his too gentle spirit has received.

This little finch, now no longer the quarrelsome scamp, who made General Bem's life so vexed, has become most docile, reliant, and confiding. Everything we do for him he seems to consider quite proper and matter-of-course. He watches our preparations with the eye of a connoisseur, and at once puts to the test all our new schemes for his comfort.

This seems the more strange because he was formerly so very pugnacious; if no better antagonist offered, he would stand before the looking-glass, and try most desperately to whip the foe who glared at him with such determined ire. I believe, however, he discovered that secret, and with characteristic contempt for humbug, gave up this amusement, when he found, on examination, that there was really no other bird behind the glass, and contented himself with whipping every bird which I brought to the room. Now, however, since the death of the Bullfinch, he will not be persuaded to leave his cage, but sits among the grasses which I give him, and sings most charmingly during all the heat of the day.

This concludes my wife's story of her pet Finches. Before taking leave of these charming little birds, it may be interesting to hear through other naturalists the entire confirmation of those traits which we have observed to characterize them so strongly in our domestication. The German Bechstein gives us some highly interesting particulars about the Bullfinch, which I cannot forego the pleasure of presenting. He says:

"Although the song of the male and female Bullfinch, in their wild state, is very harsh and disagreeable, yet if well taught while young, as they are in Hesse and Fulda, where there are schools of these little musicians for all Germany, Holland and England, they learn to whistle all kinds of airs and melodies with so soft and flute-like a tone, that they are great favorites with amateurs, and particularly with the ladies. There are some of these little birds which can whistle distinctly three different airs, without spoiling or confusing them in the least. Added to this attraction, the Bullfinch becomes exceedingly tame, sings whenever it is told to do so, and is susceptible of a most tender and lasting attachment, which is shown by its endearing actions; it balances its body, moves its tail from right to left, and spreads it like a fan. It will even repeat words with an accent and tone which indicate sensibility, if one could believe that it understood them; but its memory must not be overloaded. A single air, with a prelude or a short flourish to begin with, is as much as the bird can learn and remember, and this it will execute to the greatest perfection. These little prodigies would be more interesting and agreeable if their Hessian instructors possessed a little more musical taste, but these are generally tradespeople, employed about the house with their different occupations and trades; and by tunes, airs and minuets of a hundred years old, public-house songs, or some learnt of their apprentices, in general compose the whole of their music."

Tame Bullfinches have been known (says Buffon) to escape from the aviary, and live at liberty in the woods for a whole year, and then to recollect the voice of the person who had reared them, return to her, never more to leave her. Others have been known, which, when forced to leave their first master, have died of grief. These little birds remember very well, and often too well, any one who has injured them.

One of them, having been thrown down with its cage, by some of the lowest order of the people, did not seem at first much disturbed by it, but afterwards it would fall into convulsions as soon as it saw any shabbily-dressed person, and it died in one of these fits eight months after the first accident. A Bullfinch, belonging to a lady often mentioned before, being subject to very frightful dreams, which made it fall from its perch, and beat itself in the cage, no sooner heard the affectionate voice of its mistress, than, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, it became immediately tranquil, and re-ascended its perch to sleep again. It was very fond of chickweed, and as soon as it perceived one bringing it to him, however much care was taken to prevent its finding it easily, it would show its joy by its actions and cries.

Concerning our little warlike Southron, the Painted Finch or *Nonpareil*, Mr. Audubon has some highly attractive passages. He says:

"The flight of the *Pape*, by which the Creoles of Louisiana know this bird best, is short, although regular, and performed by a nearly constant motion of the wings, which is rendered necessary by their concave form. It hops on the ground, moving forward with ease, now and then jetting out the tail a little, and, like a true Sparrow, picking up and carrying off a grain of rice or a crumb of bread to some distance where it may eat in more security. It has a sprightly song, often repeated, which it continues even when closely confined. When the bird is at liberty, this song is uttered from the top branches of an orange tree, or those of a common briar; and although not so sonorous as that of the Canary, or of its nearer relative, the Indigo Bunting, is not far from equalling either. Its song is continued during the greatest heats of the day, which is also the case with that of the Indigo Bird.

"About the middle of April, the orange groves of the lower parts of Louisiana, and more especially those in the immediate vicinity of the city of New Orleans, are abundantly supplied with this beautiful Sparrow. But no sooner does it make its appearance than trap-cages are set, and a regular business is commenced in the market of that city. The method employed in securing the male Painted Finch is so connected with its pugnacious habits, that I feel inclined to describe it, especially as it is so different from the common mode of alluring birds, that it may afford you, kind reader, some amusement.

"A male bird in full plumage is shot and stuffed in a defensive attitude, and perched among some grass seed, rice, or other food, on the same platform as the trap-cage. This is taken to the fields or near the orangeries, and placed in so open a situation that it would be difficult for a living bird to fly over it without observing it. The trap is set. A male Painted Finch passes—perceives it, and dives towards the stuffed bird, with all the anger which its little breast can contain. It alights on the edge of the trap for a moment, and throwing its body against the stuffed bird, brings down the trap, and is made prisoner. In this manner thousands of these birds are caught every spring. So pertinacious are they in their attacks, that even when the trap has closed upon them, they continue pecking at the features of the supposed rival. The approach of man seems to allay its anger in a moment. The live bird is removed to the lower apartment of the cage, and is thereby made to assist in decoying others.

"They feed almost immediately after being caught; and if able to bear the loss of liberty for a few days, may be kept for several years. I have known some instances of their being kept in confinement for upwards of ten years. Few vessels leave the port of New Orleans, during the summer months, without taking some Painted Finches; and through this means they are transported probably to all parts of Europe. I have seen them offered for sale in London and Paris, with the trifling difference of value on each individual, which converted the sixpence paid for it in New Orleans to three guineas in London.

"The pugnacious habits of this species are common, in a great degree, to the whole family of Sparrows. Like the most daring, the common House Sparrow of Europe, they may be observed in spring time, in little groups of four, five, or six, fighting together—moving round each other so as to secure an advantageous position, pecking and pulling at each other's feathers with all the violence and animosity to which their small degree of strength can give effect."

CHAPTER XV.

OUT OF DOORS WITH NATURE.

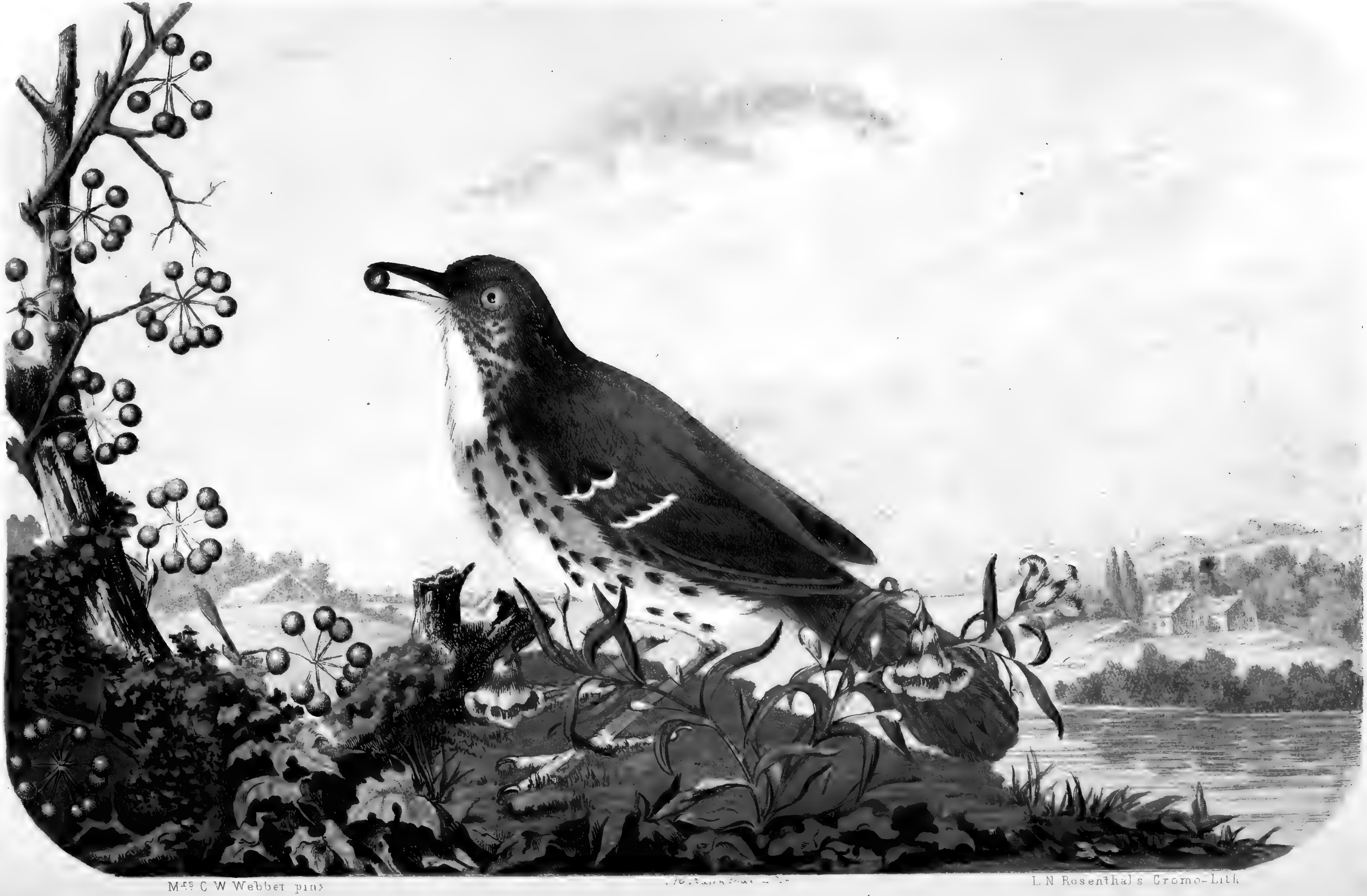
Out of doors! We weary of this unceasing labor—are choking to death of the stagnant air of heaped up cities, which, with their gutter-defiled trigonometries, set at defiance, of assoilation, the straight currents of Heaven's fresh air—leaving us to moan and swelter amidst pestilential stagnations!

Let us go, O ye who yearn for purer odors than the steam of the kitchen! Let us go forth—out of doors with Nature! Aye! and when her fresh breath shall come upon our seamed and heated brows, it shall be with an alchemy more strange than the Elixir of vain Cagliostro—more marvellous than all Spells, Philosophers' Stones, and Fortunatus' Caps—more potent than the wizard edicts of that eldest brother of shadowy science—hoar Astrology!

To be sure we ought all of us to be astrologists—perhaps *minus* the science; for should we not feel humbly—that, as we are children of the earth, so we may be moved as she is moved, in that of us which is earthy?—and that, as the stars are God's flowers of thought—so are those meek wild flowers which we find upon her bosom, the starry bloomings of the thought of earth! Should we not learn, too, to read their teachings?—perhaps thus the blossoming of Life may be renewed in us.

Be this as it may—these flowers, and trees, and birds—we love them best and dearly "out of doors!"

We know that these Stars may speak drear things to us,



Mrs. C W Webber pinx [illegible] L.N Rosenthal's Cromo-Lith

FERRUGINOUS THRUSH

they when we are untrue to ourselves—that the icy points dropt in gazing from their dim far homes into our souls, may freeze us into shudderings of awe!—but these Flow-Stars of Earth—they do not so! They are no deadly-eyed and distant strangers—but with meek upward faces they soothe us with soft eyes, and in the warm breath of sweetest odors, exhale their loving lives in tenderness for us! This is the Astrology of Love that cannot lie—the Alchemy, Elixir, Spell that shall renew our Youth forever.

Then let us go forth—out of doors with Nature!

See how even art has sold her birthright!—for after all that has been said in a pompous criticism about Art, old mother nature sets our learning at nought, in "mere simplicity." The Human Artist, working under terror of the "Rules," attempts too much. He does not deign to look at *Her* as his great teacher, but turning in veneration towards some "Name"—weak as his own except in notoriety—he incarnates nature in a school, and tamely strives rather to reproduce its errors—to perpetuate its dogmas—than to search for living truths himself.

Thus he attempts too much—if he have one instinct of art in him—for in the effort to serve both nature and the "Master," he confounds the two—crowds and over works his picture, and utterly destroys all unity and directness of effect.

The fact is, men are afraid of nature—so accustumed are they to the regalia of honor and of state, that her plainness repells them. They do not understand dignity or greatness, or nobility, divested of and separate from the "tricksey pomps" of "ribbons," "garters," gew gaws, &c.

They convey this morbid appetite into landscape unconsciously, and hence the horrid array of blazing pictures we find on the walls of our exhibitions. The scenes must be all Autumn—loaded with garish colors—trees like hay-ricks on fire; or, Indian Summer—all haze—with red sunsets, like the flaming faces of market women from behind their Sunday veils—or else a pot of ochre streaked with indigo, is turned over on the canvas to "represent" for you an Italian sky and sunset!

Nature is not always volcanic—neither does she day by day go into convulsions of the picturesque, as do her "Great Masters!" I suppose they must be recognized as such, of course, since they are responsible for the agonising monstrosities of their too literal disciples. Nature is altogether too serene in her habitual moods for these Fire Worshippers of Art, whose softest shadows are of smoke and storm clouds.

Such minds do not comprehend sublimity—they cannot understand that as music is rolled up from the abyss, filling Silence with the gradual volume of its awful symphonies, so Art must rear its solemn forms upon the plane of vast Repose!

How simple the accessaries of her grandest pictures!

Behold a tropical forest! Beneath its deep shadows a herd of elephants! They browse on the dark green and glossy leaves, or lean their sage heads in heavy quiet against the great stems around them!

What association!

The far Orient—the Magii—the ivory and gold of Ophir—the Barbarian Po, and the world conquering Macedonian, Darius, Xerxes, with their swarming millions, Xenophon, the subtle, with his hardy handful, Marathon, Thermopylæ—the pageantry, the glory, the decay—all rise in quick coming shadows to the spell of that simple picture.

The slimy Nile beneath a burning sun—a crocodile—an Ibis!

And pyramids loom along the sky-rimmed desert—Sphynx-guarded palaces, mightier than the very dreams of man's ambition since, and Hecatombs of mummied nations, come all unbidden with the scene.

A few ostriches, a clump of palm trees!

Jacob's Well—Hagar in the wilderness—the fire-eyed barb, tireless and swift of foot—the tinkling bells of the long caravan—the solitary vulture coming out of the cloudless distance—the green oasis—the dread simoon—we see them all!

An eagle wheeling through the mists above Niagara!

The loosened thunder of that great river's fall coming through the silence of a new creation to chord the bass of northern storms through mighty lakes and groaning mountain pines—Freedom cleaving through the mists of struggle with the sun upon its golden wing—the Home of a great people!

It is thus that the true mystery of art lies in *suggestion!* But your modern painter is not content with this; he must *fill up—he* must be, to us, a "better nature," and leave us no scope for memory or imagination. He is poorly jealous of the power of the wand he has presumed to wield, and must compel us to be its slaves. But, in spite of the terrors of his denunciation, we shall introduce you to yet another of those wondrous, but simple pictures.

In traversing, during the winter months, the vast prairies of Texas and the Southwest, you frequently realize all the solitary grandeur of Zahara. The eye aches through the weary stretching distance—not an object! One little cloud holds with the sun the blue heavens above—beneath and around you, the grass!—the brown waving grass!—away!—away!—with its dreamy undulating surface—it widens, widening till blended in a hazy meeting with the sky, the infinite seems just begun, and boundless space yet stretched before you.

You begin to feel strangely and hear your heart beat very loud. It seems awful to be the only thing alive to breathe within this vast expanse—the world seems dead—a parched blank with only one warm vital centre in your own breast.

You gasp for companionship—anything!—anything that moves and has a being, for it is crushing thus to stand alone before the God of this dumb moveless nature! When suddenly, a hoarse cry, "*Kewrrooh! Kewrrooh! Kewrrooh!*"

strikes through the rarified atmosphere, stunning you like a pistol-shot close to the ear!

You turn! They are the Cranes!—your heart bounds from the shock with a gush of joy—you are no longer alone! There they are—half a mile to the right—see the snowy phalanx ascending into view over yon wave-like undulation of the prairie—with every stately stride uttering that loud and thumping cry, while their long quick-necks cross each other against the horizon, weaving in and weaving out, making strange figures on the blue, as they huddle, stalking to and fro confusedly at sight of the forlorn wanderer.

How stately and how beautiful they are—tall as a tall man—the dazzling white of their plumage heightened by the black primary coverts of the wing!—their motions how picturesque and gracefully solemn!

What a surprise how they bring the real earth back to you again! That wild note has startled you before with its sudden rolling croak, but upon far different and distant scenes.

Perhaps it had been heard amidst native surroundings, as it has been by myself in Kentucky and through the South-western States, in which it alights during its fall migrations towards the South, and then how pleasant the associations it recalls thus in the friendless wilderness! They seem as if they brought us news from those we loved—as if but yesterday they had alighted, as they passed, in their favorite field, upon our veritable homestead, and now came to us with the aroma of home upon their wings, annihilating space and softening absence!

But here is *its* winter home, and with us it had only been a sojourner by the way; here it seems the incarnate spirit of the place, an embodiment of latitude sentinaling the repose of nature—its tall form overlooking the undulations of the plain with a keenness of vision surpassed only by the great vulture of the East—nothing can traverse these wastes without being challenged.

Its tocsin shout rings upon the hurried ear of the Camanche, as he sweeps startled past with streaming feathers, and lance, and bow, upon some bloody foray into the distant settlements; and the mountain maurader hates the snowy bird for many a cunning stratagem of his that clamorous warning has even foiled.

But little care the proud birds for his hate; their wary watchfulness is a match for the Indian's cunning. The Mexican, too, with his fell assassin air and hidden knife, feels his coward heart leap to his throat at that loud challenge, and he turns him on his robber-trail, like the sneaking wolf, to look behind him for the avenger coming!

Strange sights and sounds these guardians of the prairies have witnessed; as, with slow and measured tread, they have paced their stately rounds.

They are as much a part of the scenery of the prairies as the Ostrich is of that of the great desert; and if we only knew so much of the past story of the waste homes of buried empire—as the pairies beyond doubt were—as we do even of the home of the Ostrich, what strange and grand associations with the majestic era their progenitors had lived through, the sight of this noble bird, amidst such scenes, would call up? As it is, they are singularly wild and fascinating.

You are seldom out of sight of the Sand-hill Crane in these regions more than a day at a time. When the deer has retreated to the shelter of the timber, the buffalo moved further to the west, and the wolves have followed in their trails, leaving the plains tenantless, they are still enlivened by the numberless flocks of these birds—either the Blue or Canada Crane, as it is called, or the White.

And yet such tender and magnificent associations are all called up by a single stroke of the magical and unregarded pencil of our lowly mother! Who thinks of her simplicity when morbidly groping for miracles amidst the pompous wrecks of humbled human art in poor degraded Rome? Who thinks of her amidst the storied frescoes of "Beautiful

Florence"—beautiful as whited sepulchre?—as though pillared aisles and tinsel stars were equal to God's garniture of his earth and sky!

The question eternally in the mouth of your muddle-headed Fogy, "How can any one expect to be an artist who does not study art in Italy?" has spoiled many a clever sculptor and painter.

Pah! absurd! Does your true man go first to Rome to study the line of beauty that he may learn to choose a wife? Does he not rather trust to that perception of symmetry which was educated into him by the graceful freedom of his romping sisters and their bright-haired playmates? And when he has first gratified his own sense of the beautiful in securing his bride—then, if he choose, he may take her to Rome, and proudly contrast her with the Madonnas or the Venus!

So with the true artist. His art is with him his first love, and concerning her doth he question *only nature.* When his devotion has at last won her for his Bride—his soul Bride—*then* may he go to Italy, and with pride in his conscious heart stand calm-eyed and erect before any marble Titan of them all! He goes with sobered firmness to compare and study *methods*, not with lips in the dust of abject humiliation, to imitate *forms!*

Ours is not the period to be exclusively cowed by worn-out conventionalities of any sort. The time has come when man indeed carries "the countenance erect," and dares to look upward with his own eyes for truth—dares, in a word, to belong to himself and God, and not to precedent of his fellow-man!

It is, indeed, a swift age—a swift race, and well may the American swift (or chimney swallow) be said to type many of its chief characteristics.

Yes, the Yankee is the spiritual swallow as well as the moral—the overcoming speed of his rapid thought has conquered space, as do the wings of the bird; he darts through the cities to his morning meal, and takes a nation for "mine inn" by the way, from zone to zone! Say then, the American is not also the truest poet!

Is the bird upon its tireless pinions "putting a belt around the world," a beautiful and glorious creature—the most poetical of images? Why not then the man, who, in his car of power, sits calmly to be borne as by his own will, to the uttermost parts of the earth—a far more sublime embodiment of all that

> "Bottomless conceit"

has shaped to poetry.

Does the swallow breast the opposing winds, and cleave in undeviating flight the track of storms?—the Yankee, in his steamship, follows on his subject waves!

Does the swallow glide across trackless wastes—above the sea-like crests of mighty forests—rise like a loosened arrow amidst the snows of mountains, and dive the abyss of valveys?—the Yankee on his railroad thunders after it in clouds and fire—hurtling over plains, cleaving startled woods, to plunge reverberating through the yawning tunnel, and burst forth winding on the paths of cities!

Does the swallow lead the south wind's flight, and find its summer in a day?—the Yankee can pass it on the way, can speak across a continent, bid a home arise before he starts, and offer the swallow lodgings in his chimney-flue, at that, when it arrives.

There is no mistake about it—this same Yankee is the highest poet of the most poetical age the world ever saw, though it is perfectly well known that he has scarcely a volume of respectable *poetry*—so called—to bless himself withall!

His poetry is a live substantiality—a creation—an entity of being and of action—of being, real as the firm-based earth—of action grander than Homeric dreams. The "metre ballad-monger" is no longer the poet of mankind—the swarthy mechanician takes his place—and the faded Troubadour lingers a ghostly shadow beneath Barbaric towers.

The soul of the beautiful has triumphed over manacles of rhyme, and the mere artifice of jingling lines, like the sounds of the ancient armorer's hammer, become an echo of a disused craft! Our chivalry has found a new "Plate of Proof," in a free thought that "speaketh wide," and is not afraid of new "deeds of high emprize" in conquering elements to chain them to the car of Truth.

If it be poetical to have turned the wonders of Aladin's Lamp into the realities of his every-day life, then is your Yankee a poet of action more splendid than the Oriental's gorgeous fancy—a Sinbad of actual voyages on the unknown seas of miracles, with the weird Science for his helmsman!

As we Americans are then undoubtedly a "swift" people, intellectually and physically, we therefore like the chimney swallow. It is a headlong, rapid, rattling, sociable creature —a perfect Yankee in morals and manners. It is here and there and everywhere before you have time to think—it is strictly utilitarian and always busy; it is a bird of progress, having no respect for idle though ancient usages, and hence we uphold it in appropriating, without the ceremony of, by your leave—our unoccupied chimney-flues in preference to the old hollow trees their ancestors lived in.

This sort of sagacity goes to the heart of a Yankee—nothing can lie idle where he is; if nobody else takes possession and turns it to account, he feels it to be a moral duty to do so himself—industry with him covers a multitude of sins. He absolutely protects and nourishes the swallow on this account, though an intruder upon himself; but we should not expect too much of Yankee nature, nor be surprised if we should find him in emulation of the Chinese introducing "bird's-nest soup" into general use at sixpence a bowl! The near communication with China, which the California trade has opened, may lead to such a result at an early day: for with the influx of a rich commerce we may look for these foreign luxuries.

But with all Jonathan's material tendencies in the matter of practical poetry and Epic deeds, he is nevertheless surrounded in his daily walks by marvellous harmonies, the etherial tones of which might

"Wake a soul under the ribs of Death."

As he has never been noted for a laggard, we give him the credit of greeting many a resurrection of Daedal Earth with

"The top o' the morn to ye!"

as Day rolled grandly forth from its deep lair of Darkness; and then how, in spring-time, axled on harmonies, its sonorous wheels climbed the low mists, melting them in seeming snow-flakes, in rose-tints, and in music! Ah, then it is that hard-fisted Jonathan knows that he is something more than a machine maker—that, though he invents, he too had been invented first; and his rough heart melts—his brown and parchment-wrinkled face, grows glistening down its seams like "dew besprent" sides of gray old granite gorges which sudden summer storms have cut in sharp narrow tracks, as they were hurled adown from some element-defying mountain front! He hears the morning song of birds, and all his childhood is brought back to him—for tough, hard, and indestructible as his present nature seems, it is not the less true that this caoutchouc being was once tender as the first fresh-blown flower of spring, when the earliest morning bird waked with it in soft, low, garrulous prattling to the coming sun.

He recognizes, one by one, the fellows of that blissful time. First struggling out from the deep hush of dim and distant woods, he hears the mellow, liquid strain of that sweet-voiced Evangel of the solitude—the freckled Song Thrush. Then, nearer at hand, the little Wren shrills its piping treble—aye, it may be from the very chimney-top itself—while now, some minutes since, the soft twittering of the Blue Martin, underneath the eaves, has been becoming more and more musically discordant, as meek dark eyes are opened amidst the gabble. Now, from the family tree that shadows the roof, the loud, clear song of the Robin awakes his brooding mate. Now the Cat-Bird's limpid roundelay steals out from the garden hedge; and, in low Æolian twitterings, the delicate Blue Bird greets the morning—while, from the swinging summit of some oak bordering the forest, the bold pipe of the Cardinal Grosbeak rings its shrill call, waking the startled echoes like the tiny clarion of some Knight of Fairie. And now, from some scented tuft of grasses, delicious as the voice of all their aromas, a rounded glide of melody, like dew-drops rolling from a rose's cheek, creeps sudden on the sense from where the dainty Meadow Lark leans its dark breast against the clover-tops—and all at once the garrulous clatter of the gay Orchard Oriole breaks in. Now hush! hush! the noble Brown Thrush has mounted to the spire of yon young maple—his inspiration is upon him—and lo! the deep and wondrous flow of sound!—plaintive, mellow, wild, and wierd—hark! the ecstatic measured limpid gushes! The sultry, drowsy trill of the Song Sparrow, on the fence-post below, is scarcely noted, although he rises on tip-toe to it, in his furious earnest to be heard. And now the full choir is aroused; and in a mighty burst of harmony the Sun is greeted as his burnished disk wheels up the Orient. And now the Monarch of Earth's song, who, like other aristocrats, keeps late hours, and therefore is in no hurry to rise in the morning, thinks it full time to give his noisy subjects a new lesson in music, and soon his powerful song climbs to the throne of sound, and all other notes are hushed in the usurping splendors of his majestic minstrelsy!

Now, too, away in the wild forest, the Hunter-Naturalist, bearded and brown, as he sits beside his solitary camp fire, hears a consoling minstrelsy, as cheerful, as soft, as sweet as any in this neighboring choir. Here him tell how a strange charmer came to him in the wilds. It is Audubon who speaks:

"One year, in the month of August, I was trudging along the shores of the Mohawk river, when night overtook me. Being little acquainted with that part of the country, I resolved to camp where I was. The evening was calm and beautiful. The sky sparkled with stars, which were reflected by the smooth waters; and the deep shade of the rocks and trees of the opposite shore fell on the bosom of the stream, while gently from afar came on the ear the muttering sound of the cataract. My little fire was soon lighted under a rock, and spreading out my scanty stock of provisions, I reclined on my grassy couch. As I looked around on the fading features of the beautiful landscape, my heart turned towards my distant home, where my friends were doubtless wishing me, as I wished them, a happy night and peaceful slumbers. Then were heard the barkings of the watch-dog, and I tapped my faithful companion to prevent his answering them. The thoughts of my worldly sins soon then came over my mind, and having thanked the Creator of all for his never-failing mercy, I closed my eyes, and was passing away into the world of dreaming existence, when suddenly there burst on my soul the serenade of the Rose-breasted bird, so rich, so mellow, so loud in the stillness of the night, that sleep fled from my eyelids. Never did I enjoy music more; it thrilled through my heart, and surrounded me with an atmosphere of bliss. One might easily have imagined that even the Owl, charmed by such delightful music, remained reverently silent. Long after the sounds ceased did I enjoy them; and when all had again become still, I stretched out my wearied limbs, and gave myself up to the luxury of repose."

After this charming picture, never think of "*Savage*" wildernesses again; for doth not the Hunter-Naturalist tell you that beauty and melodies go everywhere hand and hand with nature.

This lovely bird—a portrait of which my wife has given you in its "singing robes," with wings outspread as in the fluttered ecstasy of song—is quite rare and difficult to obtain, from the peculiarly inaccessible character of its resorts. I recollect well the first specimen I ever saw—I came upon it suddenly amidst the sultry stillness of a dark, deep wood. I was quite a boy, and when I caught sight of its dotted wings and the strange, delicate pink underneath its wings and breast, my heart leaped with a wondering thrill, and the same exquisite sense of strangeness came over me as that which fills our childhood at hearing some wondrous fairy tale. I believe I should almost have died of vexation had I not finally succeeded in shooting the beautiful stranger to obtain a closer look at it. Ah, how I gazed and wondered and wept as I saw it close its dark lustrous eyes, and die in my hand. It was long before I learned to place it. But in the case of so rare a bird, I shall be excused in quoting still further from Mr. Audubon. He says:

"I am indebted to my friend, John Bachman, for the following information respecting this interesting Grosbeak: 'One spring I shot at a beautiful male bird of this species, in the State of New York. It was wounded in one foot only, and although I could not perceive any other injury afterwards, it fell from the tree to the ground, and before it recovered itself I secured it. Not having a cage at hand, I let it fly in the room which I had made my study. Before an hour had elapsed it appeared as if disposed to eat; it refused corn and wheat, but fed heartily on bread dipped in milk. The next day it was nearly quite gentle, and began to examine the foot injured by the shot, which was much swollen and quite black. It began to bite off its foot at the wounded part, and soon succeeded in cutting it quite across. It healed in a few days, and the bird used the mutilated leg almost as well as the other, perching and resting upon it. It required indeed some care to observe that the patient had been injured. I procured a cage for it, to which it immediately became reconciled. It ate all kinds of food, but preferred Indian corn meal and hempseed. It appeared fonder of insects than birds of that genus are supposed to be, and ate grasshoppers and crickets with peculiar relish. It would at times sit for hours watching the flies as they passed about it, and snatched at, and often secured such wasps as now and then approached the pieces of fruit thrown into the cage. Very often, of fine moonshiny nights, it would tune its pipe, and sing sweetly, but not loudly, remaining quietly perched and in the same position. Whilst singing during the day, it was in the habit of opening its wings and gently raising them, somewhat in the manner of the Mocking Bird. I found it very difficult to preserve this bird during winter, and was obliged for that purpose to place it in a room heated by a stove to summer temperature. It was a lively and very gentle companion of my study for nearly three years; it died of cold the third winter. It frequently escaped from the cage, but never exhibited the least desire to leave me, for it invariably returned to some portion of the house at the approach of night. Its song continued about six weeks during summer, and about two in the autumn; at all other times it simply uttered a faint cluck, and seemed to possess many of the ordinary habits of the Blue Grosbeak.' "

This bird frequents the deep forests of the South, and seldom gets farther north than Kentucky. It is very fond of alder-berries, upon a bunch of which my wife has placed her bird.

What a fine example of sound logic we have, by the way, in the incident mentioned above, of the Grosbeak cutting off its wounded toe with its own sharp beak. Could any learned Professor of Surgery, scalpel in hand, have managed his own case better.

Here is another anecdote to the same point, which was related to Mr. Wilson concerning the Brown Thrush. Wilson says:

"Concerning the sagacity and reasoning faculty of this bird, my venerable friend, Mr. Bartram, writes me as follows:

'I remember to have reared one of these birds from the nest; which, when full grown, became very tame and docile. I frequently let him out of his cage to give him a taste of liberty; after fluttering and dusting himself in dry sand and earth, and bathing, washing and dressing himself, he would proceed to hunt insects, such as beetles, crickets, and other shelly tribes; but, being very fond of wasps, after catching them, and knocking them about, to break their wings, he would lay them down, then examine if they had a sting, and, with his bill, squeeze the abdomen to clear it of the reservoir of poison, before he would swallow his prey. When in his cage, being very fond of dry crusts of bread, if, upon trial, the corners of the crumbs were too hard and sharp for his throat, he would throw them up, carry and put them in his water dish to soften; then take them out and swallow them. Many other remarkable circumstances might be mentioned that would fully demonstrate faculties of *mind*, not only innate, but acquired ideas, (derived from necessity in a state of domestication,) which we call understanding and knowledge. We see that this bird could associate those ideas, arrange and apply them, in a rational manner according to circumstances. For instance, if he knew that it was the hard sharp corners of the crumb of bread that hurt his gullet, and prevented him from swallowing it, and that the water would soften and render it easy to be swallowed, this knowledge must be acquired by observation and experience; or some other bird taught. Here the bird perceived, by the effect, the cause, and then took the quickest, the most effectual and agreeable method to remove that cause. What could the wisest man have done better? Call it reason or instinct, it is the same that a sensible man would have done in this case.

" 'After the same manner this bird reasoned in respect to the wasps. He found, by experience and observation, that the first he attempted to swallow hurt his throat and gave him extreme pain; and upon examination, observed that the extremity of the abdomen was armed with a poisonous sting; and after this discovery, never attempted to swallow a wasp until he first pinched his abdomen to the extremity, forcing out the sting with the receptacle of poison.'"

It will be perceived that I have here some pretty staunch backing in regarding it as an absurdity to call such plainly practical common-sense proceedings instinctive. Why, you destroy the higher meaning of the most beautiful facts of nature by levelling them all to mere mechanical and involuntary impulse. Pooh, tell me that the greeting of the dainty Blue Bird to the opening spring is merely that of a little feathered music-box, wound up and set going! You had as well stigmatize as "machine rhyming" the following song, which only a happy human soul, brimming over with that most tender and delicate inspiration with which God fills his nobler children here on earth, could have made articulate!

Aye and verily it was my chivalric and gentle friend—he of the valorous Blue-Bird heart—Noble Butler, Esq., of Louisville, Kentucky, who did indite this same song.

THE BLUE BIRD.

Though winter's power fades away,
  The tyrant does not yield;
But still he holds a waning sway
  O'er hill, and grove, and field.

But while he still is lingering,
  Some lovely days appear—
Bright heralds from the train of Spring,
  To tell that she is near.

It is as if a day of heaven
  Had fallen from on high,
And God's own smiles, for sunlight given,
  Were beaming through the sky.

The Blue Bird now, with joyous note,
  His song of triumph sings;

Joy swells melodious in his throat,
Joy quivers in his wings.

No cunning show of art severe,
But soft and low his lay—
A sunbeam shining to the ear—
Spring's softest, brightest ray.

Those magic tones call from the past
The sunny hours of youth;
And shining hopes come thronging fast
From worlds of love and truth.

The harmony is seen and heard;
For notes and rays combine,
And joys and hopes, and sun and bird,
All seem to sing and shine.

Is not that strain an Æolian of Spirit Land—a "Sunbeam shining to the ear"—than which old Herrick never produced a more dainty image.

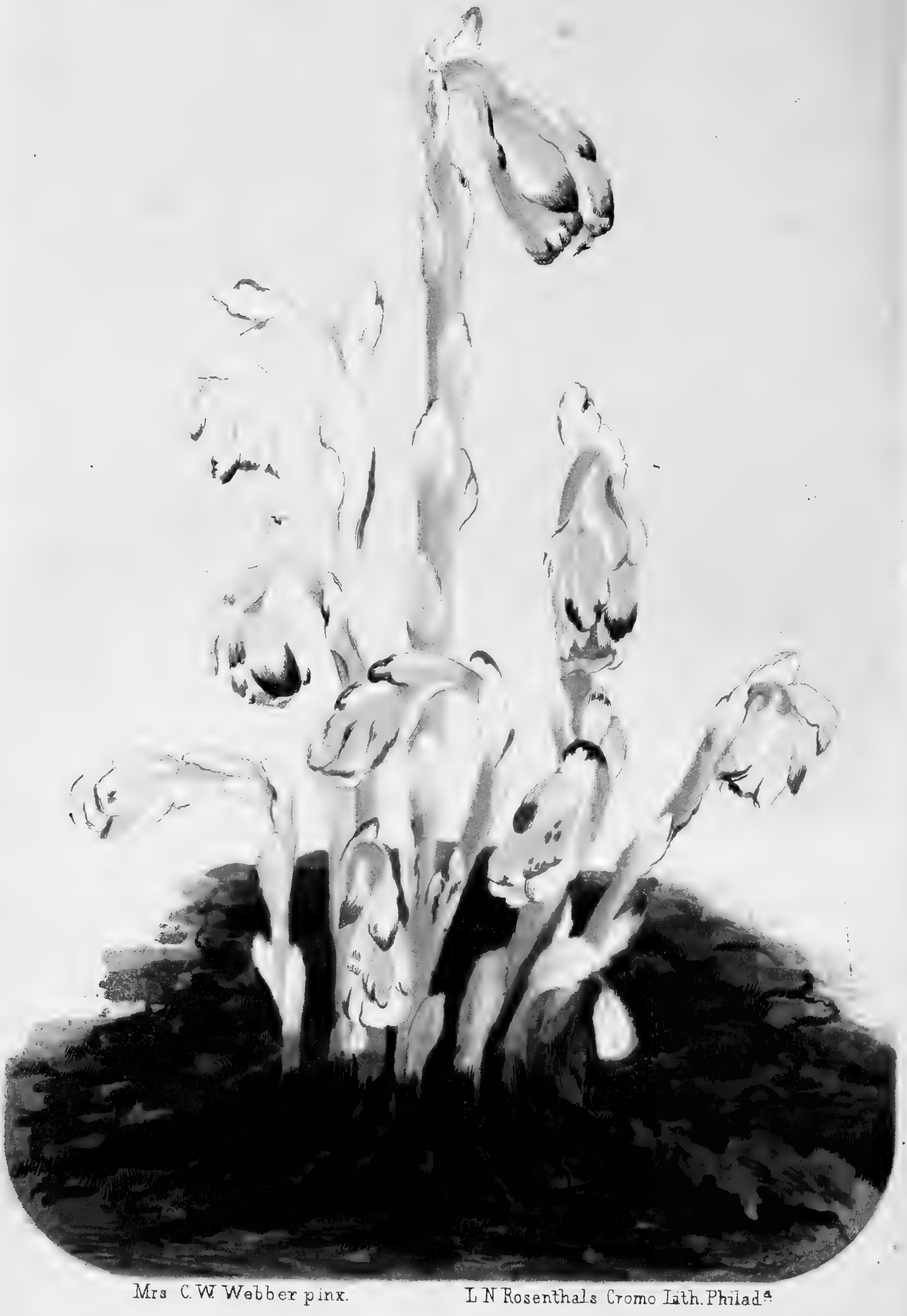
But let us take leave of these gentle recreations "out of Doors with Nature" with a bit of Rhymed Philosophy that may have its uses in reconciling men to our desultory mode of treating such heretofore strait-laced and science-encrusted themes.

COMMON NATURE.

Every flower that bears an odor,
Gives it to the common wind,
Every star that lives in beaming
Sends a ray to common mind.

Scentless flowers give too their blessing,
From the splendors on their lips,
Every fitful air caressing,
Splendor out of splendor sips.

Tuneless birds tell too their story—
Out on rustling glancing plumes—
Each gives back the sun its glory,
When the shadow it illumes.



Mrs C. W. Webber pinx. L N Rosenthals Cromo Lith. Philad^a

GHOST FLOWER.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GHOST-FLOWER, AND CHILD.

A DREAM.

A shaded creature, dim and fair,
With thin, transparent colors of the gloom;—
A flower-stalagmite, cold and rare,
Chiseled by Gnomes of caverned air,
With dew-sweats on it, gathered there—
Then moon-drawn upward into sudden bloom.

I.

Elfin are Wonders—and Elfin are we—
Elfin is everything under the sea!—

They know the godly, where elephants kneel,
They know ungodly, where petty things reel—
Think him ungodly who knows but himself—
Ah, ha! ungodly is only the Elf!

A Child comes forth, within his eyes
A mournful splendor darkened lies—
A great Bird perching on his arm,
Hears the sad song that fain would charm
This Tom Todd of the world to stay.
But Tom Todd has no time for play—
The world and Tom Todd turn away!

THE CHILD'S SONG.

II.

Tom Todd, Tom Todd come here!
I have brought to you a fierce bird,—
Tom Todd, come here?—
Tom Todd won't come!

Tom Todd! Tom Todd, come here?
I have brought you a bird that singeth so!
Tom Todd, come here?—
Tom Todd wont come!

Tom Todd! Tom Todd, come here?
For this strange bird you should hear!—
Tom Todd! Tom Todd, come here?—
Tom Todd wont come!

Tom Todd! Tom Todd, come here?
Tom Todd, I pray you come here?
I've brought you a singing eagle!—
Tom Todd, come here?
Tom Todd wont come!—
Tom Todd's a fool!

Tom Todd, the world is sad!—
He singeth on wing a rustling song,
And all things fear him on the ground;
He's fierce, Tom Todd, but he is not bad.
He singeth chorus to the storms—
Sings glory to the upper air!
He wingeth fiercely the dark clouds,
To break in whirling all their shrouds.
He floateth on the coming gleams,
And is the first to feel the beams
That God lets fall from yellow suns.

He shakes the clouds that rain down blood.
All beautiful, and strong, and good,
He is the sky's bold robber still.—
When meaning of his life you seek,
He vanishes in lofty cloud,
And screameth down defiance proud.
The clarion screamer, high and loud—
The type and note of Liberty—
Of conquering struggles of the free—
He comes like warriors suddenly;
  In fell and silent swoop
  He comes so fell a-flying,
  It sounds most like the sighing
  Of stricken roe-buck dying,
  When the feathered arrow sped.
And then he scorns to touch the dead,
E'en though there be much plunder there;
He leaves it to the vulture dread
His carrion to tear!
He scorneth, like the Lion-cat,
To touch a prey he hath not slain,
It must be won by might and main—
He drinketh no cold blood like that!
Like proud, exulting Thought, on high,
He has strong wings, and why not he,
Be type of all wild liberty?
Thoughts like him go up toward heaven,
And even souls such wings are given,
And glory, beauty, sunlight first,
Are too thrown down by him from heaven,
And yet of all things winged the worst—
If bloody talons, bloody beak,
Are the types by which you speak!
And yet this blood has set us free!
Blood broke our chains espirituelie,—

All earth is bloody, and must be—
Blood is life and blood is strength,
Blood is glory, and at length
Must robe us for Eternity!

The eagle sings this where the cataract's heard,
And earth shivered and shaken is frightened sore,
While the water comes down with a frown and a roar.
Tom Todd no more!—
I will not tell you the story I bore,
Ye are not worthy to hear such lore,
You have not the thought, the heart or the height,
You never will know the strange power of might.
Tom Todd won't come,
Tom Todd's a fool!

III.

Elfin are wonders and Elfin are we,
Elfin is everything under the sea!—

He stays on the surface—mocks at all things—
The sad one who all activity brings—
He laughs and mocks us while coldly he flings
The winter that comes of nightly decay;—
Winter is lighter than thoughts that we know
There's no dull wretchedness coupled with woe.

Take the Black Bird from me now,
There is fever on my brow!—
Yes, the red is on its wing—
And this red good hope should bring!
Yes, and there was yellow too,
Yellow goeth up the blue
To where thrones of Power are placed—
Where no gentle thing erased
Is driven to a stupid Hell
Of Bigotrie—
Where all are free!

O God! O God, the world is wrong!—
It does not know when men are strong.
When its Prophets come there're slighted—
Black Birds on their heads alighted,
Scare them with a shadowy woe—
It should not let its birds do so!

O be ye not despairing yet,
Thou child of sorrows and regret,—
For God will send a golden hope,
From out his gladder radiance,
E're he shall call thee, calmly hence!

Be not all hopeless when the world
Is sadder still than your despair!
Wait till the evil wings are furled,
And joy and gladness rule the air!

Darkness is not all forlorn
Light sleeps in it till the morn,
God is light—and light is Love,

Go poor souls and live and love!
O be patient till the light
Cometh to thee from the Dawn,
God yet lives for the forlorn!

Thou art unhappy—yet of men
  Thou art not the only bowed,
The poor are rotting vermin-clad—
  Life decaying in its shroud!
Ah why shouldst thou, then, still be sad,
    Up and work!—redeem the sod,
    Labor is the way to God!

  God is motion, stars and light!
  God is all that e're was bright!
  God is all that e're was fairy!
  God is all that e're was airy!—

God is all beneficent,
God is all by whom we're sent
His high behests from Faith to draw
And out of mystery find the law!

The tender and the virtuous souls,
They feel the way a bad world rolls;—
They write on many a sacred slip
What shall not come from saintly lip;—
They look to thoughts that men ne'er saw,
And struggle with a holiest awe—
And struggle with a solemn shade;
For nature gives all solemn things;
From nature all goes up on wings—
Most like the thought of passive death,
Like one who fears no loss of breath,
Like one who goeth, as flowers die,—
Exhaling Beauty up the sky!

The wings! the wings! O give us wings!
The world has hurt us so,
The world! the world is full of wo!
Wings! let us, let us go!

The world! the world, how hard and drear!
The world! the world, it will not hear!
O give us wings and let us go!—
The world has hurt us so—

Go where a singing place is found,
Where birds need not their wings,
Where Tom Todd never yet has frowned
Upon all lovely things.

IV.

Elfin are wonders and Elfin are we,
Elfin is everything under the sea.

Soothing wretchedness—making earth bright!
Winter!—sound thee, for once a delight!

Somebody comes and cometh in might;
Ah winter! winter! there cometh in chase
A Power more strong than thou canst embrace,
For beauty and violets bloom in the race!

Gentle Bird! gentle Bird, come from the sun,
The blue on your back and sky are as one!
Gentle Bird! gentle Bird, come ye to day
To tell me of pardon—then go away!
Gentle Bird! gentle Bird! why is it so
You and I struggle through such a dark woe?
Dreary, ah dreary the front of the Earth,
Gentle Bird tell me why pity is dearth?
Gentle Bird! gentle Bird! know they thy song?
Gentle Bird! say is it they that are wrong?
Gentle Bird tell me then—tell me how long
The good God lets us go scorning the wrong?
Gentle Bird! gentle Bird! tell me how long
Will sad things be humble and bad things be strong?
  Will virtue be poor, yet go yearning?
  Will vice have great store yet go earning—
    Earning of weak ones still more?
    Tell it me, gentle bird, I so yearn for thy lore.

  Must greatest strength, then, crush the meekest?
    Must greatest length, then, bend the more?
  The greatest height, be all the bleakest—
    And the greatest hearts—be they most sore?
  Must the brightest flowers God gave the hours,
  Reach our sad eyes through evil powers?
  Tell me, then, gentle bird, why is it so?

You twitter, and twitter, and twitter a song,
Art thou never cold—is the day never long?
Do never Hawks haunt thee and Eagles scream loud?
Croak Ravens no Portent—see ye no leaf shroud?
Doth thy bright eye quail—or thy little heart fail
When rustling by thee, they heavily sail?

Talks not the tempests too raging and loud
When your delicate form to the leafy twig clings?—
And is there no hurricane-death where it sings?
Art never fearful where the hoarse beasts do growl?
Is your little heart with you when the gray wolves do howl?
Is Panther your choice when his sweet voice comes out?
Or dost sing when soft-wing'd owls are about?
When they hoot in answer to savages' whoop—
While making dark ravages with silent swoop—
And snapping their horny beaks in that dull gloom,
Do they scare thee with thoughts of too warm a tomb,
Beneath yellow light from their great staring eyes?
Is it where things are gentle, night murder flies?
Have angels' bright songs any sweeter than thine—
Or angel art *thou*, then, my sweet bird, in fine?

Thy notes are too mellow for coarse words of mine,
Thou art braver than conqueror of any bad line;
Thou sing'st midst terrors a sad world to refine;
The hiss and the horror, the howl and the roar
When thy song is triumphing saddens no more;
Tell me then, gentle bird, how can you sing so?

Ye twitter, and twitter, and twitter a song,
But will the world let ye go twittering long?—
While killing the gentle and pampering wrong,
They go for cowards and the brutes that are strong;

Mean ye a time of lofty story,
Mean ye a time of peaceful glory?
Mean ye a time when hope shall see
A thought and a deed of benignity?
When twittereth, twittereth that small song,
Bring'st thou the graces and flowers along?
Art thou an æolian joy from on high,
That cometh here singing that men may not die?
Knowest thou aught that is gentle and good

That might makes us happy, if happy we would—
Since the good God came in that ancient flood?
Tell me, gentle bird, tell it to me,
I long for thy lore so exceedingly.

V.

Elfin are wonders, and elfin are we—
Elfin is everything under the sea:

They come as an arrow, go as a thought;
Space is too narrow, when they would be sought.
They come at no bidding, speed at no will—
Yet ever go ridding earth of some ill!
They bless and they curse—they heal and destroy,
Their good may seem worse than ill they employ!
From cavern's dark fountain, the spring on the lea—
From Eagle-kept mountain they never shall flee.

Like a beautiful thing,
With golden wing,
That comes from where suns are lit;
Like a beautiful thing,
With silver wing,
That comes from where moon-birds sit;
Like a shadowy thing,
With dim-spread wing,
That comes from where dream-birds flit.

Like an ominous thing,
With boding wing,
That comes on plumes of the night,
And yet doth bring,
On boding wing,
A ray of the golden light!

Like a singing thing,
With purple wing,

That comes whence orient stars do spring—
That cometh in burnish of silver and gold,
Through shining mists, to tell as of old,
The story the lowly flowers have told,
How Hope was pinioned, in glory, to fling
The dawn of her future on every high thing!

Like a meek-eyed thing,
With wing all blue,
That comes from a Temple where hearts are true—
That comes from a Temple so vast,
That when at last
Earth goes like a dot,
There lives not an archangel
Can tell you the spot
Where the poor thing should dwell!

Like a glorions thing,
With scarlet wing,
That flashing doth dazzle mortal eye—
That soaring, and soaring, still soaring doth sing,
God is gleamed off from my flashing wing,
See him, poor mortal, though blinded, and sing.
God sent his Justice a right hand to stain
In the blood of a Christ, that ye might remain
To work out his glory, and cease from all pain.
Till sorrow and sadness,
Horror and madness,
Give way to gladness
And cherubic strain!
Joy! O Joy! then as Winter must go,
Spring must be coming for poor souls below!

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