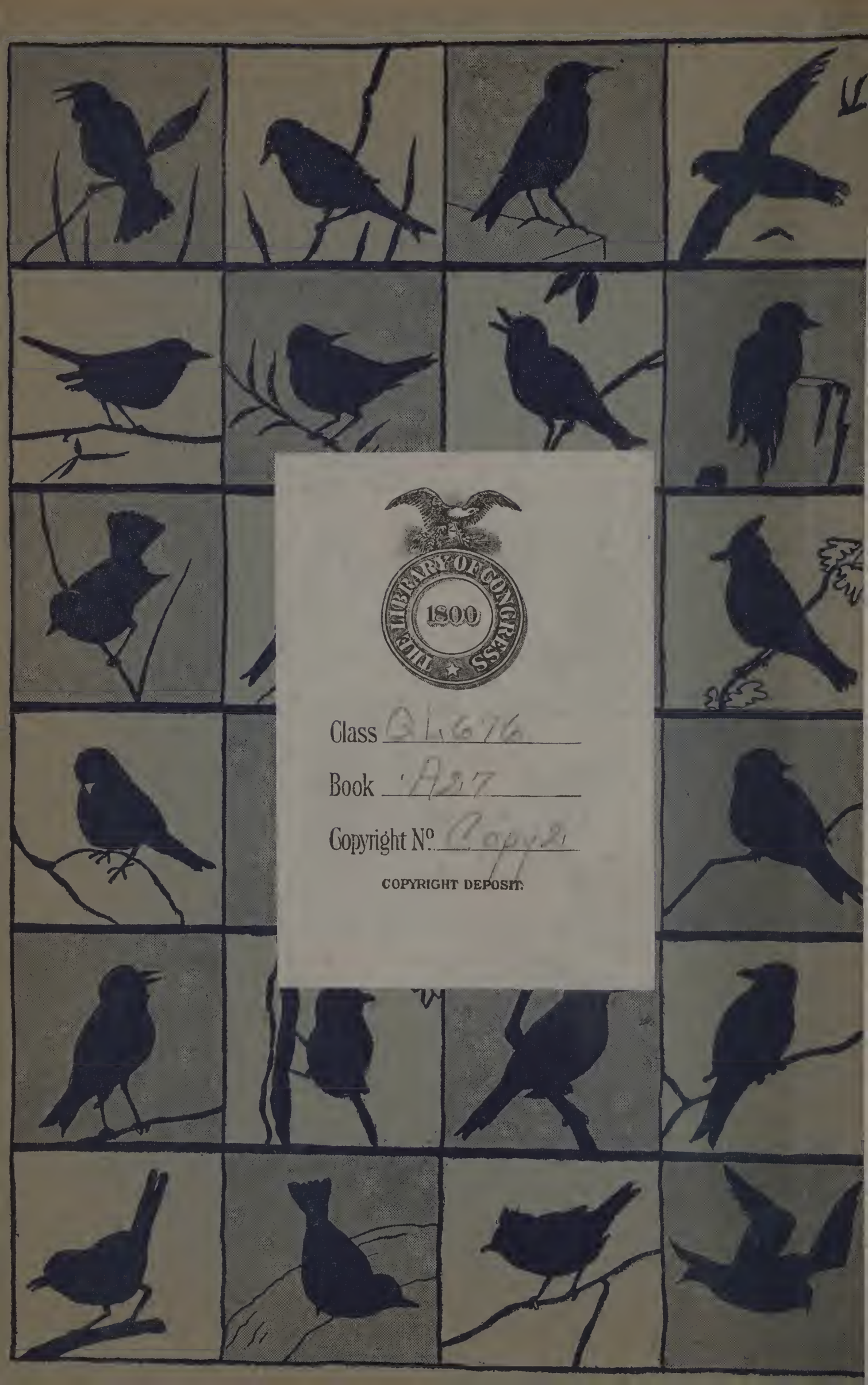
BIRDS THE INDIANS KNEW

By LENA C. AHLERS

Illustrated by LUCILLE ENDERS



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THE FOUR BABIES HAD STARVED TO DEATH.

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BOB-WHITE

THE Indians that lived in the Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes regions tell a quaint legend about how the quail got its joyous whistle. In the old days it is said that Terrapin had a beautiful whistle, the envy of all the birds. Terrapin whistled constantly, and he was always boasting about his clear, rippling, joyous whistle which seemed to start the echoes everywhere. All the birds liked his whistle, but they disliked Terrapin and thought he ought to be punished.

One day when Terrapin had been especially insolent Mr. Partridge or Mr. Quail came along and after complimenting Terrapin on his fine whistle asked to borrow it. At first Terrapin demurred, but

thinking to gain the favor of Mr. Quail decided to let him have it for a while. He cautioned the quail very carefully how to use it, and admonished him to be sure and return it soon. So Mr. Partridge took the whistle and seeing how nicely he could make it sound, flew away and never returned it to Terrapin.

Ivan and the Quail is a well known Russian story that is told about a boy and this bird. It is said that there was once a little boy named Ivan who lived in Russia. The boy's father was a rich man and a great hunter and often went hunting for quail and partridges which lived in the nearby ravines. Ivan often went along with his father and their dog, Treasure, and he thought it was wonderful fun. He would shout in glee when his father shot a bird and Treasure would pick it up and bring it to them in his mouth.

One day, as they were hunting, a quail flew up almost under the dog's nose. In a few minutes Treasure caught the poor bird and brought it to them, and the father held it in his hand. "She must have her nest of young ones not far from here, for she pretended to be wounded so as to draw the dog away from the nest and save her little ones, but Treasure has hurt her and she will not live," said Ivan's father.

Ivan saw the tragic look in the poor bird's eyes, and his heart was touched with compassion. It seemed as if the bird was asking why she had to die in this cruel way. Ivan could not help but cry, and soon Treasure found the nest with the babies

in it. By and by Ivan and his father went on with Treasure. But a few days later the little boy returned to the nest and found the four babies had starved to death. From that day the little boy lost his love for hunting, and he no longer wanted the gun that his father had promised him.

Few birds are more generally loved than is the quail, or bob-white as they are familiarly called. In the northern and eastern states this bird is more popularly known as bob-white, while in the south it is known as partridge. And the ruffled grouse is the partridge of the New England states. Other American species are found in the west and southwest, among them being the California, gambel's, and mountain species, the latter being the largest of the quail family. The blue family and massena species is the smallest in this family of at least sixty species. All these species have noticeable crests and beautiful plumage of a slate-blue, olive-brown or black and white color. Most of the other members of the quail family are tropical birds and several species are found in Europe and Asia.

Quails are found east of the Plains, and have been introduced in many parts west, being known to hunters better than any other game bird. But they are one of the best friends that the farmer can have and deserve the fullest protection; besides they have many charming and attractive manners.

Over half of the food of this bird is made up of weed seeds, and it has been proved that they eat at least one hundred and forty different kinds of

insects and bugs, many of which are very destructive. This includes such obnoxious pests as cutworms, bollworms, locusts, Colorado potato beetles, chinch bugs, cucumber beetles, wireworms, billbugs, cloverleaf weevils, army worms, grasshoppers and others.

About one-fourth of the bird's food consists of grain, which is hunted up out of the stubble and would otherwise go to waste. About a tenth of their diet consists of wild fruit. With such a list of food one can readily see why the bird is to be associated more with the ground and grass than with bushes and trees. One scarcely ever sees quail anywhere but skipping about on their dainty feet on the ground, or whirring through the air in rapid flight.

These birds are about ten inches in length, and wear speckled jackets of reddish-brown with markings of black, white, and buff. The tail is an ashy color and there is a distinct dark stripe over the eye, half-way resembling glasses. Of this gay creature George Cooper wrote:

There's a plump little chap in a speckled coat
And he sits on the zigzag rail remote;
Where he whistles at breezy, bracing morn,
When the buckwheat is ripe, and stacked the corn,
'Bob White! Bob White! Bob White'!

Mrs. Quail chooses a slight depression in some grassland or meadow, or a hole at the foot of some old stump, for her little home. The nest is always

made on the ground, so is often in danger of many intruders and is frequently molested by a passing mower, scythe or even cattle tramping through a field. Ten to eighteen white eggs are laid, and put in the nest with their points downward, so closely are they packed that one cannot be taken without disturbing them all. No bird has a keener instinct than a quail, and they can tell when a nest has been tampered with and will desert it at the least touch.

Sometimes even more eggs are laid, one summer a nest was found with thirty-six eggs in it. The fluffy little youngsters run after their parents, just as little chickens do after their mother. While the mother sits a second, and often a third time, the father takes all the children and teaches them how to search for food, escape enemies and all the other things that good little quail should know.

When night comes the family, which often at the end of a season is made up of three or four dozen lusty growing youngsters, squat around in a circle with their faces outward. The father usually sits apart so as to be ready to warn his family when any approaching danger threatens.

Who has not heard the clear, whistled notes of the quail as he joyously calls "bob-white, bob-white," with the last syllable sharply accented. One who can imitate this whistle can keep a quail answering for a long time, and can even get them to come very near.

Of this delightful bird Lucy Larcom has written:

A whole-souled little fellow,
In speckled coat of brown,
You heed not summer's passing
Or skies that darkly frown;
While other birds are quiet,
Your call comes to delight,
And that is why I like you
Most of all, Bob White!

The world has so much sorrow,
We need your lively call;
A soul to face all trouble,
Ah, that's the best of all!
The snow will soon be falling,
Nor hill nor vale in sight;
But I have learned your lesson
In my heart, Bob White!

BOBOLINK, OR ROBERT OF LINCOLN

A SAD little story is told about the coming of the bobolink which contrasts strangely with the bright cheerfulness of these birds. The Indians tell of how one of their young warriors and his squaw quarreled over the blankets they had to wear. There was only one bright blanket in their wigwam, and as all Indians love bright colors both of them wanted to wear the blanket all the time, but after much quarreling the young man decided to let his bride wear it.

All the time the warrior kept praying for the Great Spirit to send him something bright for himself. The Great Spirit seeing that he could teach a valuable lesson to his red children thought it

would be wise to change these young people into another form, so he changed the squaw into a female bobolink with a very drab frock, and the warrior into the male bobolink with his beautiful coat. And strangely enough it seemed to make them both very happy, for there are few gayer birds than bobolinks.

Bobolinks are about seven inches in length, being a bit larger than English sparrows, and are one of the most interesting of our wild birds. It was not long after the Americans first saw these birds that they enshrined them in their poetry and songs, and they were given their jingling names from their gay, sprightly imitation song of "bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link" uttered distinctly in quick succession. It was this note that William Cullen Bryant transformed slightly into *Robert of Lincoln,* which sounds like the title of an English Lord.

There are few species of birds that have such striking contrast in the color of their sexes, nor do any other birds moult so often. In the spring the male wears a handsome suit, being about the only bird that is lighter above than below. He has markings of buff and ashy white on the back of his head, shoulders, wings and back, and a light yellow patch on his neck resembles a handkerchief tied around his throat. The edges of his wings and tail feathers, which are pointed, are also yellow, while the rest is a shiny black. But in autumn his plumage changes to the color of his mate's.

Speaking about Mr. Bobolink's coat, Bryant wrote in his beautiful poem:

Robert of Lincoln is gaily dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding coat,
White are his shoulders and white his crest.

So surprising is his change of attire that on his return to the rice fields of the south many of the planters think he is an entirely different bird from the one that went north in the spring. From this change the birds are known as *ricebirds* and *reedbirds* on their southward migrations. Mrs. Bobolink has a nearly sparrowish colored frock, being yellowish-brown above and paler beneath, with two dark stripes on her crown. Bryant writes this about her:

Pretty and quiet with plain brown wings
Passing at home a patient life.

Bobolinks are close relatives to blackbirds and orioles, and are found from Labrador to Mexico and the West Indies. In North America they are found from Ohio to Nova Scotia, northward to Manitoba, and northwest to British Columbia. They winter in South America, reaching the coast line in this country about the last of April, just as the rice is sprouting. In their migrations they eat about ten per cent of the rice. They are the first birds to leave in the autumn, migrating even before the daintiest of warblers. Just as soon as the young are well on the wing they gather in flocks and move southward, reaching the rice fields just as the crop is in milk. There is nothing they seem to like better than rice. They ate large quantities of wild rice long before the

cultivated kind was introduced in this country.

They eat so much and get so stuffed that they can hardly fly, and are slaughtered mercilessly. Because of their delicate flesh they are considered a great table delicacy and one buys them when dressed in the markets as *ortolan*. The birds that reach Cuba gorge themselves further on sorghum seeds, and here they are known as *butterbirds*, and are killed in great quantities for food. In the north the birds destroy great amounts of crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, spiders and other harmful pests, and also eat the seeds of dandelions and various grasses, so they are looked upon with favor.

They make their nests in a hollow in the ground, well hidden among tall grass, and the mother is so near the color of her surroundings that the home is not easily seen. Four to six dull white eggs are laid. They are heavily spotted with irregular markings of lilac and brown and while Mrs. Bobolink sits her mate sways back and forth on some long blade of grass, singing to her.

But he is a good watchman, and always warns her of an approaching intruder, so she is seldom flushed from her nest. At this time the male bobolink utters the merriest frolic of a song that a bird ever sang, with all kinds of trills, kinks, twists, interludes and every imaginable sound mixed together. It is loud, clear, strong and rich, full of unique whimsicalities and it makes one pause again and again in marvelous rapture.

The alarm note of bobolinks is a harsh "chah,

chah," much like the cry of a blackbird. But no one can describe the sweet, wild repetition of the bobolink's song.

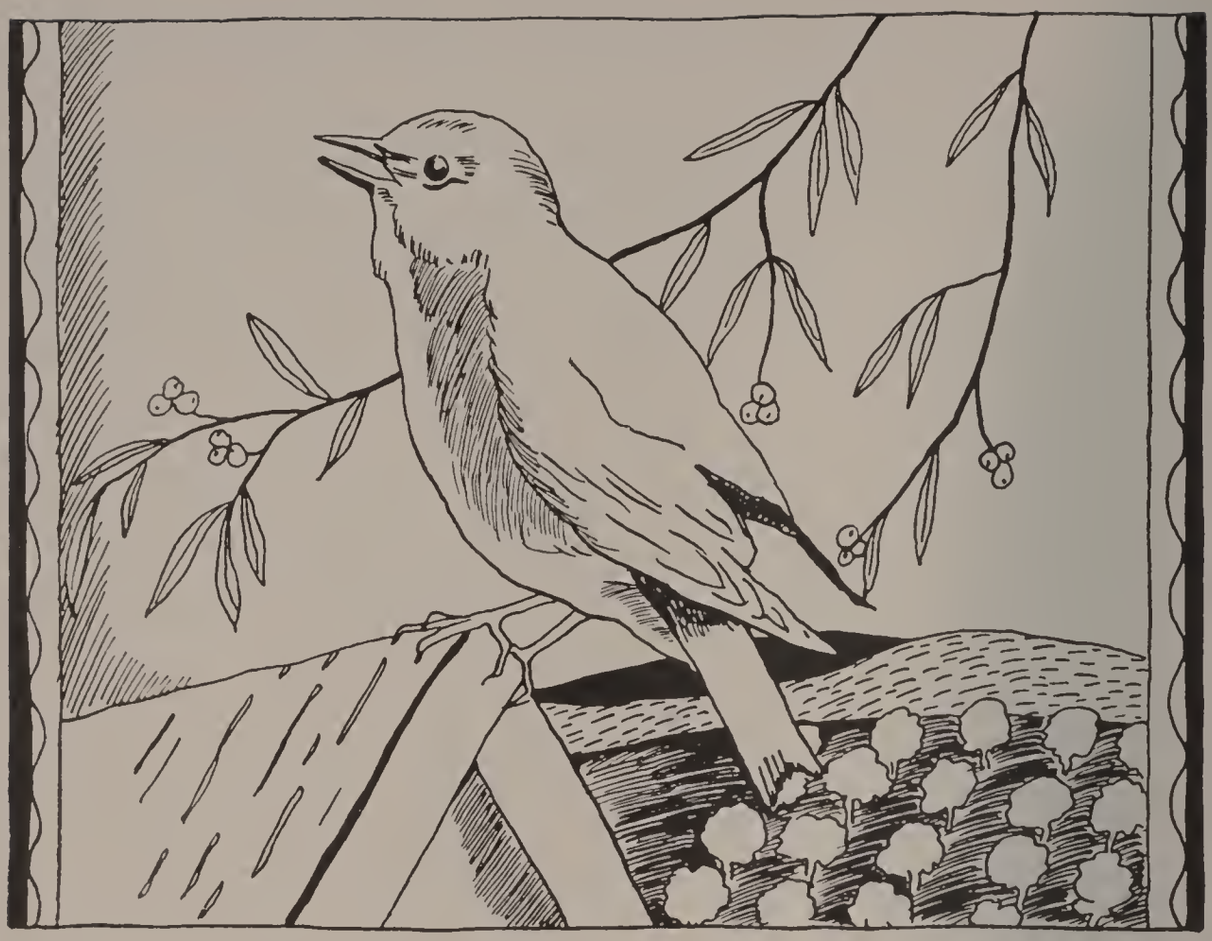
Bryant in his poem about this bird has written:

Merrily singing on brier and weed
Near to the nest of the little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o-link, bob-o-link
Spink, spank, spink.
Snug and safe in that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers
Chee, chee, chee.

Alexander Wilson, the pioneer American ornithologist, has this to say about his song:

"He chants out such a jungling melody of short variable notes uttered with such seeming confusion and rapidity, and continued for a considerable time, that it appears as if half a dozen birds of different kinds were singing and warbling all together.

"Some idea may be formed of this song by striking the high keys of a pianoforte at random, singly and quickly, making as many sudden contrasts of high and low notes as possible. Many of the tones are in themselves charming, but they succeed each other so rapidly that the ear can hardly separate them. Nevertheless, the general effect is good, and when ten or twelve are all singing in the same tree, the concert is singularly pleasing."



BLUEBIRDS

THERE is a beautiful legend told about the bluebird, which is quite as pretty as is this dainty bird. From their bright blue feathers most of us have associated bluebirds with the azure sky, and it is said that the first birds were made from a bit of the heavens. So they are especially dear to the spirit of the sky.

An Indian legend relates that one day this little bird started out upon a long and venturesome journey across the Great Waters, and at that time there were not any islands in this great body of water. By and by the poor little bird's wings began to get tired and to droop, and he longed for a place to rest, but there was none. The water seethed and foamed

everywhere, so the bird began to pray for a place to rest, and before him rose a reef.

Thankfully he alighted on this rocky bit of land, but the waves rose higher and higher and nearly washed him away, so he asked for a higher reef. The reef grew higher. After resting, the bird flew on and once more becoming tired, asked for another place on which to rest. Another reef was sent, and so on and on till the bird reached the shore, and these islands remain in the ocean to this day.

About no bird have more poems been written than about the gentle bluebird with its lovable ways and its endearing manners and its bright garments. It is always a welcome visitor in the northern states, being greeted as a harbinger of spring.

As John Burroughs, the great ornithologist, has written:

I hear the bluebird's plaintive
From out the morning sky,
Or see his wings a-twinkle
That with the azure vie;
No other bird more welcome,
No more prophetic cry.

Bluebirds measure from six and a half to seven inches in length, being just a bit larger than the English sparrows. They breed in the United States, west to Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, and north to Nova Scotia and Manitoba, and south to Mexico and Guatemala. They spend their winters with the boys and girls living in the Middle

States, southward to Bermuda and the West Indies. The azure bluebird is a subspecies with which the boys and girls living in the mountains of eastern Mexico and westward are familiar. It wears a paler garment than our eastern bluebird.

Mr. Bluebird wears an upper coat, wings, and tail of bright blue, which is washed with crimson-brown in the autumn to make him less conspicuous. His throat, breast, and sides are a cinnamon red, while underneath he is white. Mrs. Bluebird, like so many other birds, wears a duller colored frock and is sprinkled with gray, and her breast is also paler than Mr. Bluebird's.

Bluebirds are very domestic in their habits and will readily build their little homes in boxes placed for them. If the boxes are not put out for them very early, the birds search for other nesting places. They usually choose a cavity in an old fence rail, or a hole in some tree. They prefer making their little homes in an orchard near buildings. The holes are lined with grasses, and three to six pale blue eggs are laid. Both birds carefully guard the nest.

At first the baby bluebirds are very tiny and helpless, and have almost no clothing, but by and by they grow a suit of dark speckled feathers, looking like tiny little thrushes. It is not till the birds start to fly that they change their garments into their lovely colored suits, nor do their throats and breasts turn red before that time. Mr. Bluebird is a very devoted husband, although he lets his wife build the greater part of the nest.

Over half the bluebird's food consists of insects, the largest item being grasshoppers, with beetles next and white caterpillars third. For the rent of the little homes given to them the birds pay amply in the destruction of these obnoxious and harmful insects, as well as in their song and attractive ways. Their vegetable food consists chiefly of fruit pulp, mostly of wild fruit, elderberries being their favorite.

Nearly every one has heard of or been fortunate enough to hear the song of the bluebird, which is quite as sweet and gentle as is the bird itself. A short, sweet warble is the most common carol, while its song is made up of a continued warbling, sounding something like "tru-ally, tru-ally," early in the spring, which changes more to a "tur-wee, tur-wee" note in the autumn.

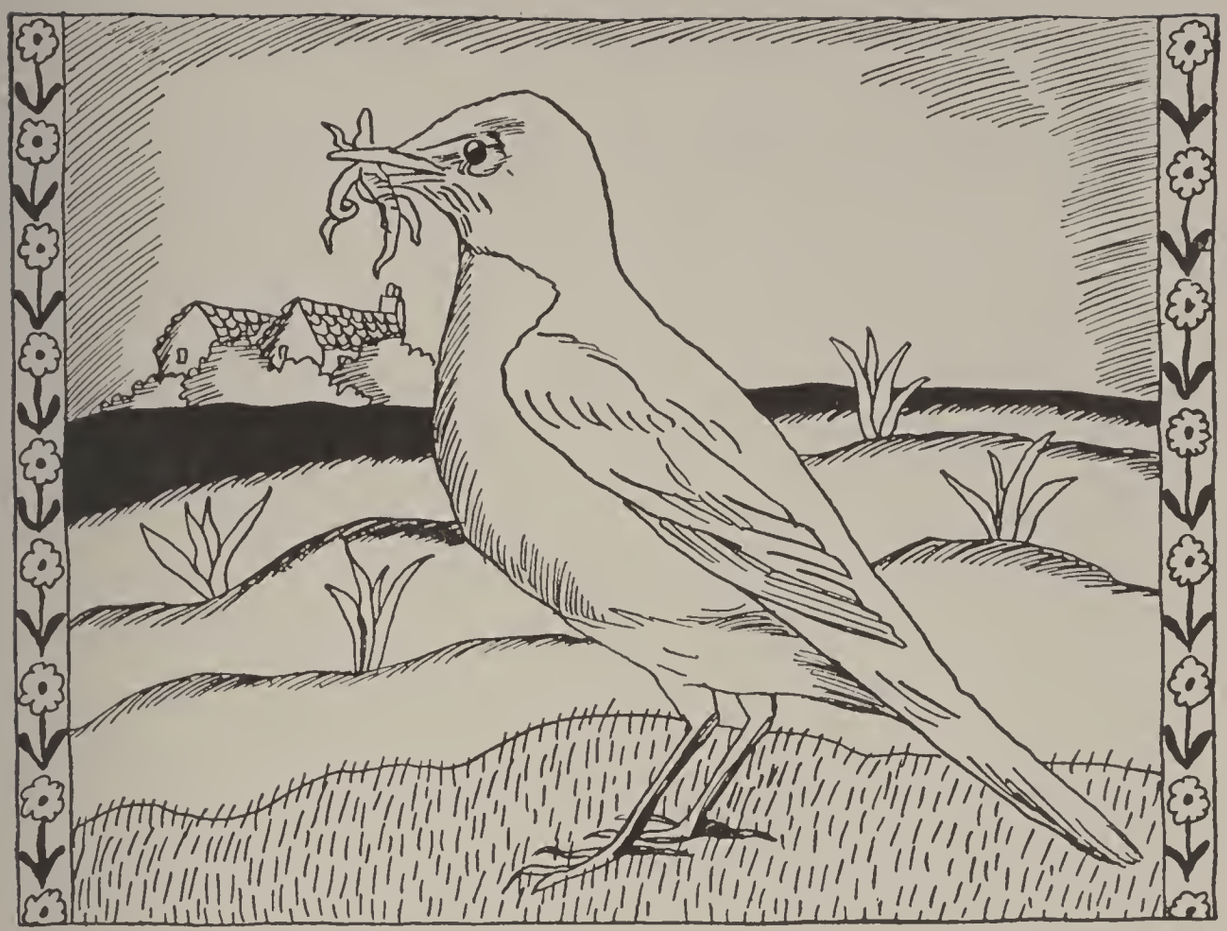
Thoreau, a great bird lover, wrote of the bluebird's song: "The bluebird comes, and with his warble drills the ice and sets free the rivers and ponds and frozen ground. His soft warble melts in the ear as the snow is melting in the valleys around. As the sand flows down the slopes a little way . . . so this little rill of melody flows a short way down the concave of the sky. . . The note of the first bluebird in the air answers to the purling rill of melted snow beneath."

In *Hiawatha,* Longfellow referred to this little blue air messenger as *Owaissa:* "In the thickets and the meadows, piped the bluebird, the Owaissa."

Eben E. Rexford has probably expressed most of

our opinions in regard to this bird's glad song in his beautiful verse:

Listen a moment, I pray you; what was the sound
I heard?
Wind in the budding branches, the ripple of the
brooks, or a bird?
Hear it again, above us! and see a flutter of wings!
The bluebird knows it is April, and soars towards
the sun and sings.
Winged lute that we call a bluebird, you blend in
a silvery strain
The sound of the laughing water, the patter of
spring's sweet rain;
The voice of the winds, the sunshine, the fragrance
of blossoming things;
Ah, you are an April poem, that God has dowered
with wings.



LEGENDS AND ROBINS

PERHAPS there are more legends told about the robin than about any other bird. This is an old legend that Indian fathers and mothers delight in telling their boys and girls. Far, far away in the Northland an old hunter and his son kept a light burning day and night. It was the one fire in that vast region, and they knew that if they let it go out all the people in the world would suffer.

One day the old hunter became very ill and he commanded his son to keep the fire burning. "Don't ever let it go out," cautioned the father, "and be careful when the White Bear comes around so he does not put it out." The boy promised that he would care for the fire.

Day after day and night after night, the brave boy tended the fire and looked after the old man. But by and by the boy became very tired and worn out, so one day he fell asleep on the ground. The White Bear, who was hiding near by, waited till the fire somewhat subsided, for he did not like heat, and then he came stealthily from his hiding place. Crouching, he softly crept past the sleeping boy and nearer and nearer to the fire. When at last he reached the glowing embers he began stamping upon them with his great feet. He kept tramping about until he thought that not a spark of fire was left.

In a nearby tree sat a little gray robin, for in the beginning it is said that all birds were gray, who was very sorry to see the fire going out. So down flew the little robin and searched until he found a tiny spark of fire, which he fanned and fanned with his wings. By and by the tiny spark became a blaze, and the flames danced higher and higher until they flared up and caught the robin's breast. Just then the boy awoke and the robin flew away and wherever he touched the earth he brought fire to the people.

The White Bear was very angry, for now he saw that instead of destroying the only fire in the world, it had been through him that many other people were given fires. And ever since the robin has worn a red breast where the dull gray feathers were burned.

Another tribe of Indians tell the pathetic legend about the coming of the robin that Longfellow im-

mortalized by referring to in his famous poem, *Hiawatha.* An aged Indian chief had a young son named Opeechee, whom he desired to have become the bravest and greatest warrior of his tribe. Before any of the young Indian boys can become a warrior they must endure a long fast in order to test their strength and endurance.

Opeechee was younger, and perhaps more delicate than any of the young men, but his great father thought it was time that his son should become a warrior. He built for him a little tent such as is built for the young men while they are fasting. For several days the boy lay in a trance in his little tent. After a number of days had passed he begged his father for food and drink. His father pleaded with him to go just a few days longer without eating or drinking, telling him he would be the greatest and bravest warrior of his tribe. Sighing, the boy lay down again.

A few days later he once more begged his father for food and drink, telling him he was too young for such a terrible ordeal. He said he felt something evil would happen if he fasted any longer. But the father, believing it would make even a greater warrior of his boy, asked him to wait just a few hours longer and then he would have fasted twelve days. This was more than any warrior had ever done before. The father promised that in the morning he would bring his son the most tempting breakfast that he could prepare. He implored the boy to continue the fast a few hours more.

The boy was too weak to plead and argue. He turned his face away, knowing he would live only a few hours longer. The next morning, happy and excited, the father rushed into the tent carrying a very tempting breakfast, but was astonished to find his son had arisen from the bed and was painting his breast a scarlet. The chief asked him why he was doing this, but the boy did not answer. A few moments later the father saw his son turn into a robin.

In Austria they tell the boys and girls another beautiful tale of the coming of the robin. The people in Austria believe that the wreath of torture worn by Christ on the cross was made from hawthorne and blackthorn. When in bloom the hawthorne is so thickly covered with white blossoms that the thorns can scarcely be seen, but they make terrible wounds. As Christ was being carried to the cross, a little gray bird flew down and picked from his brow the thorn that was stabbing him. In doing this some of Christ's blood fell on the breast of the bird which was a robin, and that is why the robin has worn a red breast ever since.

No other bird is so generally known as is the robin. Of no other feathered creature have more beautiful poems been written. The robin is as truly associated with the coming of spring as is the bluebird, crocus, and hepatica. Boys and girls living throughout North America, from Mexico to the Arctic regions, know this well-loved, happy bird. Robins winter throughout the United States, but most of them

migrate to the southern states during the coldest months. Often they are back in their summer homes in the North by the latter part of February.

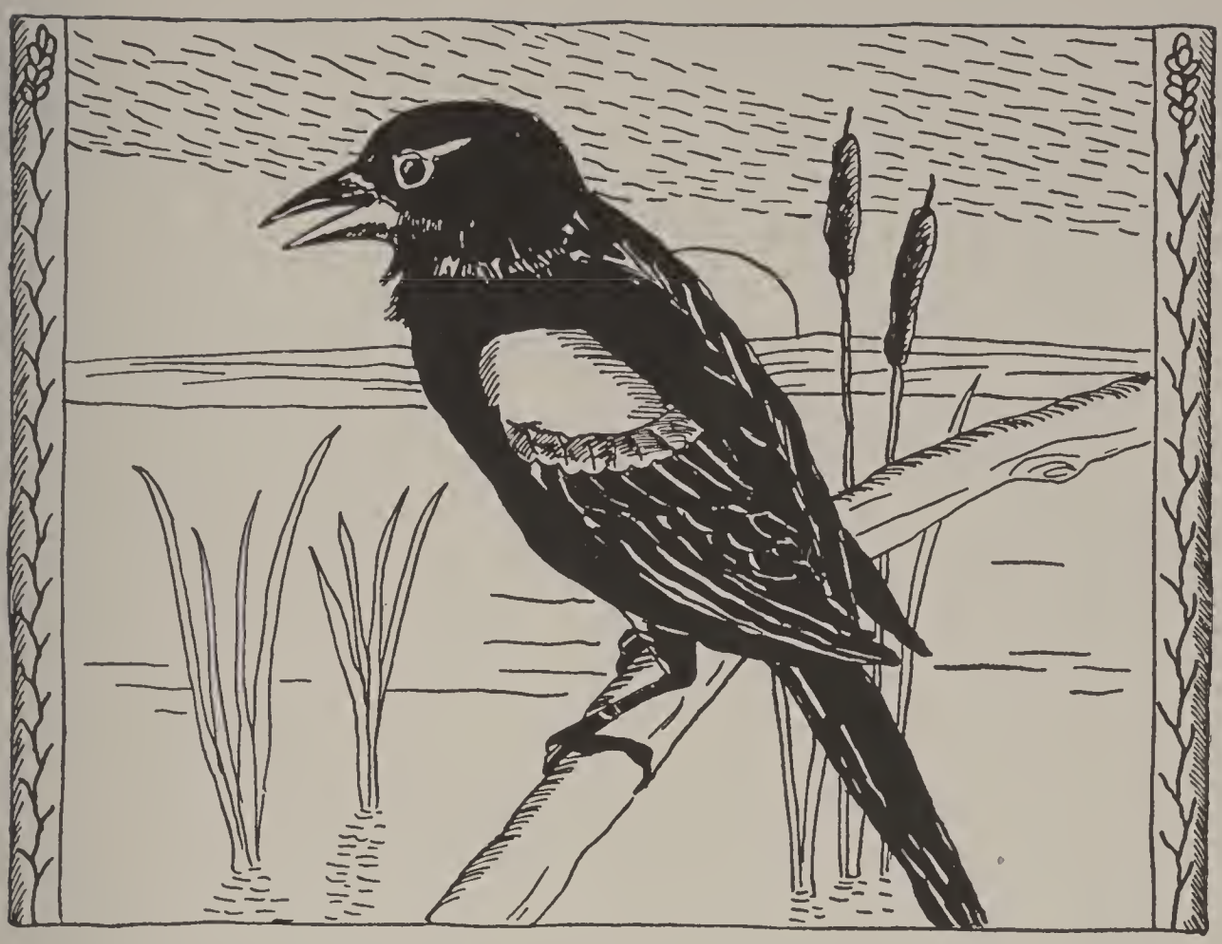
The garb that the robin wears is well known. Its dull brownish-olive-gray coat above, its red breast, brownish tail and wing feathers, and its black and white streaked throat are recognized by every one. Mrs. Robin wears a duller gown than her husband, except in autumn, when they wear exactly the same colored clothes. Robins, like chickens, moult in September.

From the time that robins arrive in the spring, almost to the time that they leave in the autumn, they greet us with a happy song. What an exultant, care-free songster this bird is, and how its loud, cheery "Cheerily-cheerup, cheerily-cheerup" rings and echoes its joyousness. Few birds have such a varied repertoire of song. At nearly any hour of the day the robins may sing a different carol. It is hard for one to recognize all the notes that this talented bird sings.

Robins make their homes of coarse grass, roots, and a few leaves, plastered together with mud and neatly lined with grasses. Both birds help in the making of their little home. It is a very substantial little house, although sometimes when it gets rain-soaked the mud plastering gives way and the walls will fall to the ground. The nest is placed in the forks of trees, on horizontal boughs, or any odd place around a friendly dwelling. Four or five bluish green eggs are laid.

Baby robins are sturdy little creatures, always clamoring for food. It is surprising what an immense number of worms and insects the little family consumes. It keeps both parents busy from early morning until late at night gathering food.

At first the babies are covered with tiny yellow pin feathers, which quickly give place to dark-colored feathers. It is surprising how fast the youngsters grow. In about twelve days they are nearly as large as their parents, and in an astonishingly short time they are able to care for themselves. Two and three broods of robins are raised in a season.



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

THIS is the legend that the Indian mothers and fathers tell their children about the coming of the red-winged blackbird. One day an Indian became so angry that he set the marshes on fire, because he wanted to burn the world. A little blackbird saw the fire, and flying up into a tree, kept singing, "Ku man wi cu! ku man wi cu!" meaning "the world is all going to burn." Then the Indian got angrier than ever, and took a burning shell and threw it at the little bird. It fell on its wings, burning them till they bled, and that is how the red-winged blackbird came by its flashing, colored wings.

Red-winged blackbirds are a bit smaller than a

robin, and are found in eastern North America, ranging west along the Gulf Coast to Texas. They migrate from their southern homes in March, and usually return in October. The males always precede the females northward, and for a week or two before they arrive, the tops of trees seem to be filled with chattering bachelors. They are very gay birds till the females arrive, and then they are busy, each trying to win a bride. By the first of May all have settled to the cares of home life.

None of the North American blackbirds are more familiar than this species. They are also known as swamp blackbirds, red-winged orioles, and winged starlings. These names are given the bird because of its color, habits, and resemblance to other birds.

Ponds and wet meadows seem to be the favorite haunts of these blackbirds, and there is scarcely such a place that does not have its family nest. In some places the red-winged blackbird is considered a harbinger of spring.

It is Mr. Blackbird who wears the gorgeous colors. Most of his frock is coal black, not a dingy shade, but a bright, metallic black with lovely reflections and shades in it. His shoulders are a vivid scarlet-orange, edged with a contrasting yellow, which, against the black of his body, shines gorgeously, making him among our most handsome birds. But poor Mrs. Blackbird is forever dressed in a rusty, black gown, inconspicuously speckled with brown, with a yellowish-white breast, nor do her sons have bright clothes until they are quite grown up.

D. M. Mulock has given a good description of the blackbird in her short poem:

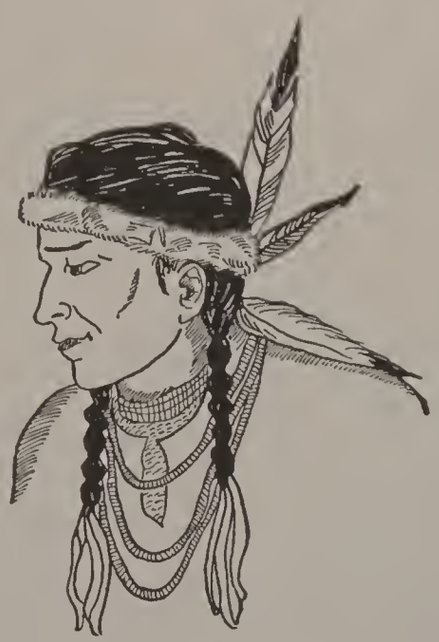
A slender young blackbird built in a thorn tree;
A spruce little fellow as ever could be;
His bill was so yellow, his feathers so black,
So long was his tail, and so glossy his back,
That good Mrs. B., who sat hatching her eggs,
And only just left them to stretch her poor legs,
And pick for a minute the worm she preferred,
Thought she never had seen such a beautiful bird.

The small home is usually built at a low elevation, in bushes or small trees in swamps, or around the edges of ponds. The nests are frequently made on hummocks in wet pastures too, where they are often destroyed by grazing cattle or wandering intruders. The little home is made of grasses and rushes woven skilfully together and plastered with mud, and when placed in bushes is usually partly suspended from the rim. This gives it a swinging motion, which must be very soothing to the babies, and one cannot help wondering if the mother croons softly to her children as they sway back and forth. Three to five bluish-white eggs, scrawled with black on the ends, are laid. Father Blackbird is very proud of his wife and little home, and all the while he is trying to keep his nest from being found he almost leads one directly to it.

The red-winged blackbird would be a beautiful singer if he did not so often interrupt his most

melodious carols with harsh chattering. In the early spring the males, as they flit from alders to willows and sit swaying back and forth on the lithe twigs, sing, "Ke, kog ker-ee, ke, kog ker-reee," over and over again in a clear, joyous voice. But it is during their courting time that they sing the most and the sweetest and richest. Then their constant liquid notes of "o-ka-lee, o-ka-lee," ring through the air. This song is chanted again and again to the mate of his choice, with much courtly bowing and vain spreading of his handsome tail.

Blackbirds are among the most social and noisy birds we have, and especially in the autumn great flocks of them are often seen together on their southward migrations. Though the red-winged blackbirds eat some cultivated grain and fruit, they destroy so many harmful insects and worms that they deserve our fullest protection.



KINGFISHER

THERE is an old, old story that is told of the birth of the kingfisher. There was once a beautiful princess whose name was Halycone who married the good Prince Ceyx. For a long time they lived happily together, but there came a time when Ceyx had to go on a long sea journey to visit a temple in a far country. Halycone begged him not to go, and insisted that if he must go he should take her with him, but this he refused to do. Soon after he sailed there was a shipwreck, and the same night Halycone had a dream of the calamity.

As soon as it was light the next morning Halycone hurried to the seashore and looked out on the seething waters. After a time she saw something dark

being tossed about on the foaming waters, and soon the breakers washed the body of her husband to her. She leaped forward as if she would jump into the ocean, but a different fate was to be hers. As she jumped two strong wings shot from her shoulders, and before she realized it she was skimming over the water, transformed into a kingfisher. And when she touched her husband, he too was changed into a kingfisher.

A tale is told by the tribes of Indians found in the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins of how the kingfisher was given its bill. Some of the old warriors say that the kingfisher was always intended to be a water bird, but because he was not given web feet and a good bill when he first came he could not get enough to eat. So one day the animals held a great council and tried to decide what they could do to help him, and they gave him a long sharp awl-like bill. The *fish gig* they called it, which he was to use in spearing fish, and ever since he has been a good fisherman.

But some warriors in other Indian tribes tell another legend. A blacksnake found the nest of a flicker, or yellowhammer, as the Indians call this handsome bird, in the hollow of a tree, and killed all her babies. The yellowhammer went to the Little People for help and they sent her the kingfisher. The kingfisher went at once, and after flying back and forth in front of the nest several times, thrust in his bill and pierced the blacksnake with a slender fish he was carrying in his bill. Therefore the Little

People said he would make good use of a spear so they gave him the long bill which he now carries.

The belted kingfisher is from twelve to thirteen inches in length, and is found throughout the whole of North America, except where the Texas kingfisher ranges. The birds go as far north as the Arctic regions and may be easily recognized. They migrate in March and December, but except in their northern range they are usually winter residents.

Kingfishers have several prominent characteristics by which they are readily distinguished, the most conspicuous being the flaring crest of the male, which reaches from his head to the nape of his neck. The crest resembles the feathered headdress of a distinguished Indian chief, and gives the bird a royal air. The conspicuous white spotted tail and wings are unmistakable, and the white spot in front of the eyes is another distinguishing mark. The bill is longer than the head, and is large and heavy, and well suited for the purposes of the kingfisher. And all kingfishers have the two outer toes joined for about half their length, which has been brought about from their habit of digging in sand banks to make their nests. It is thought that in years to come the other toes may probably be joined in the same manner giving the bird a perfect scoop.

The male belted kingfishers have bluish-gray plumage, with bands of a deeper color, from which they were named. The females have chestnut-colored sides and breast bands in addition to the gray bands of the males. The feathers are always

oily, forming a good raincoat for the birds, and beneath they have a warm robe of fleecy down. No wonder they seem to delight in the wet spray of some foaming breaker, or the mist so often found upon a body of water.

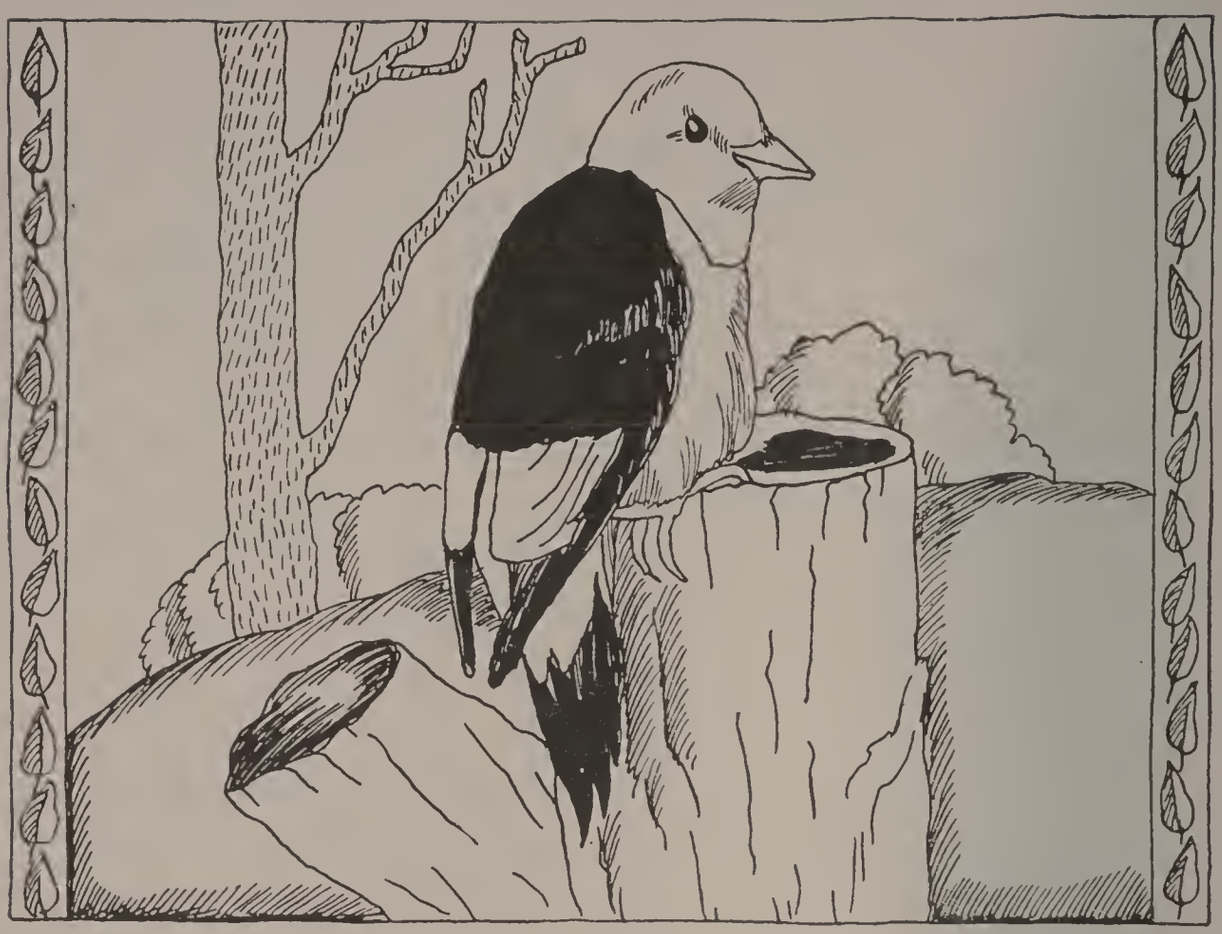
The place to find kingfishers is along ponds, lakes, rivers, seasides, small creeks, in fact any place where plenty of small fish can be found, as their food consists entirely of fish. If you watch along these places you will see the birds sitting on some old dead limbs watching the water intently with their bright eyes, or maybe hovering close above a likely spot, and then in a moment diving down. A bit later they come up with a wiggling fish clamped tightly in their strong beak. Kingfishers swallow the fish whole, usually head first, and later eject all the undigestible parts without the least trouble. No boy was ever a better fisherman, and no little minnows, trout or other fish escape the keen fisher bird.

The voice of the belted kingfisher is quite as strange as the bird itself, being a loud harsh rattle, that can easily be heard half a mile away on clear, quiet days. It may be because he is such a good fisher that the kingfisher was not given a beautiful voice.

The nest is equally as strange as the bird's unmelodious voice, and often the birds work for two or three weeks on their home. The nest is made at the end of a two or three foot tunnel made in the sand, usually near a good fishing spot. The tunnel ends in a large chamber where from five to eight

glossy white eggs are laid. While the mother is sitting Mr. Kingfisher brings her the choicest fish to eat, and later on both care for the active babies. At first the children are bare and skinny as cuckoos, but they eat so much that they grow rapidly. When their parents approach the nest they give a loud call, and all the babies scamper to the head of the tunnel. Much to the disappointment of the unfortunate ones, only one baby can be fed at a time, and so the rest have to hurry back to the nursery till the next time.

The Texas kingfisher is the smallest member of this family found in this country, and is abundant in the southwestern border of the United States from southern Texas to Arizona. Their rattling cry is more shrill than that of the belted species, and the male adults have brownish-red breast bands, while the females have greenish ones.



THE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

The woodpecker is hard at work,
A carpenter is he;
And you may hear him hammering
His nest high up in a tree.

AN old Indian legend says that years and years ago these woodpeckers had gray heads, just as their young now have for a time, given them so they would not so easily be seen by hunters. The vain woodpecker was not satisfied with his drab clothes, and noticing the Indians painting their faces in gay colors, the bird decided that he would try to do the same thing.

A short time later he saw an Indian gather red

berries and mash them, and then stand by a little pool of clear water and put the pulp on his face. The other Indians admired the painted warrior, and the woodpecker grew more dissatisfied than ever with his plain coat; so he quickly flew down to the pot of paint and closing his eyes ducked in his head. Then he looked into the water, and was surprised at the gorgeous brightness of his head, and decided to dye all his body. But before he could carry out his intention, the Indians had discovered him. Then he flew away to a tree, and was astonished and alarmed by a flying arrow which almost hit him.

How was it that the warrior who had heretofore hunted for hours and hours without finding him when often he sat on a branch right over the hunter's head, could now aim so accurately. Then the red-headed woodpecker realized that he had been given his drab coat for protection, and thought he would wash off the bright color, but it had become dry and he could not. Then he tried to beat it off by striking his bill against the trunks of trees, but it still stayed. So, cross and disappointed, he still flies about, pecking wood with all his might.

Red-headed woodpeckers are not migratory birds, unless they cannot find sufficient food. In the localities where they are migratory, they are familiar visitors in early spring, and may be seen at nearly any time of day, usually searching decayed limbs for larvae. They have very acute hearing, and seem to discover larvae by listening to them work. One will find that woodpeckers seldom make a mistake.

The red-headed woodpeckers are found in the United States east of the Rockies, breeding from the Gulf to New York and Minnesota. When they migrate, they winter in the southern part of this country. They are an inch or so shorter than robins, and an old fence post seems to be their favorite resting-place. All the woodpeckers have thrifty habits, and store food away for rainy days, just as do the squirrels. Red-headed woodpeckers are especially fond of beechnuts and acorns, and they also consume many grasshoppers. They have stout, chisel-like bills, which enable them to bore in wood; and their long, extensile tongue has a horny tip on the end, which helps them to spear insects and draw them from the wood.

The frocks of the male and female are the same, both having crimson head and neck, glossy black wings, tipped with pure white, as is the breast and lower under part, making a beautiful contrast to the bright colors. Their toes are peculiarly arranged, two turning forward and two backward, which makes them especially suited for tree climbing. Their tail feathers are stiff, which also helps them to climb.

All woodpeckers have musical tastes, and like to beat tattoos on tin or hard wood. The red-headed woodpecker has several notes, but a loud whirring "chirr, chirr," seems to be his favorite cry, though he often utters numerous other calls and imitations.

The nest is usually built high in a tree, where it is seldom molested by cats or other marauders. The

little home is made in some empty hole, or else a circular hole is cut a few inches downward in some soft wood; there, without any lining in the nest, the eggs are laid. The woodpeckers do not believe in spending hours in building a home, as do so many other birds, yet they are excellent housekeepers, and always seem warm and comfortable. From four to six glossy white eggs, nearly globular in form, are laid in May and June. After the babies are hatched, if you notice, you will find that the parents beat the food into a jelly-like mass before feeding the young.

THE DOWNY-HAIRED WOODPECKER

THE Indians tell a quaint legend about the coming of the lovable little downy-haired woodpecker. There was once a curious woman so inquisitive that she wished to know everything, and could not leave anything without examining it. She was never happy till she had investigated every mystery. So one day the Great Father gathered together all the bugs, beetles, bees, grasshoppers, mosquitoes, ants, locusts, and other destructive and harmful insects and put them in a sack. The sack was tied shut and given to the woman. "Take it and throw it into the sea," he commanded, "and do not look inside."

The woman took the sack and started on her jour-

OUT HOPPED ALL THE INSECTS AND BEETLES.

ney, but with each step she took her curiosity increased. She kept wondering and wondering what could be inside the sack and decided that just as soon as people could not see her any more she would open it just a tiny way and peep inside. So when she came to a good place she stopped and untied the sack, then, holding it open just a tiny way, she began to peep inside, but out hopped all the insects and beetles. She tried vainly to gather them back, but they quickly hopped and flew away.

The Great Father came to her and told her she must be punished for her disobedience, and he changed her into a downy-haired woodpecker. "Not till the last one of these insects and beetles is gobbled up from the earth shall you return to your own shape and be a woman once more," he informed her. With a rough "tut, tut," the woman, now changed into the woodpecker, flew away, a restless creature darting after insects, and that is the reason we see this little bird pecking and searching for food. The woman is tired of being a bird, but she cannot return to her old shape until she picks up all the bugs and insects she let escape.

Downy-haired is the smallest of the woodpecker family and is found in eastern North America from Labrador to Florida. Woodpeckers are found in all parts of the world, usually in abundance except in Australia and Madagascar. Downy-haired woodpeckers are residents throughout the year in localities in which they are found. The toes of all species of woodpeckers are peculiarly arranged, two of them

being turned forward and two backward. Their stiff tail feathers adapt them to climbing and also help as a prop on which to steady themselves while boring and searching for food. They have stout, chisel-like bills and long, extensile tongues with horny tips with which they spear insects and draw them out of the wood.

Woodpeckers are hardy creatures and, like the chickadees, have a layer of fat beneath their skin which protects them even in the most severe weather. They never seem to be cold or weary, and though they lack the power to sing like the happy little chickadees, they seem quite as joyous. Downy woodpeckers are about the size of the common English sparrow, averaging from six to seven inches in length. Mr. and Mrs. Downy-haired are almost dressed alike, being black above, striped with white. Their tail is wedge-shaped, and the outer feathers are white barred with black, while the middle feathers are entirely black. A black stripe crosses the head with a distinct white band above the eyes, which is quite noticeable. Mr. Downy-haired has a red patch at the nape of his neck that his wife and daughters do not have. Six white bands cross the wings, which are white underneath. Few birds are dressed more modestly, yet look so neat and attractive.

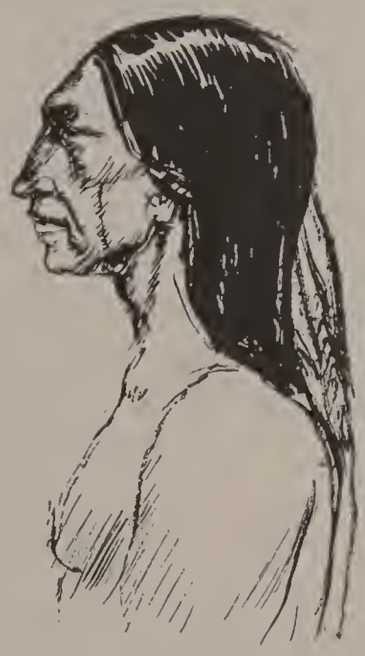
No birds are more useful in the orchard than the downy-haired woodpecker and his friend, the little chickadee. These woodpeckers keep up a continual search for insects, feeding on some of the worst foes

of the orchard and woodland. About sixteen per cent of their diet is made up of caterpillars, which includes many harmful species. Grasshopper eggs are also freely eaten, and many other destructive larvae and insects. The vegetable food that they eat consists mostly of small wild fruit and seeds, and the only injury that this bird does is to spread the seeds of the poison oak or poison ivy.

Like all woodpeckers, the downy-haired has been given no voice to sing, but occasionally he pauses in his busy work to utter a sharp "peenk, peenk," which is often continued into a rattling cry, ending as abruptly as it began. But, like all his relatives, the downy-haired delights in beating a tattoo on some resonant limb, loose board, tin roof, or anything that will make a noise. Early in the spring one can see the downy-haired woodpecker busily pecking a tattoo in which he is drumming out his love song. Not only does he drum to win a mate, but also for a likely spot in which to chisel and to startle borers beneath the bark, so he may know just where to dig for them. The insects move with a sharp noise which his keen ears hear instantly.

Nearly all species of woodpeckers prefer to live in woodland tracts, orchards, gardens, and places where there are plenty of trees which they may visit in searching for food. Downy-haired woodpeckers are too clever and too good architects not to provide a cozy nest for themselves in winter. The males and females part after the babies are large enough to care for themselves, and each lives alone

during the winter, deserting their nests in early spring when they have chosen a mate. Other birds are thankful to move into these deserted shelters. For the summer nest a few chips are placed in the bottom of another hole and four to six white eggs are laid.



THE HAIRY WOODPECKER

THE Indians tell many quaint legends about the coming of the birds, and among them it is believed that at the beginning of things the Great Spirit made the earth smooth. Some tribes of Indians believe that one day as the Great Spirit was looking at the flock of newly made birds preening their pretty feathers He commanded them to use their beaks to hollow out basins for rivers, lakes, seas and so forth. With a great twittering and fluttering all the birds, except one, began to work, but the hairy woodpecker would take no part in helping the other birds.

"Tut, tut!" she cried, as she sat on a branch and smoothed her mottled feathers and looked at her

dainty silver stockings. "You can work if you want to, but I am not going to do any such dirty work, for my clothes are too nice," she retorted.

The other birds kept working until they had all the basins for the rivers and lakes made, and all the seas and ponds and other water hollows made, and when the water began to splash and the earth became very beautiful the Great Spirit called the birds together and thanked them. He praised them for their good work and their zeal, but to the woodpecker He said: "As your feathers are so nice and clean you must not have worked. How did you keep so nice and clean?" And the woodpecker answered that she was not going to work and soil her beautiful clothes.

Then the Great Spirit told her, "Henceforth you shall wear stockings of sooty black instead of the shining silver ones of which you are so proud." Then He went on to tell the little woodpecker that because she would not dig in the earth she would have to dig in wood forever after for food, and because she would not help in making the water basins of the earth she could never drink from them. And the Great Spirit told her that all the water she could ever have to drink was the rain and the dew that fell on the leaves, and that is why the woodpecker says "plui-plui-plui," and when the bird repeats that the Indians think she is calling for more rain.

Hairy woodpeckers are found throughout the eastern part of the United States from Canada to

North Carolina; while various sub-species are found in other parts of the country. The Northern hairy woodpecker, which inhabits British America and Alaska, is larger than the common eastern species. The Southern hairy woodpecker, which is found in the South Atlantic and Gulf States, is smaller and often has less white marks on the tail coverts. Boys and girls living west of the Rocky Mountains are familiar with other species. The Eastern hairy woodpecker averages about nine inches in length, and can be told from the downy woodpecker by its larger size, and it usually is more timid.

These woodpeckers have the same mottled plumage of gray and white that the downy woodpeckers have. Their modest and unassuming coats blend harmoniously with their colorless surroundings in winter, or with the various shades of green during the warmer seasons. Mr. Hairy Woodpecker has a red patch on the top of his head, just as does Mr. Downy Woodpecker, but both of their wives lack these adornments. Judging from their name one gets an idea that these woodpeckers are covered with hairs, but this is not so, for they only have a hairy streak down the middle of their broadly striped backs. Unlike the downy woodpecker their tail feathers are unspotted.

Being a busy and skilful carpenter, and because they obtain most of their food from the trees, these woodpeckers like best to live in light woods filled with plenty of old trees. During the summer they usually live in heavy woods, where they nest, but

in winter they can often be seen in trees about houses. Even in the larger cities they can often be found searching the crevices in trees for insects and larvae.

Like all other members of the woodpecker family the hairy species are not noted for their song. They like to beat a *tattoo* on some dry limb that echoes. Sometimes they utter a sharp whistled sound that resembles "peenk, peenk," though the Indians interpreted it as "plui-plui."

It is quite interesting to watch these active little creatures make their nests, which sometimes takes from a week to ten days. Both birds work in making the home, which is done by boring a hole straight into the tree for several inches and then downward in some tree in the deep woods. When both birds work hard they chisel out about two inches in a day, so we can imagine it is quite a task to build a large enough nursery for the little family. The parents do not believe in lining their little homes with feathers and other soft materials, and the three to six glossy white eggs are laid on chips. One is surprised to see how happy the babies are in their snug little home, which is really a good protection against the weather and many marauders.

Some farmers and fruit growers look upon these little striped creatures with suspicion as they see them clambering over the fruit trees and picking holes in the bark. But if they knew the real truth they would realize that the woodpeckers are among their best friends, and seldom ever leave any marks

upon a healthy tree. The trees infested with larvae and insects they greatly benefit, getting to places where other birds cannot get—thus destroying insects and larvae that often would otherwise ruin a tree.

Two-thirds to three-fourths of their food is made up of insects, chiefly noxious kinds which include the wood-boring beetles, with which many caterpillars are associated. Next in order come the destructive ants that live in decaying wood and which are very harmful to timber. Often a colony of the ants enter a little decayed place in a tree, and if not destroyed, will honeycomb the whole tree so it is useless. But the bright eyes of these little woodpeckers often spy them, and with their long tongues draw them out and gobble them up!

THE FLICKER

SOME tribes of Indians tell a quaint story about how the flicker came to get its sharp tail. Once upon a time the world turned over and the waters rose so high that many people died. A squaw and her two children climbed into a tall tree, hoping that this would save them from being drowned, and there they sat waiting hour after hour for the waters to sink. Soon a red-headed buzzard came flying past and the squaw cried, "Help me and I will give you one of my children," but the great bird laughed and passed on. By and by a flicker came along and the squaw cried again, "Oh, help me and I will give you one of my children." So the flicker helped her to a place of safety, hanging to the clouds with its claws,

but its tail was under water. And that is the reason why flickers have had sharp tails ever since.

The flicker is the largest and most common of our five woodpeckers, and is found in abundance in the eastern part of the United States, and in Alaska, most parts of Canada and on southward, and occasionally on the Pacific Slope. They are permanent residents in most parts of their range, except in Canada, from which country they migrate to the United States in October and go back in April. None of our birds have more nicknames than the flicker, which rather odd name was given these birds from their queer loud note which resembles that word. The birds are called *high-holes* and *high-holders* from the position of their nests in tall trees, *golden-winged woodpeckers* from their color, and *yellow-hammers* for the same reason. Because of their distant resemblance to pigeons and their habit of feeding much on the ground they are called *pigeon woodpeckers,* and from one of their odd calls they are called *yarups.* Thus in different localities the birds are variously named for their habits, color, flight, and noises.

These birds measure from twelve to thirteen inches and are among our most handsomely gowned birds. The top of their heads and their necks are a bluish-gray, and they have a bright red crescent on their breasts, while Mr. Flicker has black cheek patches that look like a moustache. Above they are golden-brown, shading into brownish-gray and modishly barred with black, while underneath they

are chocolate milky spotted with black. When in flight and looked at from beneath they have a yellow appearance, but while feeding on the ground the birds look almost brown, shading into their surroundings. They have a tiny white patch on their backs above their tails, which is never noticed except in flight and is then quite conspicuous.

Flickers like best to live in the woods, orchards and trees along roadsides and delight in feeding on the ground, especially in the autumn when they can find many seeds and insects. Ants seem to be their favorite diet and over three thousand have been found in a stomach for a single meal. Wild fruit seems to come next to ants in the bird's diet, and they are especially fond of sour gum and wild black cherries. They are nearly as fond of acorns as are the frisky squirrels, and their long, slender curved bills are more like pickaxes than hammers. They have long, round, extensile tongues covered with a sticky mass which enables them to spear ants and other insects with great skill.

Like all the members of the woodpecker family the flickers have not been given a beautiful song. They have various calls and noises, and even though some of them are rather coarse and harsh-sounding still they are often welcome sounds during the stormy winter months. In spring they utter a loud, long sonorous call, jubilant as a hearty laugh, that sounds like "Wicky-wick-wick-wick," which is followed quickly by a more musical "cuh, cuh, cuh." During the nesting season they have a

tattoo call, and in autumn a nasal "Ker-yer, ker-yer, ker-yer," is their most frequent note. When a flock is feeding together they may be heard to repeat a "yar-up, yar-up" sound.

Few birds live in more perfect harmony with other feathered creatures than do the flickers, and they are never heard quarreling among themselves either. Mr. Flicker is a dandy when he goes a-courting, and spreads out his tail in quite a wonderful way.

Flickers use the deserted holes of other woodpeckers for their nests. Five to ten white eggs are laid, and the babies only remain about eight days in their tiny cradles. The parents feed their children like pigeons, hummingbirds and several other species of birds do, that is, by pumping partly digested food into their tiny throats. At first the young birds wear almost a black coat, but by and by their garments change and they are permitted to wear the gorgeous frocks worn by the older birds. After they are eight or ten days old the children usually make their own living, and often do not return home again.

THE PURPLE FINCH

SOME of the Indian tribes tell a story about the origin of the purple finch, which is not generally known. One day in early summer the Indians gathered a great many ripe wild raspberries, intending to press out the juice and serve it at a war dance they were having that night. After gathering the berries the Indians proceeded to mash them into juice, and taking the vessel containing the liquid they placed it in the woods to cool. By and by a sparrow-like bird came along and being curious took a look into the vessel, but that didn't seem to suit him, and the next minute he fluttered down into the juice. In a little while he came out dyed a raspberry-red, and when the sun dried his feathers he

was the color the male purple finches are now. Fortunately the Indians did not discover the bird in his trick, as they did the red-headed woodpecker, and only knew of the mischief that had been done when they came for the juice.

Until they are two years old the male purple finches are sparrow-like in appearance, just like the females, having a gray-brown coat, with lighter and darker shades on the chin, breast and lower back. But at all times these birds may be distinguished from the sparrows by their stout, conical bills, which are built for seed crushing. Clad in these somber shades they are well protected in surroundings of grass and weeds so they can feed undisturbed. Mabel Osgood Wright in her sketch about the purple finch says, "The Purple Finch, which, as I have said, is not purple, but, when in full plumage, washed with a rich raspberry-red, deepest on breast, crown and rump, light breast, brownish back, wings and tail, is one of the notable members of the family."

These little air creatures measure from six to six and one-fourth inches in length, and their heavy round bill makes them look something like grosbeaks. They have a habit of bristling their little crowns which makes them resemble cardinals, and from their call note and way of flying in scattered flocks they resemble the crossbill. But the purple finches have an individuality of their own, and it is rather strange that this common bird is not better known.

Purple finches are found in North America from

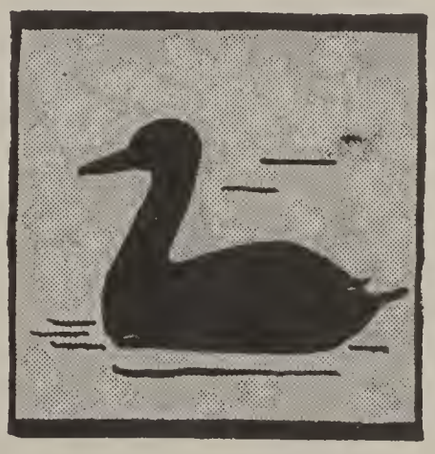
the Columbia River, east to the Atlantic Ocean, and from Mexico northward to Manitoba, being the most common in the Middle and New England states. The nesting season is spent from Minnesota and the middle states, northward, and they winter from the northern states southward.

These birds are not overly particular where they build their nests, being as much at home in brushy woodlands as in an orchard or garden. But they seem to prefer the evergreen trees. The little home is made of strips of bark, twigs, grasses, rootlets and other soft material and built at any distance from the ground. Three or four greenish-blue eggs with blackish specks are laid. Years ago the nests of these birds were often robbed of their babies, which were taken and sold as cage birds, being well adapted for their cruel prison life because of their seed-eating diet.

Purple finches can find enough food at any time of the year from the seeds of weeds in fields and along waysides. Tree buds and wild fruits are also relished in their season, but the finches can live without them, and can readily eat hard-shelled seeds which other birds cannot break open. Like a flock of goldfinches, these little birds wander about in hemlock and spruce trees and in the orchards, searching for food.

A sudden outburst of song in March announces the purple finch's musical concert for the season, which gradually grows to a subdued hum by October. These birds have the finest voices of any spe-

cies belonging to the great sparrow family, and when in love the song reaches its highest ecstasy. Like the yellow-breasted chat Mr. Purple Finch mounts fifteen or twenty feet above his bride, and keeps gradually coming down, singing a loud, long continued sweet warble, till he drops exhausted by the side of his mate. Such delight, such joy, such happiness is expressed in the songs of few other birds, and every syllable is filled with a melody that makes one marvel at its beauty. The call note of this family is a querulous whistle, quite unlike the entrancing song uttered so freely.



WILD OR PASSENGER PIGEONS

THE Chitimacha Indians tell their boys and girls a rather strange tale of how the wild pigeon came to be. Once six adventurous Indians, who were very strong and brave, started on a long journey to find a strange country which they spoke of as the Sky-Land. They kept going and going until they came to the place where the sky and the horizon met, which they called the "Jumping-off-Place." As the men stood staring at the wonderful view before them the sky came down and shut them from the earth. At first the brave warriors were frightened, and then as they looked about them and saw so many strange things they were delighted that they could wander in such a fantastic region.

So for a long time they traveled about and at last they came to the lodge of Kutonakin, the ruler of Sky-Land. Because they were weary of wandering and wanted to return to earth they asked Kutonakin how they could get back to their own people. "You cannot get back there in the form that you now are," explained the aged ruler, "for it is many miles from here to the earth, but if each of you will promise to do something to help man to become better able to take care of himself and others and do something for the world I will change you into birds and you can return whence you came."

Each of the Indians promised faithfully that he would do all in his power to help the people on earth if they were only permitted to return, and the sixth man was changed into a pigeon and promised to teach the Indians how to use wild maize.

Audubon, the great bird student, stated that when he was wandering through the country great flocks of pigeons darkened the skies, but now very few wild pigeons are left in any part of the country. The turtle dove, with its familiar, haunting "coo-coo-c-o-o," being the only representative left of this once abundant family of trusting, confiding birds. Once these birds made this country the sportsman's paradise, but unlimited netting, even in the nesting season, has been the cause of this terrible destruction. As early as 1892, Captain Bendire said, "The extermination of the passenger pigeon has progressed so rapidly during the past twenty years that it looks

now as if their total extermination might be accomplished within the present century." But no one paid any heed to him.

The wild or passenger pigeons belong to a group of birds consisting of many species, and were at one time found in all parts of the world. They vary widely in habits and color, some living in trees while others make their nests on the ground; some live in great colonies while others prefer living in isolated pairs. The members of the pigeon family living in the Far East and the tropics are more brilliantly colored than those found in other parts of the world. Wild pigeons are like eagles in choosing mates, and when their choice is made will remain mated for life. It has been proved that often when one of the mates dies the other refuses to eat and so grieves its life away. Brothers and sisters raised in captivity will often mate, and if one of them happens to die before they are grown the other will often die from sorrow. The *rock pigeon,* believed to be the ancestor of all the domestic varieties, is the most interesting member of this family in the Eastern hemisphere.

Pigeons have been domesticated from early times and frequent mention is made of them in ancient literature. Primitive people regarded them with great affection, even as every bird lover does now, and one of the indications of wealth was the number of dovecotes a man possessed. Pigeons and turtle doves are frequently mentioned in the Bible, but usually in connection with sacrifice, as in the case of the parents of Jesus.

"And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

The poor were allowed to bring the birds instead of a lamb. The first known law for bird protection in regard to pigeons is apparently found in Deuteronomy. "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young."

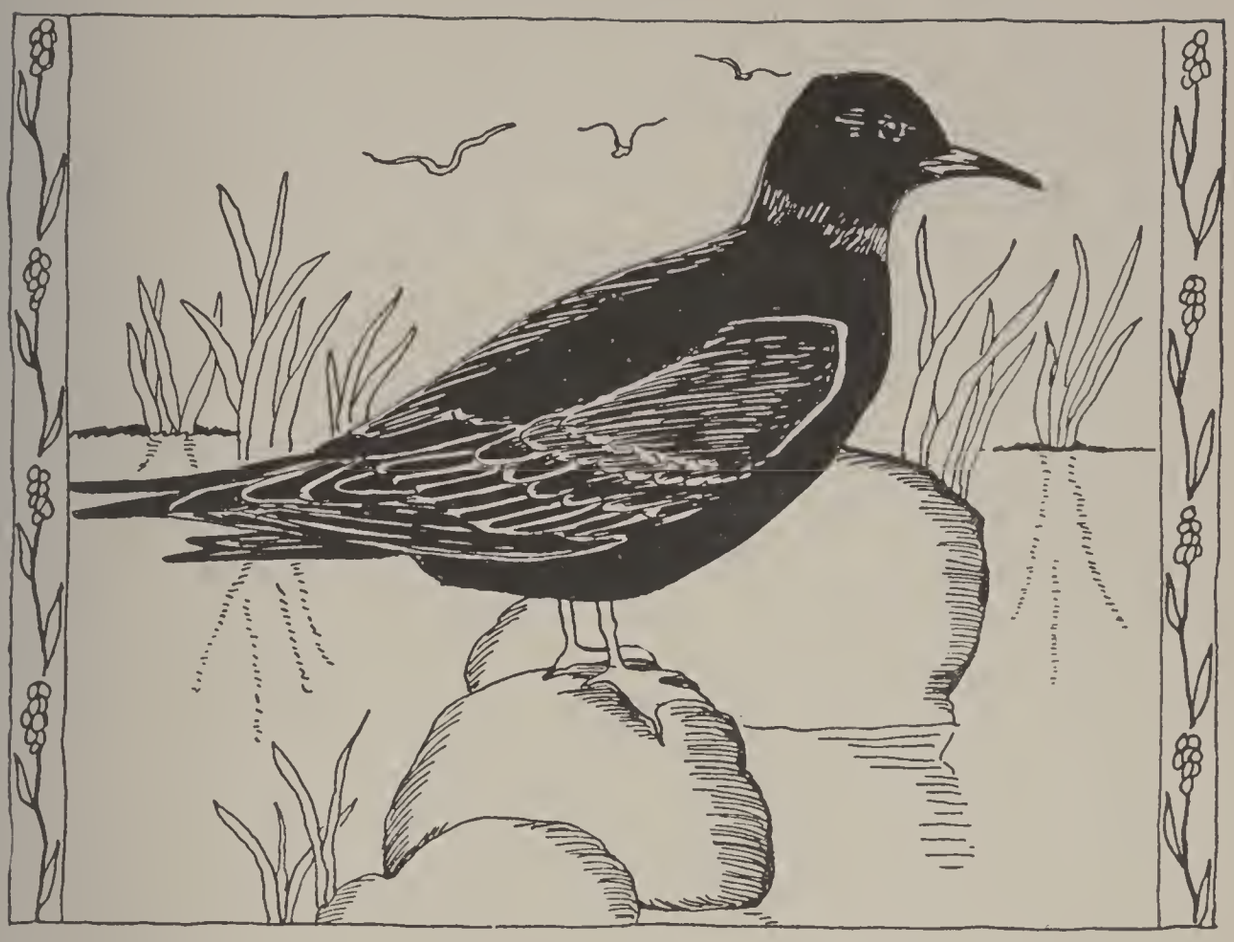
The passenger or wild pigeon is from sixteen to twenty-five inches in length. The upper parts of the male are bluish-slate color shading into olive-gray, and on the back and sides of the head having metallic shades of gold, violet and greenish hues, blending beautifully into one another with an iridescent sheen. The red eyes and black feet are very conspicuous, and the pigeons seem to be proud of them. Mrs. Wild Pigeon wears a duller frock washed with olive-brown, and it is less iridescent than her mate's.

The few wild pigeons still found in this country are residents of eastern North America, and nest chiefly among the northern borders of this country as far north as Manitoba and northward of Hudson Bay. Of late years they have been chiefly transient visitors in the United States and are rarely seen. Their home is a rickety platform of sticks thrown loosely together, often on the top of an abandoned robin's or other bird's nest. The home is very poorly

built and standing beneath it one can often see the sky, but somehow or other the babies usually manage to stay in it and thrive. One, sometimes two white eggs are laid and the birds take turns about sitting on them for five weeks. At first the babies are fed a milky substance from the beaks of their parents.

The habits of the band-tailed or white-collared pigeon are exactly the same as those of the wild or passenger pigeon, but they differ in color. These birds are found in the western United States from British Columbia to Mexico and are found chiefly in the mountainous regions, where a few have escaped the destructive hand of man. Acorns are their favorite food, therefore they prefer living where these can be found in the greatest abundance.

Mr. Band-Tail has a head, neck and underparts of a purplish-wine-red, fading to a duller color beneath, with a distinct half-white collar around his neck, hence one of his names. In other parts of his body are found exquisite shades and his feet and bill are very yellow, while his bluish tail is crossed in the middle by a conspicuous black bar, therefore the other name by which the birds are known. Mrs. Band-Tail is much more modest colored, but she is quite as proud and happy as her gentle husband.



THE TERNS

THIS is the legend that the Indians tell about the coming of the tern. Dancing Bear, a young Indian lad, had just learned how to paddle a canoe and he was very proud of his achievement. He was really a clever rower, but he did not have the strength of a full-grown warrior and therefore his parents warned him not to go on the water when the wind was blowing or the sky looked stormy. But one day, when the skies were very dark and a heavy wind was already blowing, Dancing Bear wanted to go out to the island and hunt.

The island was a long distance from the shore, and Dancing Bear knew his parents would not give him permission to go so he stole away in his canoe.

He had not gone far before it started to rain and the wind blew harder than ever. At first Dancing Bear laughed, and kept saying to himself, " O wind, I am stronger than you are," and he would laugh with joy as the great waves came beating against his frail canoe and splashed over him. By and by even his inexperienced eyes saw he was in great danger.

Then the scared little Indian boy tried to paddle with all his strength, but it was of no use, and finally the canoe was upset and Dancing Bear was drowned. Soon a noisy bird arose from the water in the very place that Dancing Bear had gone down, and that is why the Indians think terns have webbed feet and have such extraordinary endurance in flight.

There are fifty or more species of terns found in all parts of the world, but only ten of them are natives of North America. They are related to the gulls and all have long pointed bills, webbed feet and large pointed wings which carry them swiftly long distances. All the species are wonderfully expert in flight and make long journeys. These birds are often called *sea swallows,* because of their marvelous flying qualities, or *strikers,* because of their habit of plunging for food, especially fish. It is quite comical to see the bird diving, almost head foremost, in quest of creatures in the water.

The black tern measures about ten inches in length, and breeds from California to Colorado, Missouri and Ohio, northward to north central Canada. They winter in Mexico and South America. It is

the only dark tern found inland and received the name from the fact that it is nearly all black during the breeding season, except a white spot under the throat. At other times the birds are grayish-white.

Unlike most of their relatives the black terns spend the greater part of their time on the fresh water lakes and marshes of the interior, and are frequently called the *car swallow*. They build their little home among the tules and weeds along shores, and sometimes on muskrat houses or bits of floating vegetation. Two or four eggs are laid. The food of this bird is more varied than that of any other tern, and they consume immense quantities of dragonflies, Mayflies, grasshoppers, beetles of various kinds, crawfishes and other harmful insects. They catch many flies as they flit about, and the only fish they eat are of no economic value such as minnows and mummichogs.

The Caspian, or great tern, is the largest member of this interesting family, measuring nearly two feet in length. They have handsome crests, crimson feet and bills and pearl-gray back and wings. Like the other terns, great colonies of them may be found on islands during the nesting season.

The smallest bird in this family is the *lesser* or *least* tern, which is only nine inches in length. It has a yellow bill, and from the eyes to the back is a black line, which readily distinguishes it from any other species. The common tern was once abundant along the eastern coast of North America, but on account of its handsome plumes was hunted so

much that it has become almost extinct. They are now protected by the law, and here and there may still be seen in their handsome pearl-gray cloak with white tail and head. They lay three to four eggs, which vary in color from white to brown, thickly speckled with brownish-lavender spots.

The striated tern, found in New Zealand, is the most novel and striking of this family of birds. They are about thirteen inches in length and have a black bill. They wear a mottled suit striped with black and white, and in their modest plumage are quite unlike any other tropical bird.

THE OVEN BIRD

INDIAN children are taught to obey even better than some of their little white brothers and sisters. Indian parents tell their children a strange legend of how a little white girl, who did not mind her teacher, was changed into the sombre-colored oven-bird. Years and years ago, when this country still was a vast wilderness, there were very few schools and they were far apart.

One afternoon when the teacher and some of her pupils were coming home from school, a little girl with an orange-brown dress trimmed with black and white, started down a narrow path among some trees. The little girl had always minded the teacher before, but this time when she called she would not

come back, and seeing her disobedient the other children followed her, but soon they all came back. When the little girl did not come back that night the whole settlement went out to hunt for her, and the nearby Indians helped in the search, but she could not be found. Day after day for two weeks they hunted for the missing child, and then one of the young warriors found an orange-brown bird, and knew the Great Spirit had changed the girl into this strange new bird, then known as the oven-bird.

Oven-birds measure six inches in length, being about the size of an English sparrow, and are found most usually in the open woods. They are ground birds and hop about on the ground, scratching in a heap of dry leaves just like the barnyard fowls. They scarcely ever, except when scolding an intruder, mount to even the lower branches of a tree. The crown of the bird is orange-brown, bordered with black, resembling a hood, and they have no white markings on their wings or tails as do so many other birds. There is an olive or dull orange V-shaped patch on the back of their heads, which is probably the brightest spot in their dull garments. The breast is spotted and streaked on the sides, and underneath they are a dull white, so all the colors blend harmoniously and nearly match the brown surroundings they frequent most generally.

"To me the oven-bird always seems the most disembodied symbol of the woodlands," says W. Packard, secretary of the Audubon Society.

These little birds are inhabitants of North

America, breeding in the northern half of the United States and northward to Labrador. Unlike so many species of birds which are found only east of the Rockies, these strange little creatures are found from the Atlantic to the Pacific slope. They spend their winters in the United States, migrating farther north in May and returning in October. They are members of the warbler family and are often called *golden-crowned water-thrush*, from the resemblance to a small thrush.

It is from their arched, oven-like nests that these birds received their queer name. Their nest looks like the "outdoor oven of the forefathers of the Republic," wrote Mr. Packard. The arched nest is made on the ground among leaves or pine needles, and is seldom ever found. Leaves, strips of bark and other material are used to make the inside of the nest, being cemented together with clay, while the grass is arched over to form the top, a small opening being left for the door. It sometimes takes several months to build the odd home. Four to six white eggs, spotted reddish-brown, are laid. Usually the parent birds can be found very near the nest, scratching about in the leaves for insects and larvae, as they live wholly on this diet.

Oven-birds have probably the prettiest and daintiest walk of any of our birds, and as they step along they nod their tiny heads, resembling smart French ladies. Perhaps they were given this coquettish way of walking because they lack a graceful flight. They are very timid little creatures, and at the first sus-

picion of danger become nearly limp with fear. It is pitiful to see the mother bird dragging her tail and shaking all over with fright.

Their song resembles a thrush-like warble and is usually uttered from the dark shadows of the woods. Most bird lovers think that the song has a resemblance to the word *teacher,* repeated five or six times, and ascending in strength and volume with each syllable. The first "teacher" uttered is quite soft and clear, the second is more penetrating, the third resounds still louder and the last one sounds like a reverberating crescendo. If this song is heard once, it will never be forgotten, and one readily sees why this bird is so often called the *teacher bird.* Then a clear, wonderful melodious carol ripples from the throats of these birds as they flutter high among the tree tops, with their heads hanging downward.

Mr. Packard says that to him the song of the bird sounds like "kerchuck, kerchuck," instead of "teacher, teacher," with the accent on the last syllable. About another song of this bird he writes: "Not so many know the evensong of this little drab bird with the orange crown and the lustrous speaking eyes. It is heard most often at dark, sometimes of a moon-flooded night or in the gray of dawn, a brief, bubbling melody poured from the full throat of the bird as he flutters skyward in the ecstatic joy of living. The song suggests that of the bobolink and skylark. It is the flight song of the oven-bird."

A South American bird which builds a dome-shaped nest of mud is also called by this name.

THE ROAD RUNNER

THE Indians tell this legend about the road runner, a rather queer bird found in the western and southern states. Once there was a tribe of Indians who alone knew the use of fire, having obtained it from the top of a very rocky mountain. They guarded all the passes up the mountain against invaders, and no one had been able to get to the sacred altar where the fire was kept. Tribe after tribe of Indians made attempts to get the fire, all without success, and at last one chief decided he would get the road runner to help him.

The swiftly running gray bird passed all the Indians on guard, without awakening any suspicion as to his mission, and at last reached the top of the

great mountain. He went to the sacred altar and snatched a burning brand from it and started back down the steep mountain. But as he ran, the fire burning brightly, cast out a glowing light which was seen by the Indian guards, and the whole tribe was informed that their treasure was being stolen.

Every warrior started in pursuit, but the bird ran as he never had done before. Finally when he saw that the Indians would capture him he dropped the blazing fire in the grass between him and his pursuers. It flamed up and soon all the space between the Indians and the bird was blazing. The Indians supposing that the bird had been consumed in the burning grass went peacefully back to their village. But the bird had outrun the fire he had started, and still kept one tiny flame of fire which he hid in the feathers of his crest. He still carries a red feather there to show where the fire was hidden.

Probably the road runner is the fastest running bird that lives, but it is a very poor and awkward flyer. The bird received its rather queer name from one of its fantastic habits of running down the road ahead of horsemen and vehicles. In some localities it is known as chapparal cock, also ground robin, from the fact that it somewhat remotely resembles a robin and spends so much of its time on the ground. Another popular name for this strange bird is snake killer, as it has a great antipathy to snakes, killing all it sees. They are especially savage in their attacks on snakes, and will fight like a prize fighter, always trying to get in the last blow.

Road runners are members of the cuckoo family and are quite common in the southwestern United States from northern California to Colorado, Kansas, Texas and southward. Their food is made up of grain and insects.

The birds wear a glossy greenish-brown coat, each feather being fringed with white. Their legs are long and strong, and their four toes are placed so two turn to the front and two to the back. They have long broad tails with graduated feathers, which they lower or raise at will, holding them quite as coquettishly as any wren does. When running they spread their wings and tail in a sort of aeroplane shape and travel along at an amazing rate of speed. The birds themselves measure about a foot in length.

Road runners have been denied a brilliant song, and the only noise they make is a low twittering sound and clucking notes. The nest is a very poor and rude structure, usually placed in low trees or bushes. It is made of a platform of sticks, thrown roughly together on some inviting twigs. Sometimes in April or May four to ten white eggs are laid. These are not laid every day as most birds deposit their eggs, but at intervals of from one to three days. The babies are strange, queer-looking little fellows, and it is scarcely any time till they spread their little tails and wings and go traveling down the road.

THE REDPOLL LINNET

Rose-touched are the crowns, with tints like
Lights upon a winter's snow field.
Rosy are their caps as morning
When the storm clouds gather eastward.
Happy are they, hearts and voices,
Happy are the fields and forests,
When their merry notes come jingling,
Sleighbell like, from upper ether,
Happy is the red-cheeked farmer
When they gather by his barnyard.

—Frank Bolles

ONE of the northern tribes of Indians tells a pretty little story about the redpoll linnet, the bird that for some queer reason seems to love the

cold bitter winds of the Arctic regions better than the milder breezes of warmer climates. All Indians admit that they are very fond of bright colors and trinkets, and nothing seems to please them better than gorgeous shades of red, orange, yellow and other vivid colors. Taquo was a little Indian girl, whose family were very poor, and so whenever her mother made a specially nice blanket of bright colors, and was offered a good price for it, she sold it, and so the little girl always had to wear dull colored blankets.

Day after day Taquo longed for something bright and pretty as the other young girls in the tribe had, but though she asked the Great Spirit again and again it seemed the time would never come when she could have pretty things. Her mother and father comforted her and told her that some day she should have just as pretty things as any of her companions, and so Taquo tried hard to hide her sorrow from them.

One day Taquo found a bit of bright red cloth and she cried in glee. Surely the piece, which looked so large to her bright eyes, was large enough when a little border was added, for a shawl.

"Such a shawl I shall have!" she exclaimed. "Such a shawl as no other girl has ever had." But when she brought it to her mother, her mother shook her head sadly and told her it was not big enough. "Not even with a border?" asked Taquo half eagerly yet. But her mother kept shaking her head, and Taquo knew that her mother knew more about the making

of shawls than any other squaw in the tribe.

Taquo took the bit of brilliant cloth and crept to the nearby woods, and there she lay down with the cloth beneath her head, and cried and cried and prayed. She asked the Great Spirit either to send her more cloth so she could have a bright shawl, or else to make her smaller so this bit would be enough. By and by Taquo felt her prayer was being answered, for everything about her seemed to change, and soon the little girl had been transformed into a redpoll linnet. The bright red cloth had been used as a covering for her head and breast, and so happy was she in her bright colors that she has been singing sweetly ever since, even in the coldest days.

The plumage of these little birds varies greatly in color with the seasons and age of the bird, which causes it to be called at different times by various other names, as gray linnet and red linnet. In summer Mr. Redpoll wears a brown coat, with forehead, throat and breast of crimson, while his wife is much duller. At other times the male wears a brown coat above, dusky white vest, a rosy breast and a bright red cap.

Mrs. Redpoll is always dressed in more somber colors and is never as lively as her good-natured mate, though she has just as sweet a temper and is just as patient. But, as in many other bird families, usually most of the cares and worries descend upon her. All the members of this family are friendly little creatures with lively, gentle disposi-

SHE LAY DOWN WITH THE CLOTH BENEATH HER HEAD.

tions, and it is a marvel how they can live through the long, cold hours of a northern winter.

Redpoll linnets are really small finches, so named because of their reddish head-tops, and from the fact that they like to eat linseed, flax and hemp seed, and are very fond of all kinds of weed seeds. It is a beautiful sight to see a host of these little birds hanging on some frost covered weed searching for seeds, often swaying back and forth above a sheet of snow.

But even more magnificent is the sight of a pine tree covered with the gay little messengers, and it is interesting to watch them busily at work, pecking, pecking at the cones. Now and then they stop and a chorus of them sing their sweet little song. It is a peculiar fact that redpolls usually stay in the same places that their ancestors chose, or if they do leave on account of shortage of food or for some other reason usually return. It is as Lucy Larcom has so beautifully expressed:

Finches with crimson caps, stopping
Just where they stopped years before.

The actions of redpolls greatly resemble those of our familiar goldfinch, and their flight is even more rapid and buoyant. The birds often travel together, but the redpolls' visits to some of the states are very irregular. When seen they usually come to the states on the wings of a snowstorm, being driven farther south in search of food. The birds breed as far northward as they possibly can, and winter in

various states in the United States. They like to travel in great flocks, and prefer best to wander in weedy pastures. The woods hold no temptations and illusions for these sun-loving little birds. The Holboell redpoll, a near cousin of the redpoll linnet, is slightly larger, while the greater redpoll is larger and darker, but their customs and habits are about the same.

Because these little linnets are so easily tamed, sing so sweetly and because they are seed-eating birds they have been favorite cage birds. But it is a cruel and unjust thing to take these birds that love their freedom so much, and do so much toward making life brighter for others, and shut them up in a cage.

Thoreau, a wonderful lover of the great out-of-doors, wrote: "Standing there, though in this bare November landscape, I am reminded of the incredible phenomenon of small birds in winter, that ere long, amid the cold, powdery snow, as it were a fruit of the season, will come twittering a flock of delicate, crimson-tinged birds. Lesser Red Polls, to sport and feed on the seeds and buds just ripe for them on the sunny side of a wood, shaking down the powdery snow there in their cheerful feeding, as if it were high midsummer to them. They greet the hunter and the chopper in their furs. Their maker gave them the last touch, and launched them forth the day of the Great Snow. He made this bitter, imprisoning cold, before which man quails, but He made at the same time these warm and flowing

creatures to twitter and be at home in it. He said not only let there be linnets in winter, but linnets of rich plumage and pleasing twitter, bearing summer in their natures. . . . I am struck by the perfect confidence and success of Nature."

The song of the redpoll is strong and sweet, being a canary-like lisp of "tsweet, tsweet." When climbing in search of food the bird usually utters a pretty "cree-cree-cree" with a lisping "tsweet" intermingled.

The nest is made of dry grass and moss and is usually placed at a low elevation in a bush or tree, but sometimes in a tuft of grass. From three to six greenish-blue eggs, tinted with brown and reddish specks are laid.

THE VEERY OR WILSON THRUSH

MOST Indian children are more familiar with the birds than are their little white brothers and sisters, and nearly every red child can tell quaint and interesting legends about the coming of the birds and how they got their colors, songs or other characteristics.

A beautiful tale is told about the veery or Wilson thrush. A white man taught an Indian lad how to sing some hymns, and among them was one with the words, "Where are you drifting today? Are you drifting far away?" The Indian boy seemed never to tire of singing this hymn over and over again in his clear, sweet, silvery voice. One day when the Great Spirit heard him and was grieved

because some of his red children were doing wicked deeds, the thought of what a help it would be to them if they could only hear the boy's warning song came to the Great Spirit. So he changed the lad into a veery with its sweet, melodious voice.

As their name suggests these birds are members of the thrush family and therefore near relatives of the wonderful singing nightingales. Veerys are about seven and a half inches in length, and are found in eastern North America. They breed in the northern states and southern Canada, but in October they migrate southward and spend their winters in Central America, where they help the children in these tropical countries keep Christmas happy. Doubtless their sweet, cheery voices greet many a child on New Year's Day too, but by May the little concert singers are ready to return to their northern homes.

It is really hard to find exact words to describe their wild, sweet, melodious songs, containing a more infinite power to thrill than any song sung by a human singer. Caruso's wonderful voice, Paderewski's magnificent tones, Madam Gluck's melodious songs, Schumann-Heink's varied repertoire, or any of the other renowned opera singers, have voices that cannot be compared with the trill of the veery as he chants his silvery song, with a slightly descending accent at the last. The song sounds something like "too-whe-u-whe-u-whe-u."

About this bird's song Mrs. Claribel Weeks Avery has written:

One silver song is all the veery knows
And all he ever tries
Repeated like petals on a rose
Or stars along the skies.

The veery's call is a clear distinct "whee-you, whee-you."

Like most members of the thrush family these little singers are dressed in somber garments, both sexes wearing an olive-brown, tawnish-red coat above, white throat and a creamy buff waistcoat speckled with faint marks on the breast. These sly, elusive little creatures like to live near swamps, seeming to delight in a place covered thickly with ferns. They prefer to dwell in the dry places in cool, damp woods.

They make their little homes on the ground amid fallen leaves, usually on some raised hummock, or a tangled mass of briars. The little home is carefully made of strips of bark and leaves and is fashioned nicely. Greenish-blue eggs are laid and Mrs. Veery is a very attentive and loving mother, while Mr. Veery is always proud of his family and that he is a very happy individual his joyous voice always testifies.

Boys and girls who live in the regions where these birds are found and have not yet made their acquaintance should do so at once. For among the feathered population there are no more charming and endearing birds.

THE CARDINAL, A PRINCE OF BIRDS

THE Northwestern tribes of Indians tell a charming legend of the birth of the cardinal. These Indians consider red a sacred color, so the cardinal is one of their favorite birds. The story they tell is that of a father who died, and their being no one left to hunt for the family, all were on the verge of starvation. So the two little children went out in the woods and were astonished to find another wigwam than their own. With the curiosity attributed to all women the largest little girl lifted the flap and peeped inside. Hearing a sweet song she looked up and saw a beautiful red bird sitting on the cross bars of the tent pole.

"I am the spirit of your father," informed the bird,

"and I have returned to watch over and guard you. You shall never be hungry again."

The cardinal belongs to a group of large finches called *grosbeaks,* meaning *great beaks.* This regal bird received its name from its brilliant coloring, being one of the most gorgeously colored of American birds. The shade of the cardinal's coat is just the shade of the cassock worn by a cardinal of the Roman Church. There is still another reason why this prince of birds was given the honorary title of the highest ecclesiastic in the Roman Church, for like the bluejay it wears a crest upon its head, which gives it a kingly appearance. The cardinals are rather haughty aristocrats among the other birds, and delight in showing their superiority, seldom skipping about on the ground so as to soil their feet.

The cardinal is known by numerous other names, all applying to its vivid color, melodious song or some other characteristic. In some localities these birds are known as crested redbirds, in other places as crimson grosbeaks, and among dealers in cage birds as Virginia nightingales, but their most popular name is red bird, with its variation of winter redbird.

The fame of the cardinal has spread all over the English reading world through being immortalized in James Lane Allen's beautiful story *The Kentucky Cardinal.* Gene Stratton Porter has also written about this bird in *The Song of the Cardinal.*

Cardinals are really southern birds, where they

are found in abundance, and are special favorites, rivalling the famous mocking bird. They have no regularly scheduled trips as do migratory birds, and will stay all winter wherever they find a good boarding place. When they stay in the North their vivid colors make a dazzling contrast against a background of snow. The northern limit of their range, according to most authorities, is with the fortieth parallel of latitude, ranging in the east plains and southeastern South Dakota, southward.

But cardinals have often been found much farther north, and in the parks of New York and other cities they may be seen in the winter months hopping around the caged animals picking up broken bits of peanuts and other food. These hardy little songsters have been seen as far north as Nova Scotia and southern Ontario. If they are found around your home during the summer you can easily coax them to remain by hanging out bits of suet and providing plenty of other food. During the summer they live mostly upon fruit and insects, but can easily change their diet in winter.

In former times, and until recently, large numbers of cardinals were caught in traps, or taken from their nest when babies, and sold to bird dealers for cage birds. Through the efforts of various societies this cruel practice has been stopped, and they are not permitted to be sold. This is well, for they are too beautiful and valuable birds to be destroyed, and as Mrs. Olive Miller says, "He is a cynic, morose and crusty" when caged, which is a strange con-

trast to the wild, beautiful bird that we see when he is free. Unless you are very quick, and rather sly, it is hard to catch a glimpse of a really wild cardinal.

As soon as these birds learn that you will be their friends and they have nothing to fear they can be lured near enough to the house so they can easily be watched from windows. They have rather distrustful natures and it takes a good bit of patience and time to lure them near houses, but when once tamed they are friendly and lovable creatures.

Cardinals are slightly smaller and more restless than the familiar robins, and there is nothing "churchy" about them. Their crest, which can be lowered or erected at will, is probably their most conspicuous feature. They have short rounded wings, and long tails, the male's being longer than his mate's, and large reddish bills. The black throats of the males set off their bright cardinal coats, and at any time they may easily be seen as they swing back and forth in a tree, even though they are not calling attention to themselves by their marvelous song.

The female is much less conspicuous, having a brownish-red frock, with just enough touches of a brighter shade to set it off well. Mr. and Mrs. Cardinal are a handsome pair, and their plumage remains much the same the whole year, though in winter the males are streaked with a bit of brown.

The food of the cardinal varies with the season and locality, but during the summer it consists mostly of mulberries, grapes and other wild fruits,

and the seeds of grasses, weeds and so forth, with large quantities of beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, ants, flies, larvae and other destructive insects. They are especially fond of rose bugs.

As with so many birds Mrs. Cardinal builds the nest, while her husband sings to her in his gayest voice. The somewhat inartistic home is made of leaves, bark, twigs and so forth and nicely lined with grasses, and is usually placed in a leafy shrub, eight or ten feet from the ground. Three to four white eggs speckled with brown are laid, and while the mother sits the father entertains her with all kinds of beautiful songs. The home life of the cardinals is one of the most beautiful known among birds, and during the time of incubation the males are very attentive. The birds get very excited and sometimes the males will lead people right to their nest, all the time he is trying so courageously to withdraw their attention.

Unlike the females in most families of birds, Mrs. Cardinal is more accomplished than her mate, and has a wholly independent song that is quite individual. Though not so loud and warbling as that of the male's, yet it is very melodious and pleasing, and there are some who consider it more beautiful. But the song of the cardinal is really indescribable, and it is remarkable among the songs of birds as Caruso's voice was among human beings.

Audubon, the great naturalist, described the song of the cardinal in these words: "Its song is at first loud and clear, resembling the finest sounds pro-

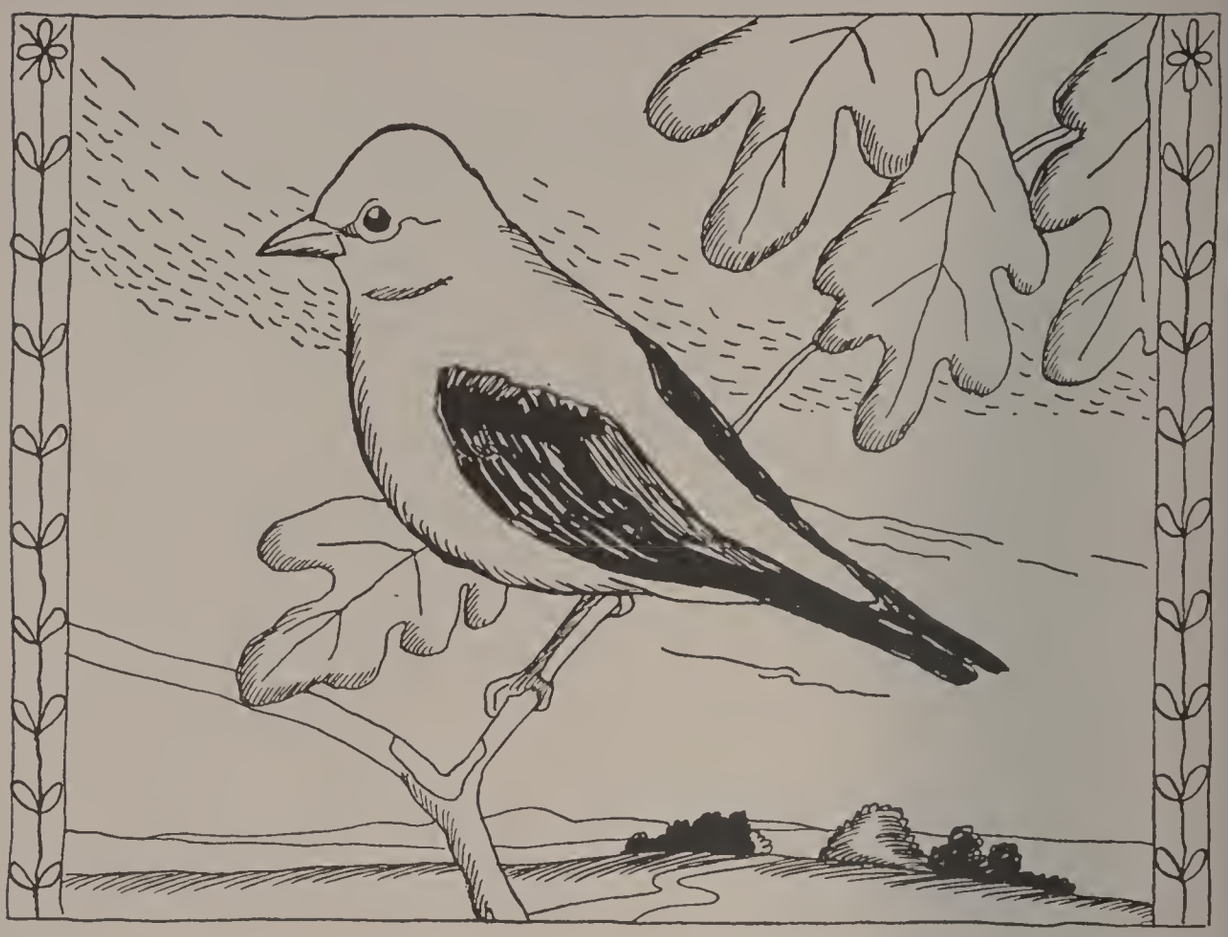
duced by the flageolet, and gradually descends into marked and continued cadences, until it dies away in the air around. During the love season the song is emitted with increased emphasis by this proud musician, who as if aware of his powers, swells his throat, spreads his rosy tail, droops his wings, and leans alternately to the right and left, as if on the eve of expiring with delight at the delicious sound of his own voice.

"Again and again are those melodies repeated, the bird resting only at intervals to breathe. They may be heard from long before the sun gilds the eastern horizon to the period when the blazing orb pours down its noon-day floods of heat and light, driving the birds to the coverts to seek repose for a while. Again invigorated by nature, the musician recommences his song, when, as if he had never strained his throat before, he makes the whole neighborhood resound, nor ceases till the shades of evening close around him.

"Day after day the song of the Redbird beguiles the weariness of his mate as she assiduously warms her eggs; and at times she also assists with the modesty of her gentler sex. Few individuals of our own race refuse their homage and admiration to the sweet songster. How pleasing is it, when, by a clouded sky, the woods are rendered so dark that, were it not for an occasional glimpse of clear light falling between the trees, you might imagine night at hand, while you are yet far distant from your home. How pleasing to have your ear suddenly sa-

luted by the well-known notes of this favorite bird, assuring you of peace around, and of the full hour that still remains for you to pursue your walk in security! How often have I enjoyed this pleasure, and how often in due humbleness of hope, do I trust that I may enjoy it again!

"This song is heard all winter in the more southerly States; and at that season the Cardinals often collect in flocks which roam together through the swamps and thickets, or, when the weather is severe, come into a village or about a farm-house in search of the food then hard to obtain in the snowy woods."



THE SCARLET TANAGER

THE various tribes of Indians had different legends for all the birds. By many it is believed that in the very beginning all birds were gray, and that through various ways these colors were changed into the robes that the birds wear today. A charming story is told about the gorgeously colored scarlet tanager. One day a drab-colored bird went into the woods to fast, and falling asleep it dreamed that someone had said to it, "When you awake paint your face and body in the brightest colors which you can find." So when the tanager awoke and found some bright red paint nearby, which an Indian had left for the purpose, he dipped in his head and wings, and then all of his body, and

that is why Mr. Scarlet Tanager is such a vivid color part of the year.

Only four or five tanagers of the three hundred and fifty species known to naturalists are found in the United States, for they are birds of the tropical regions of Central and South America. The scarlet tanager is about a fourth smaller than the robin, and likes best to live in the open woods; but where they are more abundant will often come out into fields, parks, orchards and yards to feed. At one time they were very common in many parts of North America and on to the northern borders of Canada.

But their gorgeous color has been a snare that has led to their destruction mostly for millinery purposes. The densest evergreens and foliage cannot hide the blazing beauty of the males at certain times, and so now it is not often that a flash of their beauty is seen. Instinct seems to have taught the bird to be careful of its charms, and though at one time it was one of the tamest of our many birds it is now wild and shy, liking the solitude of a grove of oak or swamp maple trees near a stream or pond, the best of any location.

The song of the scarlet tanager resembles that of the robin, but is harsher and perhaps it has fewer variations. Their voices seem to be always highly pitched. The birds delight to perch high in a tree-top and sing in loud, cheerful voices their rich, sweet song. Their call is a sharp "chirp, chirp," or a shrill "chirp churr, chirp churr."

In spring the male is a brilliant scarlet with black

wings and tail, and under his wing coverts is a grayish-white, but with the coming of autumn he dons a garment similiar to the modest one his wife wears. Mrs. Scarlet Tanager is olive above and greenish-yellow underneath, with darker wings and tail margined with white.

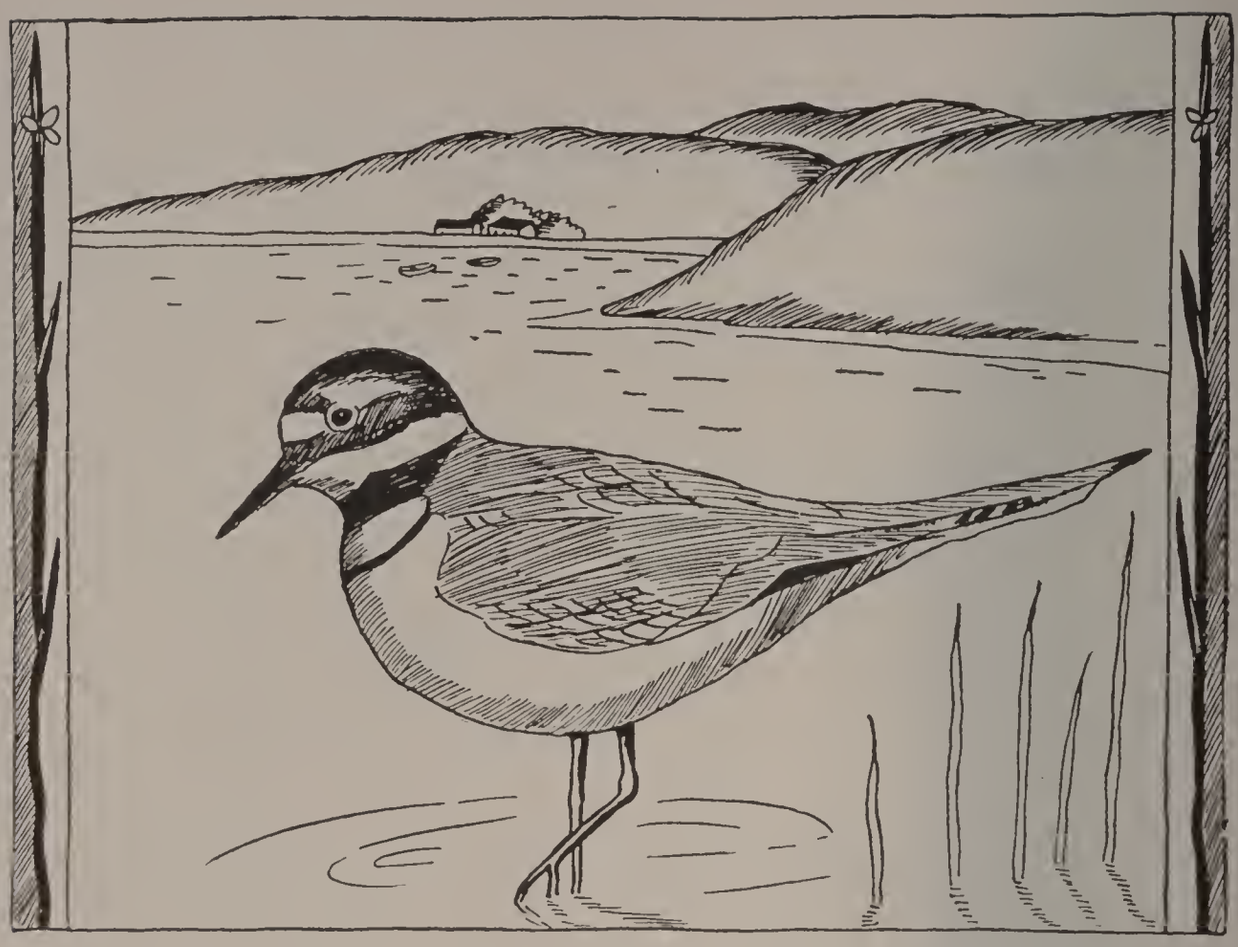
These tanagers winter in South America, coming back to the northern states in May and starting on their southward journey in October. Their food is made up of berries, seeds and insects, which they frequently catch on the wing in true flycatcher style.

These birds build a rather untidy and fragile home in which to rear their babies, but it usually answers the purpose. A frail, saucer-shaped structure is usually built on some horizontal branch of an oak or pine tree, and is made of fibers and sticks. Standing beneath the nest one can look through it and see the sky or branches of the tree overhead, but it seems to be a strong little home and rests securely on its foundation. As soon as the home is made three or four blue-green eggs are laid, and with that off goes Father Tanager in his bright coat. After that he "chip-churrs" by the hour to his little bride, only coming to her long enough to feed her with berries and insects.

Naturally you would think the babies would be dressed in the brightest shades, but not so, for they have to wear dull-colored garments, and later here and there they come to wear a bit of scarlet. But by and by all the boys get just as bright a suit as their

father, while the little girls have to wear the same modest gowns that their mothers do.

The western tanager is another interesting species of this family found in the Rockies to the Pacific coast. Mr. Western Tanager wears a yellow robe with black tail and wings and a crimson head, which gives him a flashing appearance.



THE KILDEER

THERE was once a white boy who was very fond of hunting, but unlike the Indians with whom he often went on the chase, he would not kill wild animals for food alone, but just for fun. Often his Indian companions protested at this cruel sport, telling him that it was not right to take the life of any living thing just for pleasure. But the boy would laugh and call their attention again and again to his clever shooting.

"The Great Spirit will punish him some time," said a chief one day, when the boy had shot a rabbit after enough meat had been obtained for a meal.

One day, after a longer chase than usual, the Indians and the white boy returned with their usual

amount of meat, when a deer went trotting across their trail. The white boy raised his gun and shot, even while the Indians pleaded with him not to kill the animal.

"I killed a deer, I killed a deer," shouted the boy in great glee, as the poor animal bounded forward and fell. In joy the boy ran to the side of the deer, and as he stood there watching the dying animal he was changed into a bird. A moment later the bird flew away sadly crying, "kill-deer, kill-deer," a variation of which it has repeated ever since.

Kildeers are members of the plover family and are found in temperate North America, northward to Newfoundland. They nest throughout their range, and usually winter south of the New England states to Bermuda, the West Indies and Central and South America. The birds migrate in March, and at migration times are very abundant. All plovers can easily be told by the crescent-shaped mass in which they fly, and by their quick movements.

No boy or girl needs to be told how a kildeer looks, for no bird tells its name plainer, and its piercing, oft repeated cry of "kil-dee, kil-dee," is heard wherever one of these birds chooses to stay. He is a noisy restless bird, as active as any healthy boy, and he is a good sentinel, always being ready, night or day to cry out his name. When scared the bird's voice is shrill and high, sounding like the warning note of a bugle, but at other times it is sweet and low, even musical and pleasant to hear.

Nature has given these birds quite a tricolored

frock, though the shades may not be as bright as Jacob's coat is alleged to have been. The birds are about the size of a robin, and Mr. and Mrs. Kildeers' gowns are the same color and trimmed in the same marvelous manner. The birds wear light colored shoes and stockings, red eyelids and a black bill, which are rather noticeable when the birds are feeding, or skipping about on the ground. Their backs are grayish brown with an olive sheen, while the foreheads, a spot behind their eyes, throat, ring around the neck, a patch on the wings, a band across their breast and all underneath are white. Their front, crowns, cheeks, a ring around the neck and a band across the chests are black, with touches of chestnut on their lower back and base of the tail. As if to add to the fancy trimmings nearly all the feathers of the wings and tail are slightly tipped with white. Because of the various colors and stripes this bird is known in some regions as the "plover with a convict's vest."

With a busy company of friends the birds like best to live in broad tracts of grassy land, near water, or in uplands or lowlands and marshy swamps. As the birds feed on insects and worms, they naturally spend most of the time on the ground, and they are very active and nimble on their long legs and three-toed feet. Sometimes these birds will visit a farmyard, but much persecution from hunters has made this naturally gentle bird shy and timid.

The bird deserves the fullest protection as among its food are many harmful grasshoppers, beetles,

crickets and other insects which make up its diet in the day. Because most of the worms come out toward nightfall the birds are especially active at these hours searching for them. The bird may be high up in the air, and seeing some insect or worm that looks especially tempting, dart down and catch it in its short, stout beak. It is claimed that under favorable conditions these birds can see a worm on freshly plowed ground at a distance of three hundred feet down.

Most plovers nest in the Arctic regions, where the cruel deeds of man are not known, but the kildeer nests throughout its range. The birds make their nest on the ground in gravel, sand, or even in the pasture or a plowed field, in a shallow depression. The little home is never lined, and nothing else is done to the hole chosen for a home, but usually a clump of weeds hangs over the place.

Generally four buff-colored eggs, spotted brown, are laid, which are unusually large compared to the bird, and are always laid with the small ends to the center. This is so the eggs will take as little space as possible. The mother sits upon the eggs, even when disturbed, until you can nearly touch her, and then feigning lameness she will start to run away in an opposite direction from the approaching intruder. The young birds are very strong and are able to walk as soon as they are hatched, and it is not long till their plaintive "kil-dee, kildee," joins with their parents' cries.

THE KINGLETS

THE Caribs and Indians of Guiana tell a queer legend of the coming of the kinglets. They believe that God created a wonderful tree from which sprang many things, such as man, birds, beasts and so forth, at the command of a great voice in the sky. Once upon a time this kingly voice commanded that this tree, the silk cotton, be cut down. In sorrow the people took the leaves and twigs and planted them and from them sprang many things, among them the dainty little kinglets.

The kinglets are a family of charming, little, active, restless birds that delight in flitting about rapidly among the twigs and leaves of trees in search of insects. They are not at all shy and are quite as

lively and happy as are wrens and chickadees. In fact the golden-crowned kinglets are so rugged that many of them spend the winters in the most severe states in this country. This species is found in North America, breeding from the northern part of this country, northward, and farther south in the mountain regions. It is seldom that they fly southward for the winter, so the children living in the southern states and countries are not acquainted with this gay little messenger.

Mr. Golden-crowned Kinglet wears an orange crown tinged with yellow and trimmed with black, while the rest of his suit is an olive-green. Mrs. Golden-crowned Kinglet wears a more yellowish-head dress that is not so gaudy as her husband's, and the rest of her clothes are less brightly colored. These tiny birds are scarcely any larger than a house wren, and yet they are always busy, and because they eat so many insects are among the most beneficial of birds.

These kinglets are not as good singers as are the ruby-crowned species, and utter only a few weak chirps, chips and thrills. But they make the most beautiful and cunning little home in which a baby ever lived. The home is made of a large ball of soft green moss in which feathers have been interwoven, and this is carefully hung from the tips of small branches in coniferous trees. The inside of this ball is carefully hollowed out for a nursery and six to nine creamy white eggs, spotted and dotted with brown, are laid. Tiny as the nests are they yet seem

large for so small a bird, being a little over four inches across, but there must be room for the new babies.

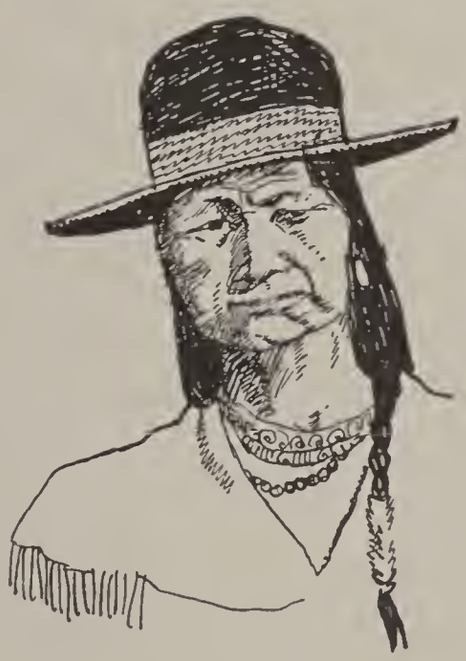
The ruby-crowned kinglets are about a fourth of an inch larger than the golden-crowned birds, and the males have a red patch on the top of their shapely little heads, which, however, is only visible when the birds are angry or excited. Kinglets are fierce little fighters, and it is only in battle that we are convinced they deserve the name given to them.

Like the other kinglets the ruby-crowned species flit about among the pine trees, but unlike them they are not fond of cold weather, so they spend their winters in Central America and Mexico. These birds are most common in their migrations in October and April, and it is on their return northward that they fill the air with their rich, lyrical song.

These tiny creatures have surprisingly loud voices, and their clear, sweet warble is strong and varied. It is as musical and full of exuberance as the song of the wren is, and these little creatures are just as fond of lifting and flitting their wings in a coquettish way, as the wren is of jerking his saucy little tail. Surprisingly enough the kinglet's call is a harsh grating chatter, and it is startling to hear the birds utter it after finishing a melodious song.

Ruby-crowned kinglets are found in North America, breeding northward from the northern United States, and farther south in the mountains. Their nesting habits are the same as those of the golden-crowned species.

Over three-fourths of the kinglets' food is made up of wasps, beetles, flies and other little insects. Most of the animal food that they consume is very small, but of a harmful character, so even if the birds are tiny they are real helpers. Their vegetable food consists of the seeds of poison ivy and poison oak, weed seeds, and a few small fruits, elderberries being among their favorite dish.



SCISSORS-TAIL FLYCATCHER

THE Cherokee Indians tell their children a legend of how the scissors-tail flycatcher was created from a redhorse fish, a member of the sucker family. The fish has an elongated, compressed body and large eyes, also a long tail as has the flycatcher, and salmon-pink sides, from which the Indians believe that these birds got their pink feathers beneath their wings.

The Pawnee Indians also tell legends in connection with the coming of this pretty bird, and looked upon it with reverence and awe, believing that it was a sacred spirit sent to earth by the Great Father. While the Mexican Indians, believing that the birds ate the brains of other birds, thought

they were wise and therefore were filled with various superstitions when the little creatures came into camp.

These charming little birds belong to a large family of songless perching birds containing about four hundred species. The flycatchers are most abundant in the United States. The scissors-tail flycatcher breeds from Texas, northward to Kansas, and winters south of the United States to Costa Rica. But everywhere the little bird is greeted with affection, though the boys and girls living in Texas and southwestern states are probably better acquainted with these birds than folk living elsewhere.

In these states the flycatcher is frequently mentioned as the "Texas Bird of Paradise," not so much for the brilliancy of its plumage as for its attractive appearance. It is the most graceful of the flycatcher family, and probably of all perching birds, having the excellent, courtly manners of the most polished ballroom guest. Strangely enough the kingbird, wood pewee, crested flycatcher and Arcadian flycatcher belong to this same family, but the flycatcher found in the Old World belongs to another family.

If you are not familiar with this bird you probably wonder why it was given such a quaint, odd name, but if you have once seen the bird's long scissor-like tail you will cease to be puzzled. In the adults the head and body are nearly white, while the quills of the tail and wings are a dark gray shading into reddish-brown, with outer feathers of white. Under-

neath the wings are patches of salmon-pink, shaped oddly enough and truly resembling the scales of fish. These bright bits can only be seen when the bird is in flight. There is little or no difference in the frocks that Mr. and Mrs. Scissors-tail wear, but the females, as in almost all tribes of birds, are smaller than the males. The babies wear a garb of soft, downy pearl, which changes as they grow older into the colors of their parents.

Scissors-tail flycatchers are rather solitary, sedentary birds and are seldom found in flocks. They usually travel in pairs, for after being mated they are devoted lovers and homemakers, but sometimes the birds do travel in flocks. A flock of them is a wonderful sight, for few birds have such a marvelous flight. From some lofty perch on a telegraph wire or the limbs of a tree they dart out into the air, floating apparently without the least effort, and opening and closing their pretty wings and tail in joyous abandon.

The birds are usually found in the open country or in the borders of woodlands where the most insects are found. They scarcely ever touch the ground, for their long tails make walking awkward, but in flight they are surpassed by few birds in grace.

All flycatchers can be known by the way they catch their food, and one can often see the birds sitting quietly on some perch, appearing to be half asleep and dreaming joyous dreams, when off they dart. Click, click goes their broad bill, as the insects

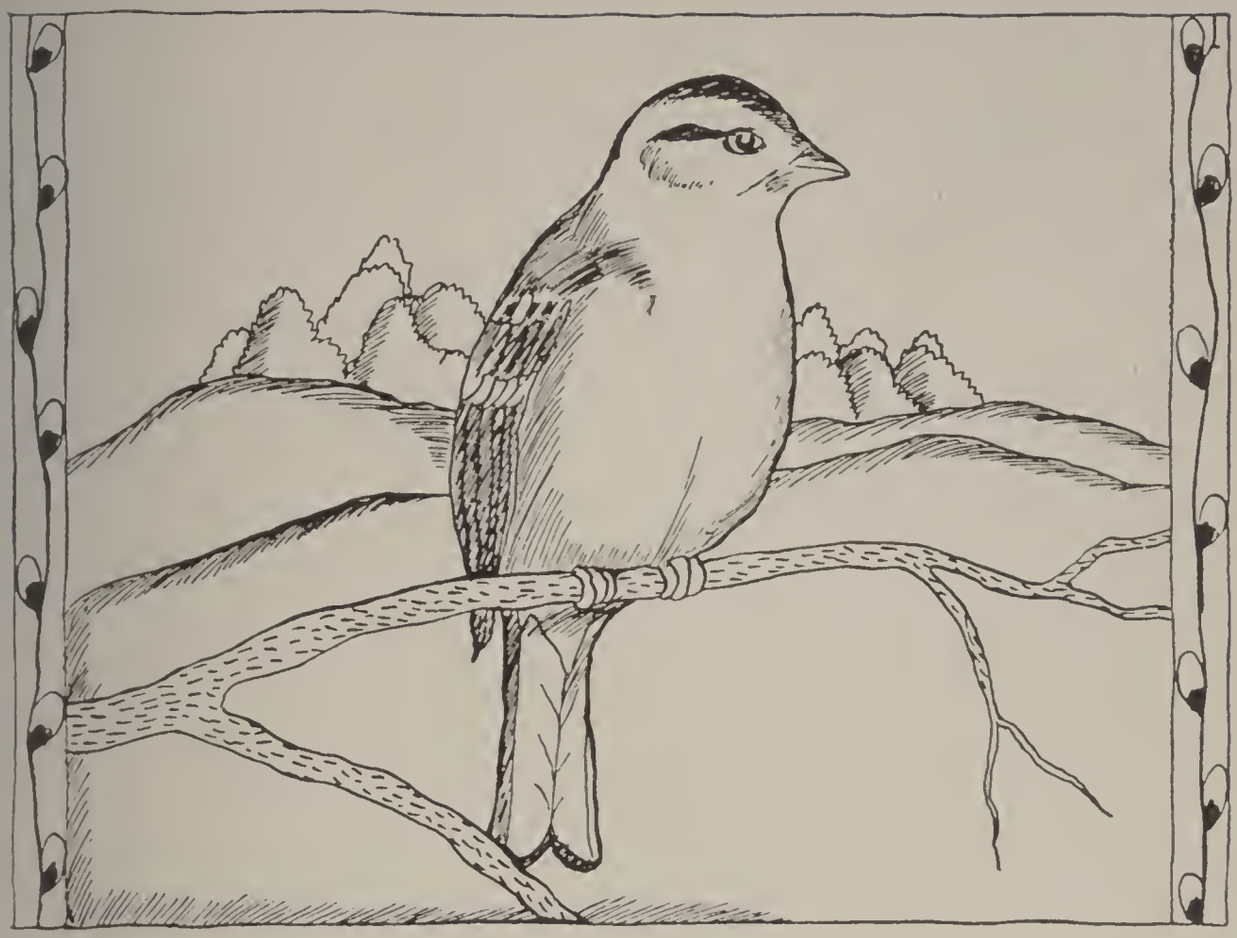
are caught in the air, and now and then the long scissor-like tail is opened and shut. Then a short fluttering ensues and another dive is made. Often fifty or more such marvelous looping flights are made, and as many insects caught and devoured. Most of the bird's diet, as its name suggests, is made up of insects, of which grasshoppers, wasps, bees and ants make the larger part. But the birds eat a small amount of seed and fruit.

The flycatcher family is not noted for its beautiful singing, though one would rather think that birds so closely associated with tropical gorgeousness would possess a beautiful voice. The little song of the scissors-tail is shrill and fine, but full of buoyant enthusiasm that really holds innumerable thrills. Some think that the bird calls "tzip, tzip," a note similiar to that of the kingbird, while to others it sounds more like "hip-see-dee, hip-se-dee." Probably others would interpret it in different sounds, for it is a peculiar fact that many bird notes and songs do not sound the same to different people. Then the same bird often has various notes, especially at different times of the year, and often even the male and female in the same species have different notes. Usually the babies have another way of expressing themselves, especially when demanding food.

These flycatchers are not very particular about what kind of building material they use in constructing their little home, for all kinds of trash are used. Grass, paper, twigs, rags, strings, anything is

gathered up and placed in any kind of tree or bush and at any height. The birds seem to care little about how their home looks, and probably like some people believe the sooner it is made the better, for little care and time is spent in making the nest.

Somehow or other the little home usually clings together until it is no longer needed, but alas it seldom remains to be used by other birds, as do some nests that are made more carefully. Four to five creamy white eggs, spotted with brown, are laid. Few birds seem as proud of their children as are these parents, and few babies receive more affection and tender care. The youngsters are rather voracious eaters, and are forever demanding food, always ready at the edge of the nest when they see their parents coming. There follows a lively skirmish when there are more than two babies waiting for food. The tots grow rapidly and soon the little wings and tails grow long enough to carry the light bodies sailing through the air.



THE TREE SPARROW

IN the beginning the Great Spirit first gave the red men the trees and flowers. The Indians learned to love these very much, and for hours at a time would lie in the shade of the trees, or near a bunch of flowers, and listen to the leaves whisper. The leaves told them many strange tales, and one day the maple tree whispered to the chief of the tribe that the bad Frost Spirit would soon come and take all the flowers and leaves away. When the chief told his people they were very sad, and wondered how it would be possible to live through all the long days of winter without the dancing leaves.

One day, when he could bear the thought no longer, the strong chief asked the Great Spirit to send

something to sing to them through the winter instead of the leaves. And because the chief was a good man, the Great Spirit listened to his plea, and one morning when the Indians awoke they heard a strange commotion around the maple trees. With bows and arrows they hurried down to the group of maples, under which they had dreamed all summer. They were startled to find that the golden-yellow and red maple leaves were turning brown and drifting to the ground. But they were still more astonished to find that as soon as the leaves touched the ground they were transformed into little grayish-brown creatures. And this is the story they tell of the birth of the friendly tree sparrow.

Tree sparrows are residents of the Arctic regions, passing their winters in the northern half of the United States, appearing in this country in October. They can often be seen hopping about in the fields and gardens in the winter months. These are one of the most common sparrows, and are found in abundance in North America, east of the Plains, breeding in Labrador and Hudson Bay. The western tree sparrow is a sub-species, being paler in color, and found west of the Plains to the Pacific.

The tree sparrows bear a strong resemblance to our familiar chipping sparrows, but are larger and have other characteristic markings. They are not quite as large as the common English sparrow, being six and a fourth inches in length, nor are they as noisy.

These birds are clothed in the usual drab colors

worn by sparrows, but may easily be distinguished by a blackish-brown spot in the middle of their breast, and their reddish-brown crown. There is no black about the head, and the back and wings are mostly a soft reddish-brown. The parti-colored bill is rather conspicuous, the upper half being black, the lower yellow and finished with a black tip. Just these tiny touches of color give the bird a bright appearance, especially in winter when the ground is covered with snow.

No bird, not even the cheerful chickadees, has a more social nature and more hospitable ways than do the tree sparrows. No matter how frugal is the table spread for them, nor how hungry they are, they will always welcome other winter birds to their feeding grounds, and share with them the choicest seeds. They seem never to quarrel among themselves, or with other birds, and a flock is usually seen together.

There are few more useful birds than these little creatures, for in winter their diet is composed entirely of weed seeds, most of which are destructive. It is said that each sparrow will eat at least a fourth of an ounce a day, so in this way they are of great benefit. Professor Beal of the Department of Agriculture estimates that tree sparrows in Iowa alone destroy eight hundred and seventy-five tons of obnoxious weed seeds every winter.

The little home is usually built on the ground, or at a low elevation in a bush. Several pale bluish-green eggs, with brown specks, are laid, and the

mother looks after them carefully. The baby sparrows are rather odd looking little creatures, and are forever hungry. The parents seem to be very happy and proud of their little family, and when they take them out for their first short flight no bird parents seem prouder. The young birds grow rapidly, and it is not long till they are as large as their parents, but it takes some time before they have enough strength to endure long journeys.

Mr. Chapman, a bird student, likens their cheerful, soft, jingling notes to various elements of winter, and in comparing them with frost used these words, "sparkling frost crystals turned to music." This gives but a faint idea of the beautiful thrill one has on hearing the soft, musical notes in winter. Their song is strong, sweet and musical, ending in a low, glad warble, that makes one feel the bird is happy just to be alive. Their carol heard some stormy day in winter sounds sweeter and more melodious than the sweetest notes ever uttered by the most famous human singers. Among themselves they converse in a soft, musical chirp, which never sounds rough or quarrelsome.

Cooper was probably referring to this cheerful little air messenger when he wrote:

Ah, may I be as cheerful
As yonder winter birds,
Through ills and petty crosses,
With no repining words.

THE SONG SPARROW

THE Indians find it very hard to imagine that there ever was a time when there was no joyful, vivacious song sparrows in the world, and yet at the very beginning of things there were no birds at all. Then one after another of the species of birds were created in one way or another. One day the Great Spirit came to a large heap of chips which had been hewn from posts, and he wondered how he could make these bits of wood of any use. For a long time he pondered about the chips which had been hewn from the posts and then decided that they could be made to serve the greatest use by being turned into birds. So He changed them into the happy song sparrows we love so much.

With the exception of the English sparrow the song sparrow probably has the widest distribution of all this large family of drab-colored birds. They are quite hardy little creatures and often spend their winters in the northern states, but they usually migrate as far south as the southern part of Illinois and on to the Gulf States. They are among the first of the spring birds to come back to their northern homes, and usually come back in March.

Song sparrows are found throughout eastern North America and north to Canada and fly about nearly everywhere in bushes, vines, hedges and even around the homes in large cities. When grown the birds measure about six and one-fourth inches in length and few birds rival them in musical ecstasy. Their whole bodies seem to throb to the sweetness of their song, which is very pleasing and melodious, sounding much like that of a canary. From early morning till late at night the birds seem to be singing their varied carols. Unlike the song of so many birds, who have only a note or two in their chorus, the song sparrows' carols never grow monotonous.

Clothed as are all members of the sparrow family in clay-colored garments, these birds have three long gray bands across the tops of their brown heads, and brown stripes on each side of their throats. Their brownish-gray backs are streaked with red. Underneath they are gray, shading to a white, streaked with brown. The most distinguishing mark of this sparrow is the blackish lines around the throat which look like a tiny collar.

These sparrows build neat little attractive homes of grass, either on the ground or low in bushes. They lay three to five bluish-white eggs, thickly spotted with brown. Mrs. Song Sparrow makes a very attentive mother and keeps her little home snug and clean. She teaches her babies the very best manners and they are always quiet, well-behaved, charming youngsters of which the parents are very proud.

Henry Van Dyke, a noted writer, has eulogized this little feathered Caruso in a poem about the bird:

He does not wear a Joseph's coat
Of many colors smart and gay;
His suit is Quaker brown and gray,
With darker patches at the throat.
And yet of all the well-dressed throng
No one can sing so brave a song.
It makes the pride of looks appear
A vain and foolish thing to hear
His "Sweet-sweet-sweet-very merry cheer."

A lofty place he does not love,
But sits by choice, and well at ease,
In hedges and in little trees
That stretch their slender arms above
The meadow brook, and there he sings
Till all the world with pleasure rings;
And so he tells in every ear
That lowly homes to heaven are near
In "Sweet-sweet-sweet-very merry cheer."

THE UPLAND PLOVER

THERE is an old, old legend that is told of the upland plover which is as interesting as it is pathetic. There was a young Indian boy who liked to wander far in search of wild animals and birds, but he was not yet a warrior, not having undergone the great fast that each of the boys must pass through before he is considered fit to go hunting.

Again and again his mother and father warned the young lad not to go so far from the wigwam, telling him that some day they feared he would be lost. But the boy was very brave and his spirit was throbbing with adventure, and just to go along with the other warriors held no thrill for him. He longed for something more exciting and venturesome, and

laughed at the idea that he could not endure the things that boys a few years older than he had passed through.

"Just because I haven't fasted is no sign I am not a great warrior," he boasted one day to his mother as he began to get ready to go on a long chase. All his mother's pleading did not touch the boy's heart and he left her crying at the flap of the wigwam with a promise that he would return soon.

But the day passed and still another and another and he did not come, and the whole tribe became anxious and started to search for him. A week passed by and nothing was heard from the boy but still they kept looking for him, and on the tenth day they found the boy's blanket beneath a tree. Close-by they saw a lovely dove-like bird eating insects. "I am the soul of Rantou, the lost boy," said the bird. "The Great Spirit has changed me into a bird that I may comfort his broken-hearted mother and father, his sisters and brothers and his people. He disobeyed once too often and the Great Spirit has seen fit to punish him." Then the bird flew away.

The upland plovers are members of a very large family of birds that are found in almost every part of the world. This bird breeds as far north as the Yukon Valley and southward to Maine, as far down as the Potomac Valley and Oklahoma, and westward to the foot of the Sierra Nevadas. Its winters are spent in South America on the broad pampas of the Argentine, where it can find plenty of animal

food. Thus in its migrations it travels almost the length of the two Americas, and it is truly a wonderful bird in flight.

These birds are really a species of sandpipers, but have become so widely known as plovers that even the greatest of bird students now class them as such. The birds do not have the short neck and legs and the short pigeon-like bill of the true plover, having a more slenderly built body. They also have four toes instead of the three toes that real plovers have, but still they resemble the family of birds in some of their characteristics and habits.

In various localities the bird is known as grass, cornfield, plain, field, highland, and gray plover from its habits or color. In the west it is known as prairie pigeon, prairie snipe, meadow plover, and whistling plover, and it may be by any of these names that boys and girls living in these states are familiar with these shy, retiring birds.

Years ago upland plovers were found throughout their range in great abundance, and it was considered a bird of good omen, being both harmless and useful, but alas, because of the greed of man, this bird has become almost extinct. It is thought that when the first white men came to this country this wild little creature was very rare in the eastern states because of the vast woods along the Atlantic shore—as it usually lives in prairie regions.

As the land was cleared the birds became abundant, but with the advance of market-hunting they decreased rapidly. In 1880, when pigeons began to

fail for the market, barrels and barrels of these birds were killed and sent to the cities. Since then laws have been passed in the hope of saving this beautiful bird, which deserves the fullest protection.

Upland plovers have several curious habits. Though so timid about anyone approaching on foot the birds do not fear anyone in a vehicle or on horseback. When startled, they have a very interesting habit of running quickly a short distance, then stopping with a quick jerk and looking about them in all directions as if to try to find out what the trouble is.

Ninety-seven per cent of the plover's diet consists of animal food, of which about half is grasshoppers, the bird being a gourmand for these pests. Crickets, locusts, weevils of nearly all kinds, billbugs and other insects are also eaten. It is thought that even when they were abundant the birds were harmless, and have always consumed some of the farmers' worst enemies. In the spring their animal diet is varied a little by a few nips at some tender vegetables.

These birds are about twelve inches in length, and are the only plain colored shorebirds found east of the plains, inhabiting dry fields and hillsides. This bird utters several different cries, that can scarcely be characterized as songs, but late in May they have a mournful, mellow whistle that sounds quite melodious. Professor Lyndes Jones says that its common rolling call is not unlike the cry of a "tree-frog," of a different and unmistakable quality

and caliber. Its common call note sounds something like "quitty-quit, quitty-quit," while the alarm note is a peculiar sharp call.

Upland plovers are not skillful nest builders and they choose a little grass-lined hollow at the root of a small bush for their home. Four large pale gray eggs, spotted with various colors, are laid, and Mrs. Upland Plover guards them carefully. She will often sit on the eggs until she is almost stepped upon, while her husband pleads with her to come away. The young birds hatch out in June and are able to run about at once, though their legs seem very long and awkward.

Edward Howe Forbush, a noted ornithologist, says about the babies in his Audubon leaflet, "Through the early summer they dwell in the grassland in security, feeding largely on insects and wild strawberries. Their anxious parents lead them about and sound the alarm at the approach of an enemy, when the little ones scatter, squat and hide. In July, when the hay is cut, they are well able to look out for themselves, although they have not yet learned fully to fear the sportsman."

PRAIRIE CHICKENS

ACCORDING to an old Indian legend, there was once a mother chicken who had a flock of the most cunning and active little chickens. They were probably of various colors and rather wild, for they belonged to a family living on the edge of a great prairie. For a time the mother hen was kept locked up in a coop so she would not wander so far away in the long grass with her babies. Because she understood the dangers of the prairie to her brood of small youngsters, she was contented, but as the children grew older they wanted to go farther and farther away. Over and over again the mother pleaded with the most daring and adventurous of her children not to go far away from her, telling

them again and again of the many things that might befall them in the acres of grass stretching beside them.

One day Little Pinshot, as the reddish brown chicken was called, eluded his mother's watchful attentions and wriggled out underneath the pen and started running as fast as he could. "I will see the world," he kept saying to himself, going farther and farther into the long grass that seemed like giant trees to the tiny chicken. Little Pinshot had not gone very far before he felt something crawling close to his yellow feet, and looking down he saw a long snake creeping near to him, and he started to peep. He was so frightened that he turned around and started to run as hard as he could, his only thought being that he wanted to get safely back to his mother.

After he had run a much longer way than it seemed he had come, he still did not see the pen from which he had escaped, and this scared him even worse, besides just then a prairie dog popped out of his hole and barked at him. Little Pinshot was so frightened that he could not even cry and he was so tired he couldn't go any farther, and the little prairie dog came nearer and nearer. Then all at once Little Pinshot felt that he could fly and that he was growing larger and larger, for a good fairy had seen the trouble that he was in and had changed him into a prairie chicken that he might better escape enemies living on the ground.

Like the passenger or wild pigeon the prairie

chickens were once abundant, but ruthless killing has made them almost extinct. About thirty years ago, about two dozen prairie chickens used to make their home here on our farm in northern Illinois, but now not a one is left, though none of us ever killed any of them. What prairie chickens are left are found in the Mississippi Valley, southward to Louisiana and Texas, eastward to Kentucky and Indiana and northward to the Dakotas and Manitoba. These birds are permanent residents in most parts of their range, migrating only in the northern limits, or when the food that they prefer is not available. With the introduction of steam plows and railroads, the birds flee, for they are truly birds of the boundless prairies.

Prairie chickens are also known as pinnated grouse and prairie hens, as they are members of the grouse family. The birds measure from sixteen to eighteen inches in length and as in most families of birds the females are smaller than the males, have different colored markings and lack the loose sacs that the males have on each side of their cheeks. Mr. Prairie Chicken can inflate these yellow sacs at will, and when puffed out they look like two huge oranges on each side of his face, an antic which he delights in when courting.

The upper parts of the birds are brown barred with black, chestnut, ochre and white. The wings are mostly a whitish-red; on the side of the neck are tufts made up of ten or more narrow stiff feathers rounded at the end, which may be erected above

the head. The rounded white-tipped tail is a dusky brown, while the chin and throat are white and the breast and farther underneath are whitish, evenly barred with black. The legs are scantily feathered in front only, giving them rather a queer appearance.

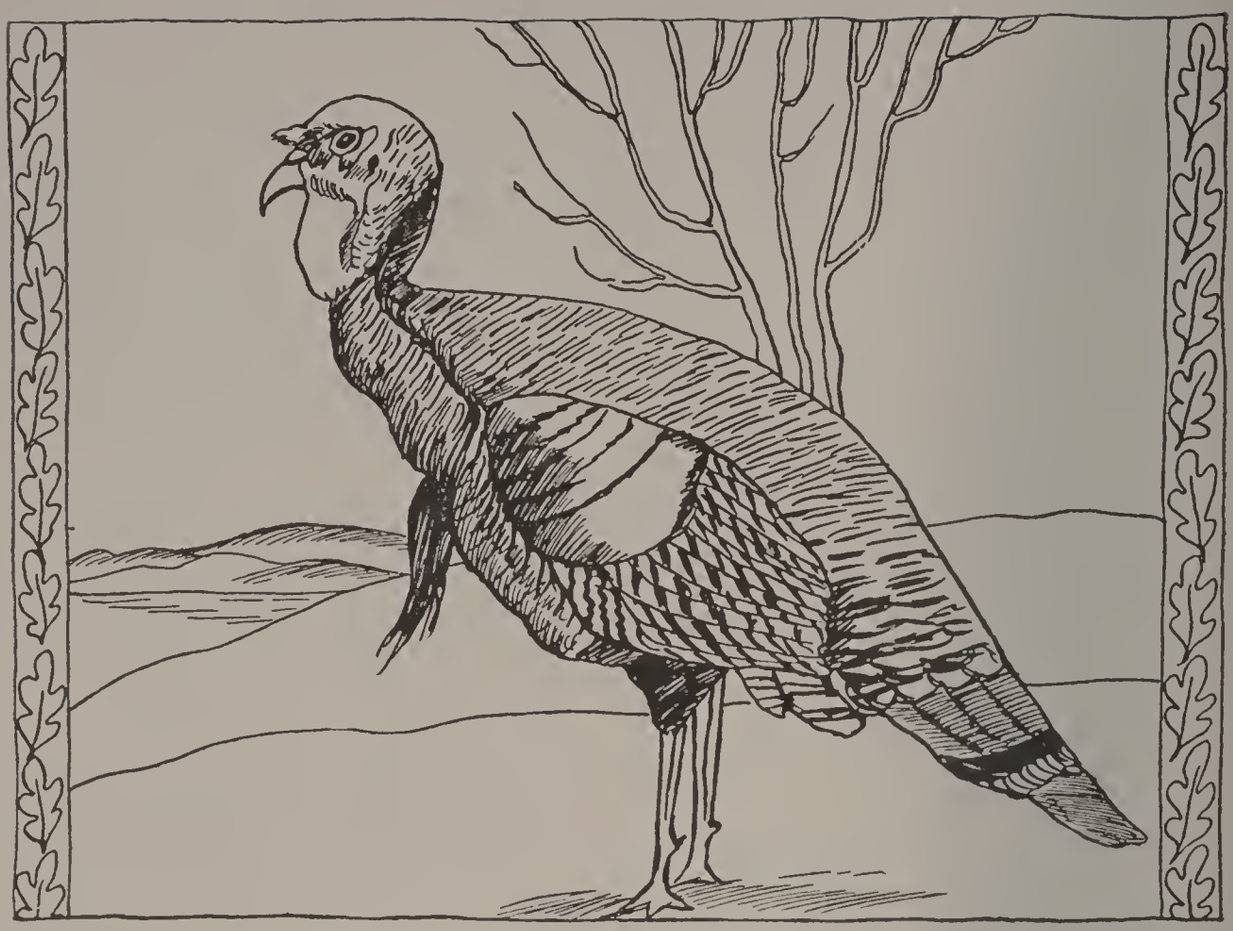
These birds are strong fliers and will fly a long distance. As Edgar S. Jones says: "His peculiar manner of flying also attracts attention. As he leaves the ground the wings produce a sort of whirring sound not produced by birds of any other family. After arising in the air, he flaps the wings for a considerable distance." They will not and can not live in certain places any more than an Indian used to roaming over the boundless prairies can stand to be shut up in a crowded city. So it is getting harder and harder for these shy, gentle-natured birds to find a suitable place to live.

Few birds have finer manners and more coquettish ways than Mr. Prairie Chicken when he woos his bride. The booming noise associated with these birds is made by the male as the wind is permitted to go out of the air sacs on his cheeks. He also drums with his wings, and all his queer antics will attract other males, and by and by a real scrap ensues. At other times their cry is a hollow sound, and when alarmed the whole flock will fly up pitifully crying, "Cluk-cluk-cluk-cluk."

The nest is a very rude affair made in a clump of thick grass, usually in a dry place, but sometimes in marshy ground where it is inundated in a wet

season. Sometimes a slight hole or depression in the ground is chosen for a nesting site, which is sparsely lined with grasses and feathers plucked from the mother's body. Ten to twenty creamy-pale brown eggs are laid. They are spotted regularly with reddish-brown dots, and usually each egg in a clutch is spotted differently.

As soon as the nesting season begins Mr. Prairie Chicken deserts his wife, and returns when the incubating period is over and the babies are several weeks old. It takes from twenty-three to twenty-eight days for the eggs to hatch, but thousands of eggs and young are destroyed by machinery, cattle and other animals passing over the nests. So near is the color of the mother bird to that of her surroundings that one may almost step on her before seeing her. Like all the birds belonging to this family a prairie chicken makes an ideal and attentive mother, and teaches her children to be marvelously cunning in hiding in the grass. As the fall season approaches the members of the various families unite in order to spend the winter together.



WILD TURKEYS

IT would be a strange and interesting sight to see a flock of wild turkeys in those places where once they were so abundant. Great flocks of these game birds were once found as far north as Maine, Ontario and the Dakotas, but in most of these regions they are now extinct, and they are found only in flocks in this country on the islands off the southern coast of Georgia and in the southwestern states.

It is commonly believed that our domesticated turkeys are descendants of the wild turkeys that our Pilgrim ancestors found in this country, and with which they celebrated their first Thanksgiving. This, however, is erroneous, for the turkeys of our barnyard descended from the wild turkeys found in

South America. Because it was at first believed that turkeys came from the country of Turkey they were so called.

Before the onward rush of civilization gave the wild turkeys cause to be scared they were not very wild, but much persecution has made them very wary and cunning and unapproachable in the few places where they are still found in settled country. These same conditions have forced these liberty-loving birds to hunt out the most inaccessible mountains and swampy bottom lands in which to live, not because they prefer these localities but for the reason that they like freedom and the wild sweep of unsettled country as much as the eagle.

In their native haunts wild turkeys congregate in small flocks, usually going out into the open country only for food, which is a habit very similar to that of other wild birds. They are very fond of the softer shelled nuts, which they can break open, as well as of seeds, insects, berries, and other small fruit. They build their crude nests on the ground out of dry leaves. Usually ten to fourteen pale cream-buff, brown speckled eggs are laid, and sometimes two or more hens lay in the same nest, taking turns about sitting on the eggs. Just as soon as the mating season is over the turkey gobblers leave, and pay no more attention to their wives and babies. But even though Mr. Turkey is so heartless he is still very jealous of his wife, who often hides her nest away so that her husband will not destroy the eggs and even the babies.

During the courting season there is no more gallant and attentive lover than Mr. Wild Turkey. Beginning at the break of dawn in spring, without leaving the place where they have roosted, the males begin to utter their shrill, clear love song, which is wholly different from the coarse call of our barnyard turkeys. The females always roost apart until the males have won them as brides, but they give plenty of evidence of hearing the lovers singing to them.

Wild turkeys are the largest of the game birds, and average about four feet in length. Mrs. Turkey is a paler color than her husband, and does not have the bristles on her breast. The head and upper part of Mr. Turkey's neck is naked, while the rest of him is clothed in metallic bronze feathers with copper and green reflections, and all the feathers are tipped black. A long bunch of bristles, resembling a bushy beard, hangs from the middle of the male's breast, whilst his head, bill and legs are red. The feet are spurred, giving them a rather quaint appearance.

The brush turkey is a wild species found in Australia, and is especially interesting because of the way in which it hatches its eggs. The nest is made of grass and other vegetable matter, and is usually built by several pairs of birds, the males helping their wives. The eggs of several families are laid in these nests and are left until hatched by the decay of the vegetable matter. From the very moment that they are hatched the babies have to take care of

themselves, which they do in a remarkable way.

Brush turkeys are smaller than the wild turkeys found in this country, being about the size of a common turkey, and like them have wattles on the head and neck. About twelve species belong to this family of birds, which are sometimes called *mound birds*. They are hunted for their flesh.

A rather interesting story is told about the discovery of the wild turkey. This story, of Greek origin, became interwoven with Indian legends and with changed names, is told by Indians as one of their legends.

Ancient history tells about a king of Macedonia named Meleager, who it appears, seemed to have been very fond of travel, and in one of his journeys he met the regal wild turkey and introduced it into Europe. The bird was named in honor of the king, and to this very day the scientifical name of the turkey is *meleagrides*. In ancient literature we find allusions made to the wild turkey under its scientific name, and Sophocles wrote a play, that later was lost, in which there was a chorus about the meleagrides. This play was written to celebrate the death of King Meleager.

Tradition has it then that for a time all sight of the wild turkey was lost, and it does not seem to have been heard of again until the Romans used it for food. But as wild turkeys do not thrive under domestic conditions the birds seem to have died out and were not heard of again in Europe till the sixteenth century.

When next heard of it is said that a young man in the French army brought wild turkeys from India into France and Germany. Once again they seemed to have become extinct, and wild turkeys seem not to have been known again till people began coming to America.

THE RED-TAILED HAWK

IN America the hawks play quite an important part in the folklore and legends of the Indians, and this is the tale that they tell about the red-tailed hawk. Once there was a very bad Indian, who never liked to do a kind deed or say a pleasant word, and one day an ugly old witch ran after him because he was teasing her. The Indian started to run as fast as he could, but the witch could run faster and gained on him, and the harder the Indian ran the faster the witch ran. She had almost reached him when the Indian began to cry for help, and suddenly he felt himself changed into a hawk, and in this new form he escaped from the enraged woman.

As Mrs. Ida Dorman Morris says in *Prairie Far-*

mer: "The hawk is no common bird. Its history runs back to the days of chivalry, to the time when knighthood was in flower, when gallant young knights found the sport of hawking quite to their taste. Back still further yet we may go to find the earliest mention of the hawk, back to the early Egyptians, when the hawk was the symbol of the god Horus, the sun god of Egypt. Dire punishment was meted out to anyone who injured a hawk."

Hawks are very common birds and are found in every country, but each seems to have its own particular hawk, and the sparrow-hawk belongs to America, the whistling-hawk belongs to Africa, the falcon-hawk to Persia and so forth. The red-tailed hawks breed in the United States, Mexico, Costa Rica, Canada and Alaska, and generally winter in the southern part of the United States and south to Guatemala.

Just because some hawks have committed great crimes and are fond of killing poultry and other birds, all hawks have rather a disreputable name, but some of them are among our best friends. One can hardly mention "hawk" to some farmers without their thinking of a gun, but the red-tailed hawk, or *hen-hawk* as it is familiarly called, is one of the most useful of this family. Everyone should learn to distinguish the useful hawks from the bad ones. As Mrs. Morris says: "No intelligent person today would think of killing a robin for a cherry or two," so the good hawks should not be killed for the deeds committed by the other ones.

The red-tailed hawk is one of the best known birds of prey and like all members of the family has a strong, sharply-curved bill, which is fitted for tearing food to pieces. Its claws or talons are also constructed like those of other hawks, and its legs are so jointed that when they bend they will close tightly, thus holding their food in a tight grip, till the leg is straightened. In this way all hawks obtain a tight hold on their prey. These birds are among the largest of the hawks, and are about two feet in length, Mrs. Red-Tail being larger than her husband. In nearly all families of hawks the females are larger than the males, and upon the females usually devolves the duty of protecting the home and babies. The grown red-tailed hawks are of a grayish color with reddish-brown tails, hence their names. They like best to live in a low, wet, wooded place near open meadows, where they can soar about searching for food.

Most hawks, like eagles and owls, when they once choose a mate remain mated for life. No birds are more devoted lovers or parents than hawks. But the birds are rather poor home-makers, though they build rough nests high up in some tree. From two to six white eggs are laid, which usually hatch in about four weeks. The babies are covered with down and are very helpless for a while; by and by they get feathers, which are usually darker than their parents' and are striped and spotted beneath.

These birds, like their relatives, have a habit of sitting on some prominent limb or pole out in the

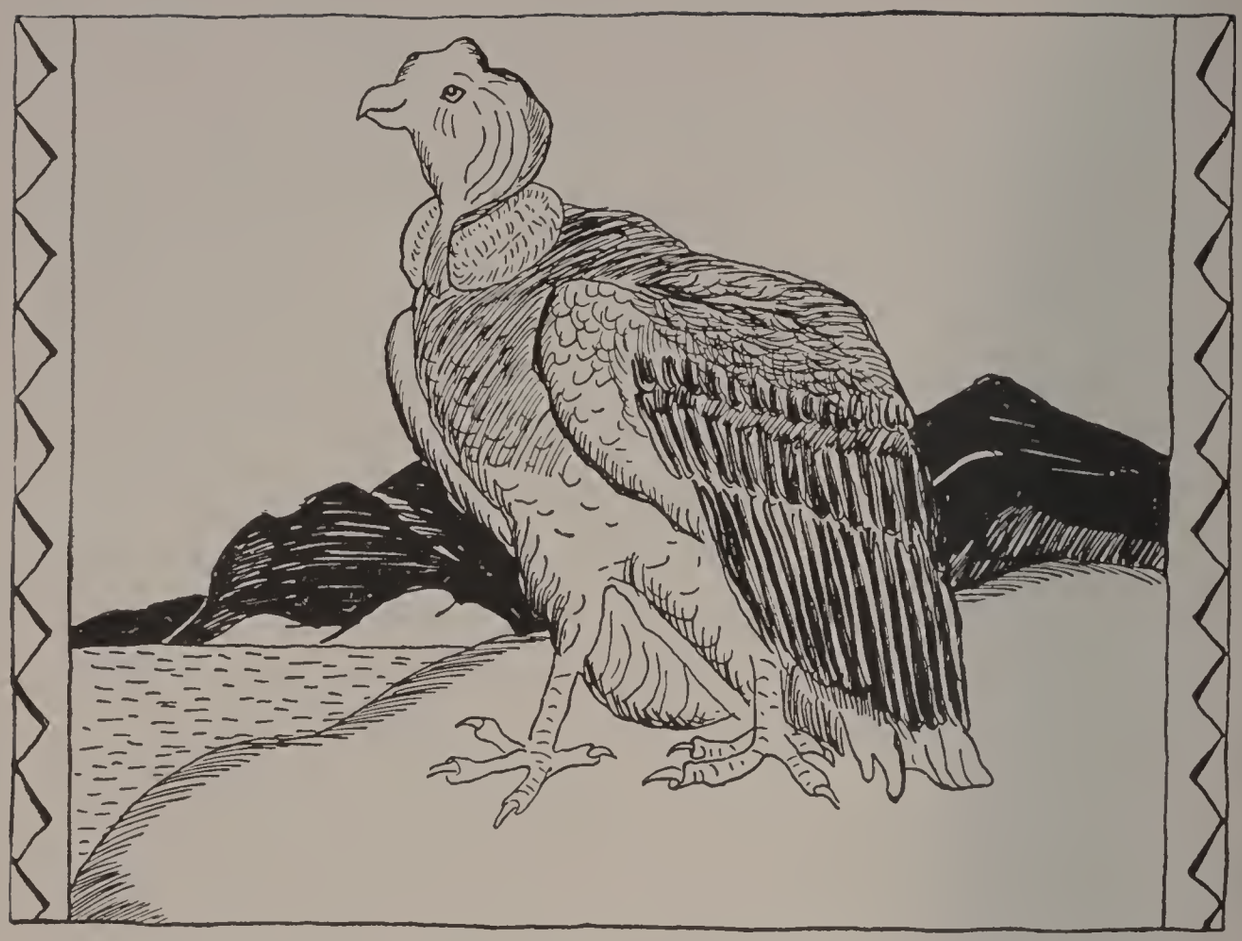
open, or flying about with outspread wings over some field.

Red-tailed hawks feed on a variety of food including small mammals of a destructive character, snakes, frogs, insects, crawfish, centipedes and even carrion. It may be that sometimes when food is scarce this hawk will kill a few chickens or birds, but notwithstanding this it deserves the fullest protection. Only a very few of the hawks, such as the Cooper's hawk, goshawk, sharp-skinned hawk or blue darter, pigeon hawk, and the duck hawk or true falcon, should be branded as criminals.

The sparrow-hawk is the smallest bird in this family, and the handsomest, and is often listed among the hawks that should be killed because of its bad habits. But after a careful survey the United States government says that this little hawk renders good service in destroying noxious insects and rodents and should be encouraged and protected. After all only a few of these little hawks were found to have killed birds, and the good that they do outweighs the bad, thus giving them the right to live.

The falcon, the hawk used so much in hawking, is a strong, powerful bird. But it was the *peregrine falcon,* known in America as the *duck hawk,* that was preferred for this game. Its upper parts are slate colored, while the under parts are cream barred with darker shades, except the upper portion of the breast. These falcons live in wild places, and it was the females that were valued most for the game, because they are so fierce and quick. The game itself

is an amusement of Oriental origin, in which the trained falcons or hawks are sent after other game. After being trained to catch game the birds are taken, hooded and leashed, to the field, where when the game is seen they are unhooded and loosened. Instead of devouring the game that they catch the birds bring it to their master. This was a favorite sport in the Middle Ages, and in recent years several such clubs have started in this country.



THE GRACEFUL CONDOR

CONDORS are the largest birds in the vulture family and the biggest creatures of the air. They are birds of the Andes Mountains, measuring about three feet in length and nine and a half feet from the tips of their oustretched wings, with a tail a foot and two inches in length. Once upon a time a species of condor, even larger than the South American birds, was found along the Pacific coast in the United States.

As a rule members of the vulture family have no feathers on their heads and the upper part of their necks, which enables them to feed more easily on carrion, which is their favorite food. Condors, like all vultures, are birds of prey, depending on their

keen sight and smell for their food, but really relying more upon its sight than smell. Mr. Nuttall says that the condor was named from an Indian word alluding to its supposed sagacious scent.

Large and powerful as is the condor it has never been known to attack man, but it kills small quadrupeds and comes down from its lofty nest to feed upon the decaying flesh of dead animals. It will also attack sick or helpless animals unable to protect themselves, and after gorging itself becomes nearly helpless. In this condition it is easily lassoed, and Indians used to pursue the bird with a lasso or noose and capture it. When thus restrained the giant bird makes extra efforts to get away, and in doing so disgorges itself freely and becomes a fighting demon. Condors also sleep very soundly and so are often lassoed at night.

Condors wear a white waistcoat and a brownish-gray collar, with a silky-down ruff between the bare feathered part of the neck and head, the rest of the plumage being black. The head and neck of Mr. Condor is covered with dull red skin folded in wrinkles, and he has a comb and wattles of the same shade. Mrs. Condor does not have any comb and wattles nor does her garment contain so much white as that of her husband's. It is a remarkable fact that the females of nearly all birds of prey are larger and more powerful than the males.

The condor's legs are short, while its sharp-pointed, stout claws are short and considerably curved. Being adapted for grasping they cannot truly perch

or carry objects when flying. Their strong, curved bills are fitted for tearing food apart, having on the back side toward the end a projection which is like a tooth and is frequently covered with naked membrane called *cere.*

These birds fly high in the air, often at an elevation of twenty thousand feet, and at this height they seem to glide along hour after hour without apparent effort, scarcely seeming to make a motion with their wings. They are always graceful and their flight without the flapping of wings is marvelous, but as the bird descends nearer to the earth it can only continue this motionless flight for a short time.

These strange birds nest high among the cliffs, laying two white eggs, which measure three to four inches long, in a rude nest made of a few sticks. It takes seven weeks for the eggs to incubate, and as it is difficult to reach them they have sold to museums for a hundred dollars each. The babies have no feathers at first, but are covered with whitish frizzled hair which makes them appear to be as large as their parents. The youngsters resemble small owls and are very helpless, remaining in their nests for a year. Not until the children are six years old do they acquire the garments similar to those worn by their parents.

THE GREAT HORNED OWL, KING OF OWLS

THE Cherokee Indians tell a strange legend about the great horned owl. There was once a widow who had only one daughter, and the mother often told the girl, "You must be married and then there will be a man to go hunting."

One day a man came courting the daughter and he asked her, "Will you marry me?"

"I can only marry a man who will work," replied the girl.

"I am just that kind of man," said the man, so the mother said that the couple might be married.

One day the mother gave the man a hoe and told him, "Go and hoe the corn. When breakfast is ready I will call you."

When she went to call him she found that he had hoed only a very small piece of ground, and she wondered what he had been doing. In a nearby thicket she heard some one saying, "Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo." The man did not come back until the evening and the mother asked him where he had been all day.

"Hard at work," he responded, but when the mother said she could not find him when she had come to call him he looked rather startled and replied, "I was out cutting sticks with which to mark the fields."

Early the next morning the man left with the hoe and again the mother went out to call him. But she found the hoe lying in the field and the man sitting in a thicket trying to mock a little owl. That night when the man came home the mother was so angry she drove him from the house and said that he should be changed into a great horned owl.

Horned owls belong to a family made up of about two hundred species of birds ranging in size from the saw-whet owl to those as large as an eagle. As the emblem of wisdom the owl in the mythology of old Greeks was sacred to Athene, the Roman Minerva, goddess of wisdom. With the exception of man this solitary and fearless inhabitant of the woods has few enemies, though even this owl is usually worsted in a battle with weasels, minks and raccoons. This bird is rather bloodthirsty and seems to have few redeeming qualities as it likes to visit the poultry yard and will also destroy song birds.

The great horned owl, also called hoot and cat

owl, is known as *the king of owls* because of its large size. Mr. Great Horned Owl measures from nineteen to twenty-three inches in length, while the females measure from twenty-one to twenty-six inches in length. There are three distinguishing marks that are sufficient to tell this family of owls from any of their relatives. The large ear tufts that this family of birds have help greatly to give them their wise appearance. The feet and legs are covered with feathers which help to protect them from the cold. The other conspicuous mark is that part of the throat and breast are white.

These owls wear a rather handsome garb, the upper parts being a tawny-brown variegated to pale buff and white. Their faces are buff and the wise yellow eyes are firmly set in sockets so that it is necessary for the owls to twist and turn to see in different directions. These owls have hooked beaks and strong, muscular feet well adapted for perching and for grasping prey. Their peculiar flexible hind toe, which is reversible, is a great help to the birds.

Great horned owls are found throughout the greater part of eastern North America and west to the Mississippi River and northward to Labrador. They are permanent residents wherever they range and will feast where other birds would starve. After the birds that have searched for food in the day time are well in bed out comes the great horned owl from his home in the hollow of a tree, and begins the hunt for food to satisfy his enormous appetite.

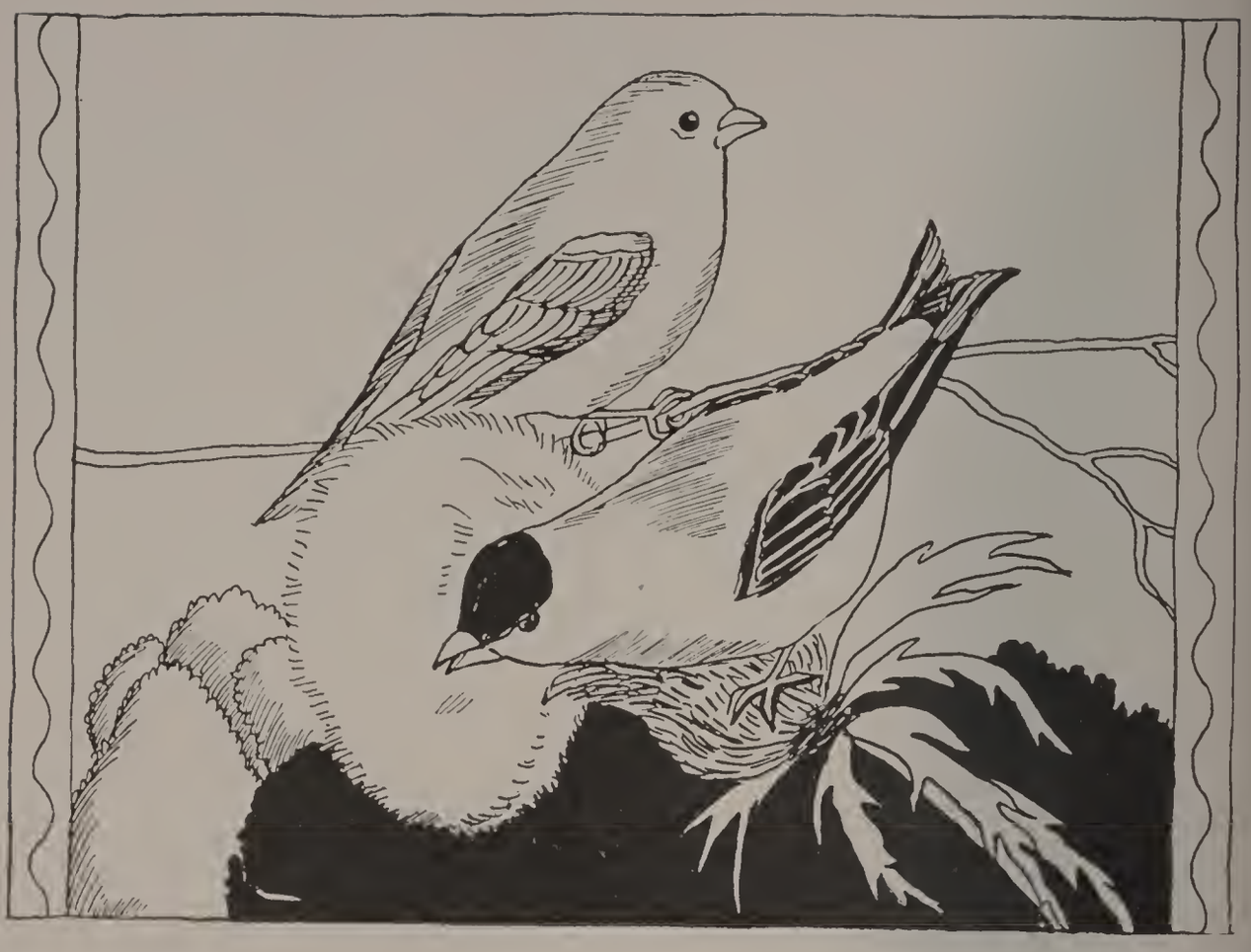
Sometimes when these owls are quite hungry they will begin the search for food early in the afternoon, and especially so during the hatching and brooding season. The birds seldom go out for food on a windy night or when much rain is falling as they depend mostly on their hearing to tell them where to search. Usually there is a large quantity of food around the nest, proving that this bird lives up to the old adage of providing for a "rainy day."

The downy wing feathers of these owls help to make the birds' flight noiseless, so that the victims are not aware of their presence until they feel the owls' sharp talons piercing in their flesh. So alert and quick are these owls that they often swoop down while flying and pick up a rabbit without ever ceasing their flight.

These owls have a more piercing and weird scream than any of the other members of this family. Usually at the end of his day's labors the owl will perch on a limb and give a loud, deep-toned cry which starts out with a scream like that of a woman in great agony and ends with a wild "Who-hoo-hoo, to-whoo-hoo-hoo," which scares every living thing that hears it.

These owls are very unsocial and solitary at all times but at the nesting season which usually begins in February. Mr. Great-Horned Owl is a wonderful wooer, performing all kinds of queer antics and marvelous stunts to please a lady. With a leap and bound he flutters from the earth and skips from tree to tree, going through all kinds of evolutions

and snapping his great bill in every way. As a big enough hole to hold the large bodies of the owls is hard to find they often choose a crow's, hawk's or squirrel's nest in which to lay their two or three dull-white eggs. Being laid so early the intruders are usually gone by the time the rightful owners of the home are ready for them. Mr. Great Horned Owl is very busy after the eggs hatch and he always carries all of his first catches to his mate and children.



THE BEAUTIFUL GOLDFINCH

THE European goldfinch resembles its American cousin in habits, but is one of the gaudiest of the little air children. It ranges throughout Europe, except in the northernmost regions, and a few specimens have been seen in eastern United States. This goldfinch lays four or five white eggs marked with purple. On account of its vivid beauty it is a favorite cage bird in Europe. This is the legend they tell over there.

When the birds were first created, they were all dressed in somber gray. This displeased some of them very much, and they pleaded with the Creator to give them brighter garments. So one day He called all the birds together, and stood them one by

one in a line in front of Him, dipped His brush into the jars of rainbow colors, and gave each a separate and suitable frock. But the goldfinch did not come at the call, being very busy with something else, and so it happened that this little bird did not reach the Master till the painting had been finished. Seeing how pretty the other birds looked in their bright garments, the poor little goldfinch begged to be painted too. The colors were nearly gone, only a smudge remaining in each can, but the Creator said He would try to use the colors that were left, and do the best that He could.

And such a gorgeous coat as He did give him! None of the other birds preening themselves and gazing into the mirror of water, had one so beautiful. His forehead and the base of his bill were painted a bright crimson, his cap and sailor collar black, and his back brown and yellow, his breast white, while there was only enough golden paint left to paint his wings. There was just enough for all but the tips, which were edged with black. There was only enough black paint left to paint the top part of his tail, so the edge was tipped with white.

When the goldfinch saw its beautiful reflection, it broke forth in a glad song. But the Father sighed and shook His head, knowing that the little bird must be punished in some way for the tardiness and vanity, and He told the goldfinch that He feared the gorgeous coat would give him great trouble. So it proved to be, for ever since the European goldfinch has been persecuted by human beings.

The American goldfinch is about an inch smaller than the well-known English sparrow, and the male is quite a handsome bird in summer, though not so gayly dressed as his European relative. He is bright yellow, except on the crown of his head, front, wings, and tail, which are black, and across his wings are whitish bands, with white feathers on the inner side of his tail. He changes into an almost entirely different bird after moulting for winter, his head turning to a yellow-olive and his back to a brownish drab, not unlike his gay little mate. Mrs. Goldfinch always wears a brownish-olive dress above, with a yellowish-white lining.

The American goldfinch is found in North America, from the sunny South to the fur countries of the north and westward to the Rocky Mountains, migrating in May and October. But where food is plentiful, and the winters are not too severe, goldfinches may be frequently found throughout the winter, otherwise they spend their winters in the Southern States. The Western goldfinch is found from the plains to the Pacific Ocean, being found in abundance west of the Rocky Mountains. The cap, wings, and tail are black, and the sides of the head are duller than the Eastern species.

These finches spend their winters roving about in bands over the country. In the summer they prefer to live in swamps or woodlands near water. Their eggs are smaller than those of the Eastern species, and are laid in May and June.

Among themselves the goldfinches are very so-

ciable birds, and usually breed in colonies and travel in flocks. It is not an uncommon sight to see half a dozen or more goldfinches feeding on the same sunflower, thistle, or other flower. How they do seem to like the gay yellow flowers in our garden, and somehow or other, a goldfinch always knows the places where he can find a nodding sunflower. But goldfinches, for some reason, do not seem to respond to the friendliness of people. You can watch them for a few moments, and they will keep on busily at work, but soon they flit silently away.

These little gold-winged creatures build a cozy and compact cup-like nest, closely constructed of grasses, bark, vegetable fiber, and other soft materials woven together. They usually line their tiny cradle with thistledown or moss, so it will be soft and snug for their tiny babies. The home is usually placed in the crotch of a bush or tree, often twenty feet from the ground, and alders and willows near a stream seem to be the favorite trees for nesting. But now and then some goldfinch will build his tiny home on the plant they all love so well, a branching thistle.

Except the cedar waxwings, goldfinches are the last birds to make their nests, seldom laying their four or five unmarked bluish eggs till the last part of July or the first of August. At this season of the year there is always plenty of seed to be found to feed the babies. Seeds make up the greater part of their diet.

The song of the goldfinch is a sweet, canary-like warble, and is often sung as the bird rises swiftly in

the air, descending with graceful undulations in a wavy line through the ether. Often the accents rise on each wave, rippling in sweet trilling notes as the singer comes nearer or goes farther away. The call is a melodious "tcheer, tcheer," usually uttered when in flight.

THE CHICKADEE

WITH its cheering song, "chicka-dee-dee, chicka-dee-dee," here is one of our happiest and most active birds. This loyal little friend does not migrate from its home in the cold countries during winter months. Its song is heard even on stormy and bitter cold days, seemingly because it finds the world full of joy.

The black-capped chickadees are about five inches in length, only a tiny bit larger than the happy wrens, and they are almost as gay and active. Mr. and Mrs. Chickadee wear the same modest, rather somber-colored garments. Their crown and napes are black, hence the name of *black-capped.* Above, their gown is gray with just a hint of brown. A lit-

tle white band runs around the throats of the birds. This widens towards the breast, forming a dainty collar which is quite becoming. The waistcoats are a dirty white color, although there is nothing untidy about a neat little chickadee. The downy wings and tails are gray with a trimming of white.

Anyone who is at all acquainted with the winter birds knows the bright little chickadees. They are among the most popular of our well-known and loved winter visitors. They are found in abundance in eastern North America, north of the Carolinas to Labrador. In the northern states they never migrate. During the warmer months the plump little creatures retire to the coolness of the woods, coming back out in the open with the cooler days of September. In the southern states they migrate in late September and May. None of the species take long journeys. When they do travel they go in great flocks, for they are very sociable little creatures. Few of our birds are less shy or more friendly. They are among the most frequent visitors to feeding boxes, and will become so tame that they will readily eat from one's hand. It is very interesting to watch them from a window in the winter. When eating they will stop to sing one of their gay little carols, as if in thankfulness for the food.

It is very easy to know this little air messenger from its name alone as it is repeated again and again in a silvery, tinkling voice. How often a heart is lightened on a cold, blustering day by a cheerful "Chicka-dee-dee, chicka-dee-dee." No bird, except

the wren, is more cheerful, more exultant because it is living. The chickadee can be coaxed almost any place by a good mimic. During the mating season the bird chants a thrilling "phe-be, phe-be," probably an endearing name in bird language.

These birds seek a deserted woodpecker's hole in which to build their homes. If that can not be found they make a new nursery in a decayed limb, a very hard task for the small carpenters. These holes are lined with wool, ferns, bits of bark, moss, hair, and anything soft and warm. Here are laid five to eight white eggs, sparingly spotted with brownish-red. The little babies are quite as happy and contented as their parents and it is not long till they, too, learn to sing as freely as their older sisters and brothers.

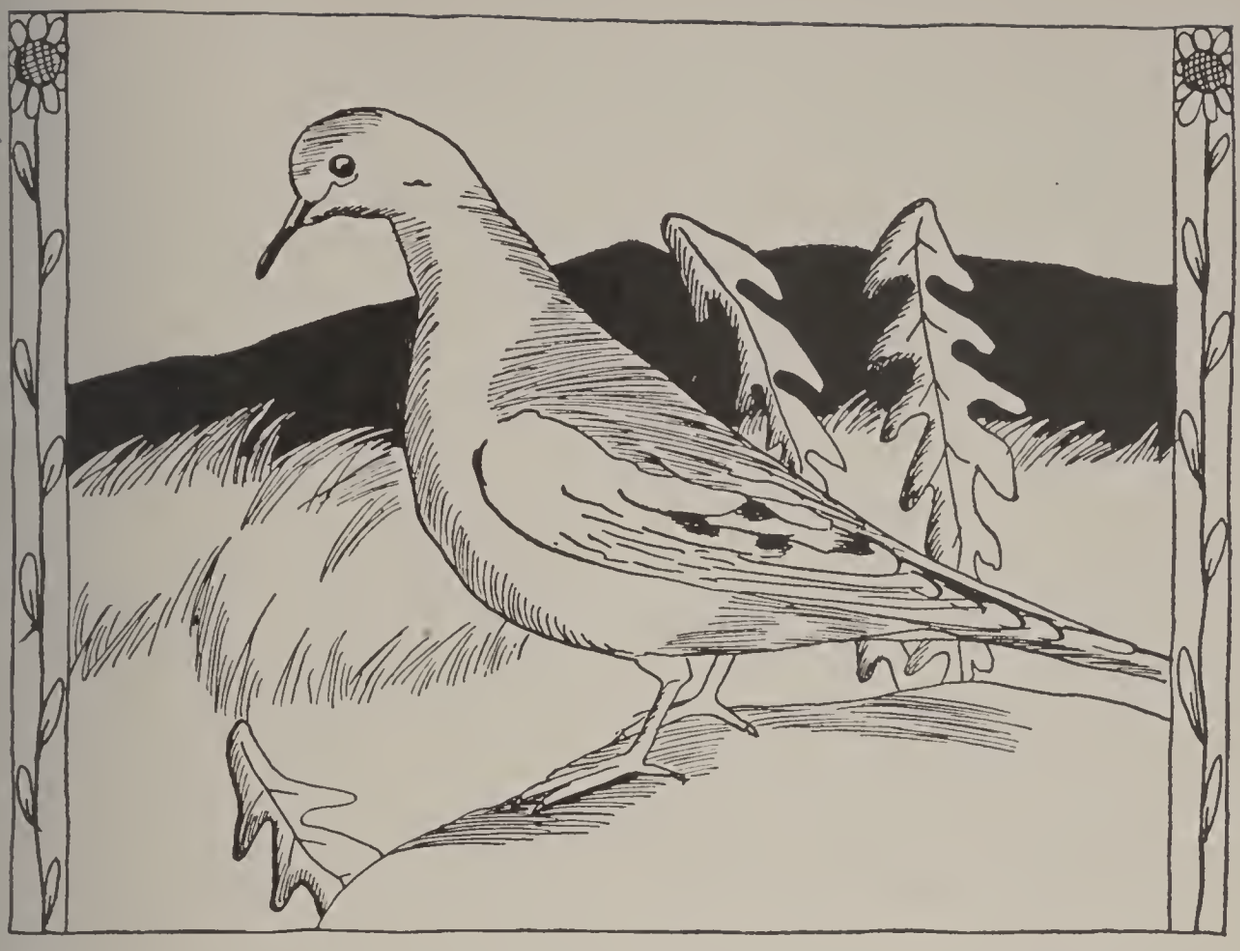
Although the birds are small they defend their nest bravely. They will fight fiercely if their home and babies are in danger. The older birds always sleep in a hole at night. With the thick covering of fat that they have just beneath the skin they never suffer from the cold.

Chickadees are among our most useful birds. They are always searching for food. All kinds of moths, ants, wasps, bugs, caterpillars, flies and other harmful and obnoxious insects are eaten. Their vegetable food is made up of pine seeds and the wax of poison ivy, thus differing from most of the birds, which eat the seeds of the ivy. In summer the pulp of wild fruit is also eaten. During the winter the birds eat larvae, chrysalids, and eggs of moths, varied with a few pine seeds. Spiders are an important item in

their diet and are eaten at all seasons of the year, and for any meal.

The Hudsonian chickadee is a northern bird, living in Canada and the northern border of the United States. It is seldom ever seen farther south. But now and then one of these little creatures is found in company with a flock of the black-capped species. These birds are even smaller than the black-capped species and can only be told from them by their black-brown color. These little creatures are even more social and tame than the black-capped species. They are especially friendly near the lumber camps, which they visit frequently. Their song is the same as that of the other chickadees. It is a great joy to the men as they work in the forest. These birds lay six or seven eggs. Their other habits are similar to the black-capped species.

The Carolina chickadee is even smaller than the Hudsonian species, measuring only four and one-half inches in length. This little creature has no white edges to its feathers. It is a resident in the southeastern United States, breeding north to Virginia and Ohio. All the chickadees are members of the titmouse family.



THE MOURNING OR TURTLE DOVE

THERE is a story that is told about doves that will interest every boy and girl who has admired their grandmother's old Willow china. Koong Shee was a pretty Chinese girl who became infatuated with her father's secretary, Chang, and when her parents discovered this they were very angry and imprisoned the girl in the little house shown at the left of the picture on the dishes. Near the house is a lake, and the girl spent much time looking at the bridge and the willow, and writing poems telling how she wanted to be free.

Chang smuggled messages to her enclosed in the shells of cocoanuts, and one day she threw into the lake a tiny shell with a sail attached to it. Chang

wandering by the shore saw the shell and rescued it and took out the message and read it. The meaning of the words were plain, that if Chang wanted the girl he was to rescue her, and he did. In the disguise of a priest he was permitted to see Koong Shee and they tried to escape together, but before they had crossed the bridge the girl's father saw them.

They were quick and young and soon got out of his reach, and taking the boat, which may be seen in the pictures, escaped and were married and lived in the little house also pictured. Here they were very happy until an old man, a former suitor of Koong Shee's, found them and set fire to their house and burned it. It is said that because of their beautiful love the young couple was changed into a pair of doves, and the birds may be seen in flight right over the willow on all these pretty dishes.

Frequent mention of the dove is made in the Bible and it holds a prominent place in literature and art. The dove is a symbol of love, gentleness, innocence, and peace. In the days of the early Christian Church, the pictures of doves, carrying olive branches, were carved on many of the tombs found in the catacombs of Rome and elsewhere, these pictures supposing to have symbolized eternal peace. At present we see the "dove of peace" as a common feature in cartoons and other illustrations of all kinds. The dove is supposed to have been the bird that Noah sent from the Ark to see if the waters had receded, and which later returned with an olive branch to tell him that the flood had subsided.

It is also said that a dove rested on the head of Christ after his baptism, and that later in His ministry He overthrew the seats of those that sold doves in the Temple. So something sacred seems to linger around these birds.

Turtle or mourning doves are members of the pigeon family, and are the best known of this species of birds. They are found from Quebec to Panama and westward to Arizona, but they are most abundant and familiar in the temperate climates east of the Rockies. They migrate from their southern homes in March, returning in November, but south of Virginia they do not migrate.

The name of "mourning dove" was given these dainty, shy birds from the plaintive cooing notes with which the male woos the female. "Coo-o-o-ar-coo-o-o, coo-o-o-ar-coo-o-o," sounds the haunting voice of this bird, sounding more like a dirge than a rapture of song. When once heard, especially about dusk in some lonesome place or bit of woods, the effect is weird and ghostlike. All the echoes seem to answer and the pathetic call seems to be shouted from everywhere. The sound makes little quivers of fear, of longing, of tragedy creep over one, and we almost wait to see ghostlike figures come stalking toward us. But the turtle dove is really not a sad bird at all, and is quite a gay-natured creature with many endearing ways. No birds are more devoted lovers, and whenever Mr. and Mrs. Turtle Dove are together it reminds one of the perfect union of the Brownings.

These birds are among our larger birds, measuring a foot to thirteen inches in length, and are of a slender build. The males wear very modest coats of a grayish brown or fawn color above shading into bluish-gray, while their crowns and upper part of the head is a greenish-purple-gold with several brighter reflections which extend down the neck. There is a black spot under each ear, which is rather conspicuous, looking like a big black button. The forehead and breast are a reddish-buff which gets lighter underneath. The two middle tail feathers are the longest and all the others are banded black tipped with ashy white. Few birds look more attractive in such modest colored garments, nor are many so neat and tidy in appearance. Mrs. Turtle Dove wears a duller colored garment and lacks the bright reflections. The turtle dove of Europe is ashen color tinged with red.

Turtle doves are very poor homemakers, laying their two pretty white eggs on a flimsy nest made of a few sticks that are loosely thrown together. Sometimes they build their poor little home right on top of an empty robin's nest. But even if they are such poor home builders they are very loving parents and feed their babies as do flickers, pigeons and humming birds, that is by pumping food from their own crops into the young birds.

After the nesting season turtle doves are no longer so shy and timid, and will let anyone approach very near them. They seem to like to visit yards and barnyards, and will walk about bowing their heads

in rather a comical, dignified way. Everyone who has seen a turtle dove knows what a whistling noise they make with their wings in flight.

Turtle doves feed on grass and weed seeds and on waste grain, practically all of their food being made up of vegetable matter. Most of the weed seeds that they eat are of obnoxious varieties. The birds also consume a goodly amount of gravel to help digest their other food, and may frequently be seen in the middle of the roads taking a dust bath. They seem to enjoy these baths very much, and will often lie there for several hours, scratching the dust through their feathers.

THE NIGHTHAWK

IN summer, nighthawks are found from northern Canada southward to the northern part of the Gulf States, and from the Atlantic coast westward to the plains. They winter in South America, seeming to enjoy the wild freedom of the tropical climate. They are members of the goatsucker family, but that the birds suck goats is merely a superstition. The name given to this bird is erroneous, as on the wing they are wholly different from other hawks, and resemble the whippoorwill. In various localities the nighthawk has been called by other names, mostly given to the bird from its habits, such as nightjar, bull bat, and mosquito hawk.

These birds are about ten inches in length, and

with wings extended, measure about twenty-three inches across, but when the body is shorn of their long feathers, it is very small, so small that we marvel that this bird should ever be killed for food, but in some places it is used for this purpose. In other places they are cruelly used for gun practice targets. Yet there are few more useful birds than these active, busy hawks. Life without insects would be impossible to them. They destroy large numbers of almost every destructive and obnoxious insect and beetle, ants being among their favorite foods. Grasshoppers, chinch bugs, May beetles, June bugs, and potato, cucumber, chestnut, and rice beetles are consumed in large quantities. Kill bugs, squash bugs, cotton boll weevil, moths, clover-leaf weevils, and anopheles, transmitters of the deadly malaria, are among other destructive insects that this bird eats.

It is not for the beauty of its plumage, or the sweetness of the song, that the United States Government is trying to protect the nighthawk, but for its general usefulness.

Nighthawks may be distinguished from whippoorwills by the conspicuous white marks on their wings, their nasal notes, slightly forked tail, and the habit of frequenting the open country. In another way they have been named wrongly, as they really seem to prefer to hunt in the later afternoon, early in the evening, at dawn, or on some bright moonlight night.

Mr. Nighthawk wears a very inconspicuous garb of mottled black and white plumage, the white spots

almost forming a bar across his wings, which are plainly noticeable in flight. A broad white band also crosses his throat, while Mrs. Nighthawk substitutes buff trimmings for the white. They have enormous mouths, somewhat resembling a frog's, with bristly hair and tipped with a minute beak. So quick and clever are they in flight, and so keen of sight, that scarcely an insect escapes their notice.

Toward the end of the summer the nighthawk may be seen at nearly any hour of the day, coursing through the fields. Once in a while as he hunts, he will give a sharp cry sounding like "peent, peent, peent." Sometimes the bird keeps repeating "k-ze-e-rt, k-ze-e-rt," sounding like the tearing of cloth.

Like the whippoorwill and some other birds, the nighthawks do not build a nest, but they do not—like the European cuckoo and cowbird—place their family duties on other birds. The two gray speckled eggs are laid on the bare ground in some sunny spot, or even on a rock, or on the flat top of some house. In the cities, where many of the buildings are high, with flat gravel tops, one may see these wild birds circling about the housetops. But they are usually far removed from the noise and clamor of the street, and are seldom disturbed.

Nighthawks are high flyers, and are often not seen on this account. The weird, whirring, rushing sound one hears so often on summer evenings, is made by the wind passing through the nighthawk's wings as it descends rapidly from some high flight. It was

from this noise that in the South the bird was nicknamed bull bat. Some superstitious folks say that this noise is a bad omen, and look upon it with terrible dread. Upward the bird flies, higher than the human eye can see, and a short time later he coasts downward with such force one would think he would be dashed to pieces. Then, when the bird nearly touches the ground, he gives a sudden turn and goes skimming away, chasing some insect, and a moment later repeats the whole wonderful performance.

THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE

NO other bird is so closely associated with the history of our country as is the Baltimore oriole, a gorgeous little creature. When Lord Baltimore sailed down the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, he discovered many of these orioles, and because they wore the same colors as his livery, he named them in his honor.

This bird is called by various names in different localities, such as hangbird, from the shape of the nest it builds, suspended from twigs; firebird, because of its vivid orange and red coloring; and golden robin, for the same reason.

Baltimore orioles range throughout North America, east of the Rockies, breeding from New Bruns-

wick to Manitoba. They winter in Central America, where the rich coloring of the tropical foliage makes them much less conspicuous than in our Northern States. They migrate northward in early May, the males preceding the females. Just when the orchards begin to bloom, great flocks of male Baltimore orioles may be seen traveling rapidly, while the females proceed more leisurely. They return to their winter home about the middle of September, in almost as joyful a mood as they came to us in the springtime.

These orioles are from seven to eight inches in length. The head, throat, and upper part of Mr. Oriole is a glossy black that shimmers and shines in the sunlight, and the wings are black with white spots and edgings like dainty trimmings. The tail quills are black with yellow markings on the tip, and everywhere else he is a bright orange shading into a reddish-flame color, so vivid that it may be seen for a long distance.

At first the males are dull colored like their mothers and sisters, and it is only by degrees that they are given the bright frock their fathers wear. The older male orioles do not change the color of their suits when they moult, as do bobolinks and goldfinches. Poor Mrs. Oriole must wear a garb of yellowish olive, with wings of dark brown, and quills margined with white, while her tail is a yellowish brown with dusky bars. But she seems to be quite contented to let her mate wear the bright colors.

These birds are sociable little creatures, and seem

to love the company of mankind. From choice they always build their little homes as close to houses as possible.

Their diet is made up largely of insects, and they seem to prefer small caterpillars, certain kinds of beetles, and small flies. They vary their meat diet with fruits and seeds; most of which are found scattered liberally along roadsides.

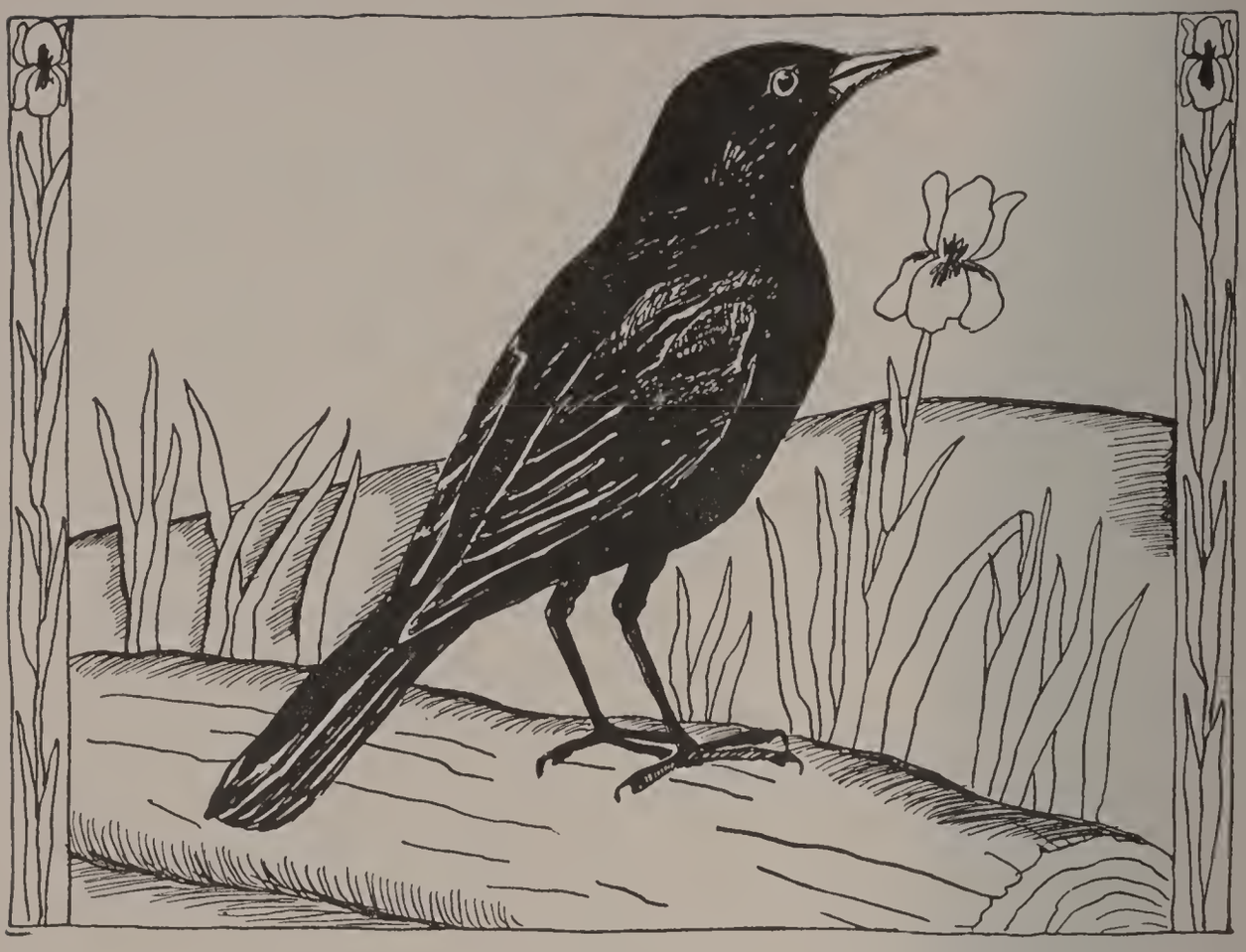
It is hard to describe the clear, querulous, varied whistle or warble of this oriole. The last note of its theme seems always to end in an upward inflection, as though he were asking a question. All during May and June the beautiful song is repeated as the bird flits about in the fruit trees, looking for insects and larvae. A richer, fuller note is caroled by the male as he sings to his mate during the days of courting. One can easily imitate the oriole's song, and receive a quick response from the mystified, astonished bird. The music from a piano, and probably from other musical instruments, excites these birds, and joyously singing, they will come nearer and nearer the sound.

Most wonderful of all are the marvelous nests that these birds build. They are among the best architects in the bird world, and we marvel at their great skill and ingenuity in constructing the wonderful home that they weave and suspend to some limb. They seem to prefer a tree with long, drooping branches in which to build their little palace, a weeping willow or an elm seeming to be their preference. The nest is a hanging structure from six to

eight inches deep, resembling a long, slender purse with the opening quite a distance from the nest proper. This protects the birds from hawks and other intruders, and with the overhanging leaves and branches, serves as a protection to the family.

The nest is made up of flax, milkweed, grass, plant fibers, and other soft materials, especially bright-colored strings. The home is often used a second year, and because it is woven so well, will often last for years, although tossed about in all kinds of weather. When used a second year, bright-colored strings are gathered by the birds and woven into the structure to give it a fresh and new appearance.

Five or six dull whitish eggs, with irregular dark-brown scrawls, are laid, and both birds defend the nest very courageously. Backward and forward the babies sway in their tiny cradle, and by and by, when they seem to get tired of their dark home, they venture toward the top. Sometimes the little fellows topple over, and being too weak to fly back to the nest, are killed by exposure or some intruder.



BLACKBIRDS

AFTER seeing the modest, sober garments that the blackbirds wear we marvel that they belong to the same family to which the gorgeously clad Baltimore orioles, meadow larks, and bobolinks belong. We can readily believe that the somber clad cowbirds and grackles are near relatives, but it is hard to conceive that the bright red-winged blackbirds are such near kin. In habits, manner, and song the birds of this family show a great difference. The cowbird builds no nest at all, while the orioles are among the finest architects in the bird world.

Of the several members of the blackbird family the rusty species is probably best known. These birds measure from nine to nine and a half inches

in length. They are found east of the Rocky Mountains in North America to Newfoundland and the Gulf of Mexico. They are among the first harbingers of spring, migrating northward in early April and staying until late in November. Nearly all species of blackbirds travel in great flocks. The rusty blackbirds are often seen in company with other birds. In their spring migrations they frequently may be seen along some sluggish, secluded stream, feeding upon the seeds of various water plants and insects. At these times they are very noisy, making a squeaking, spluttering sound which, however, is quite pleasing.

When in full plumage, Mr. Rusty Blackbird wears a conventional suit of glossy black which has marvelous metallic reflections interchanging with rusty brown. The brown color becomes more and more pronounced as the season advances and the newness wears off his suit. His pale, straw-colored eyes are always bright and full of mischief. Mrs. Rusty Blackbird wears a duller garment than her husband, which is of a more grayish color, and she has a light line over her eyes. You can easily tell her, too, because she is smaller than her mate.

The song of these birds is rather a squeaky carol, but not at all unmusical. The rich liquid warbling would be quite delightful if they did not interrupt themselves with discordant complaining. The blackbird's noisy voice is among the first sounds we hear in the spring, and it is always a welcome sound.

All the species of blackbirds feed upon worms,

insects, fruit, and grain. From the habit they have of feeding on unripe grain, especially oats and wheat in shock, they have made the farmers look upon them with suspicion, but they certainly give more service than damage in what they destroy. If all the harmful and obnoxious insects and larvae that they consume were left to live, these tiny vermin alone would destroy more good grain and fruit than do the blackbirds themselves.

The favorite nesting place of blackbirds is a low bush on the edge of a pond or some moist lowland or marsh. The little home is made of grass, leaves, and mud. Three to five pale blue eggs, streaked and spotted with blackish-purple, are laid. The babies are quite as noisy and cheerful as their parents and are forever demanding food.

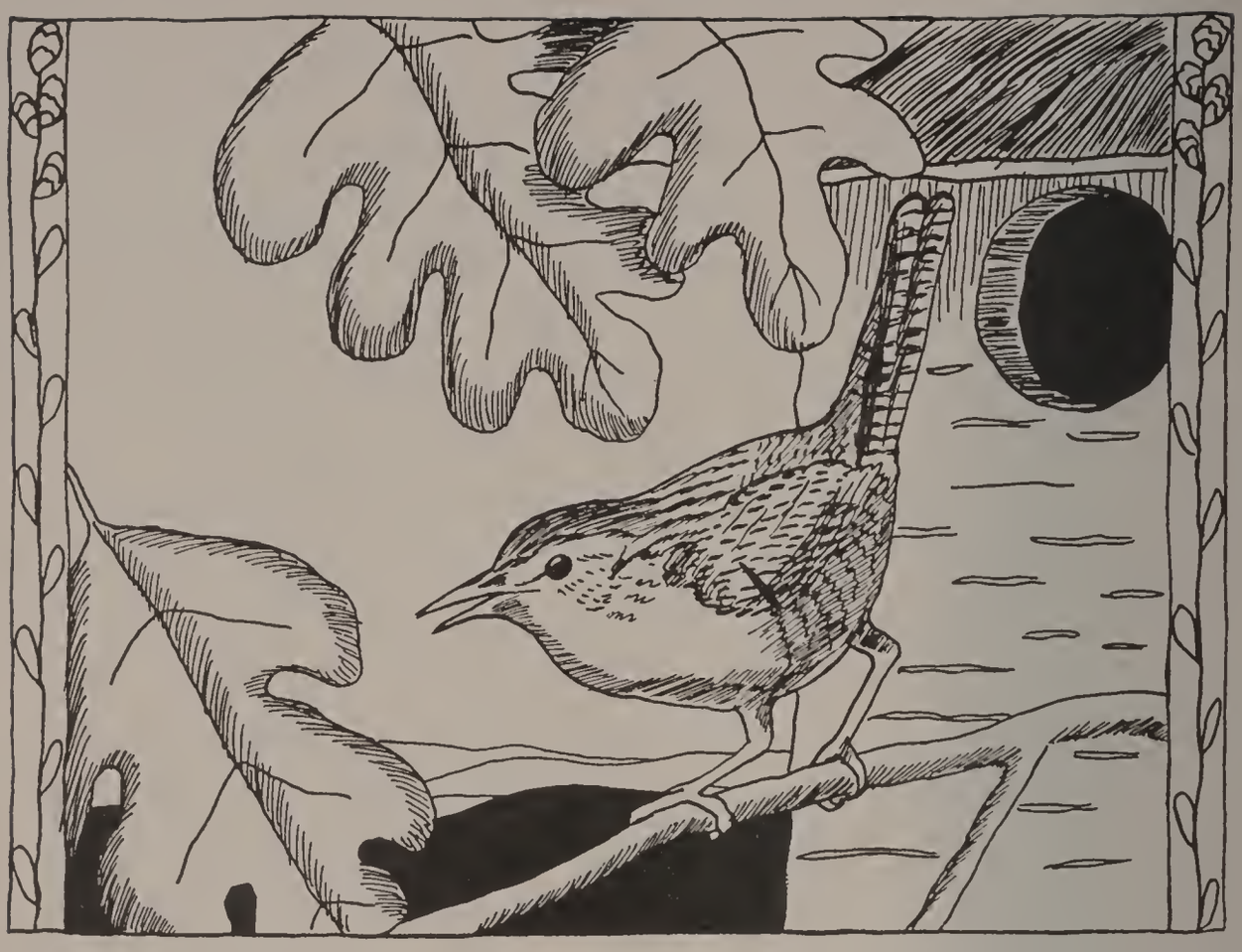
D. M. Mulock has written a pretty little poem about this bird:

A slender young Blackbird built in a thorn tree:
A spruce little fellow as ever could be;
His bill was so yellow, his feathers so black,
That good Mrs. B., who sat hatching her eggs,
And only just left them to stretch her poor legs,
And pick for a minute the worm she preferred,
Thought there never was such a beautiful bird.

The crow blackbird, known as the purple grackle, is found in the eastern United States from the Gulf of Mexico to Massachuetts. Mr. Crow Blackbird has a purple head and wears an irridescent black coat with reflections of green, purple, violet, and copper,

barred with black. His bright yellow eyes are very conspicuous. His wings are longer than his tail. Mrs. Crow Blackbird is a brownish gray. These birds are not so sociable and happy as the rusty blackbirds, but they are among the first of the birds to migrate northward in spring. Their song is a very squawky note. Their favorite call is a harsh "tchack, tchack."

Mr. Brewer Blackbird has a purplish head and a greenish body, while his wife wears a grayish brown gown. This blackbird may be distinguished from the other species by its trough-shaped tail, plainly noticeable in flight. These birds breed in the west, east to Texas, Kansas and Minnesota, and north to southern Canada, wintering over most of the United States and south to Guatemala. Caterpillars form the largest part of their animal diet.



THE WRENS

SEVERAL different families of wrens are found in abundance in North America. All are small, active birds with slender beaks, rounded wings, and erect tails, and all have brown or grayish plumage barred and mottled with black. Wrens have marvelous powers of song, and also disagreeable voices that sound very harsh when they are quarreling. All are ground birds, and live mostly upon insects.

The cactus wren is the largest member of the family, and inhabits the southwestern border of the United States, ranging from southern Texas to California. A bed of cactus is their favorite resort, and their nests are large, purse-shaped structures placed in one of these thorny plants. Four or five creamy

white eggs are laid, and two or three broods are often raised in a season.

The rock wren is found in the dry foothills of the Rocky Mountain regions and westward to the Pacific, wintering in the southwestern United States. Because of their color and habits, one can scarcely see them among the rocks. Their song resembles that of a canary, being very wild and sweet. Their nest is made of sticks, weeds, and grass, in the crevices of rocks. Five or six white eggs, slightly speckled with reddish brown, are laid.

The Berwick wren, like all the other species, is very restless and active, and delights in climbing over fallen logs, fences, trees, stumps, and peering into every little crevice. It is found in the Mississippi Valley and the plains, north to South Dakota, and eastward to the Alleghany Mountains. Its song is a carol of melodious notes.

The Carolina wren is a shy species found in the Southern States, breeding from the Gulf northward to Connecticut and Illinois. It, too, seems to prefer forest undergrowths near water, fallen logs and bushes, and delights in sitting with its tail erect over its shapely head, and singing. The notes, loud and tinkling, are impossible to describe, but resemble "whee-udel, whee-udel" endlessly repeated. The nest is made in brush heaps or holes in trees, but this wren will also build in boxes, as does the house wren. Five to seven white eggs, speckled with brown, are laid.

The short-billed marsh wren and the long-billed

marsh wren are at home among the reeds and cattails found growing in the marshes. They range throughout the United States and southern Canada, migrating in May and September. Both birds are dainty, active little creatures with lovable and endearing ways.

Winter wrens are the tiniest members of this family, and the stoutest built, being only four inches in length. They look very coquettish with their short tails waving over their heads. These wrens wear a garment which is a bright cinnamon color above and paler underneath, and the sides, wings, and tail are heavily barred with black. They are found in abundance in eastern North America and southward and westward to the great plains. They make their tiny home in brush heaps, tin cans, hollow stumps, and in any crevice or nook that meets with their approval. Their song is very sweet and rippling, though not so musical as that of the house wren. It sounds very beautiful when heard some stormy winter day.

There are very few who do not know the house wren, the dear little bird with the cinnamon-brown cloak barred and obscured with lighter and darker shades. There is no more sociable and lovable bird than these little creatures, and how they delight to sing to us. They are found in abundance in North America from Manitoba to the Gulf, wintering south of the Carolinas. They migrate in April, and their rippling, joyous song is often heard before spring has touched the earth in beauty. They do not depart until October, and it is a sad time when the song

of the last wren is heard. No bird pours out a more joyous and rapturous song, and there never was a more tireless, energetic, and brilliant singer.

Year after year the wrens return to the same boxes, crevices, and other nesting sites, asking only that the last year's nests be removed.

Strangest of all, Mr. Wren begins to carry twigs to the site chosen for a nest before he finds a mate, but the day she comes, how he does bubble over with song. And all the time that Mrs. Wren helps with the house building her active little mate works harder and harder.

No man can estimate the great quantities of insects and vermin that these little midgets destroy, and it pays in every way to encourage them to visit your homes. They will gladly come.

As Kate M. Post says:

The chimney belongs to the swallows,
The piazza's owned by the wren;
We'll take care to see our title's clear,
When we purchase a farm again.

THE WOODCOCK

THE woodcock is one of the most interesting and odd of our birds, and like the owl feeds at night, hiding during the day amid leaves and grasses. Its dark brown plumage barred with black and reddish colors blends perfectly with the various wood tones, and keeps it from being easily discovered. Both the American and European woodcocks belong to the snipe family, and their eyes are placed in the upper corner of their triangular-shaped heads, which makes it difficult for them to see on the ground while feeding. Many think that like owls they can see best at night, therefore have night habits.

The real reason is probably because worms come

to the surface then, and as this makes up their diet they desire to find as many as possible. The birds have long, straight, stout bills that are so sensitive they can collect their food with the mere touch of them. Woodcocks never scratch with their feet, though their legs are strong, but always dig with their bills. The upper half is flexible to the tip, and works independently of the lower one.

The American woodcock is from ten to eleven inches long and has indistinct black lines on the front of the head, and another from bill to eye, while across the back of its head are three buff bars. The bird breeds from Montreal and the northern United States to the Gulf, wintering in the South Atlantic and Gulf States, but are residents in their range all but through the very coldest months.

The bird has a short thick neck and a compounded round body, which helps to give its bill strength. It has short legs and wings which makes its flight awkward. It is very interesting to watch a flock of birds feeding, and they often eat half a pound of worms in twenty-four hours, making their tiny bodies bulge out. Down goes the bill, sinking to the nostrils in some soft earth, and one after another it draws out the worms and gulps them down. They like to frequent corn-lands and other places where the earth is soft and moist.

Woodcocks migrate silently by night, and in April each bird selects a mate and starts building its nest. The little home is made of grass in a hollow stump, or in a tuft of dense growth in the woods,

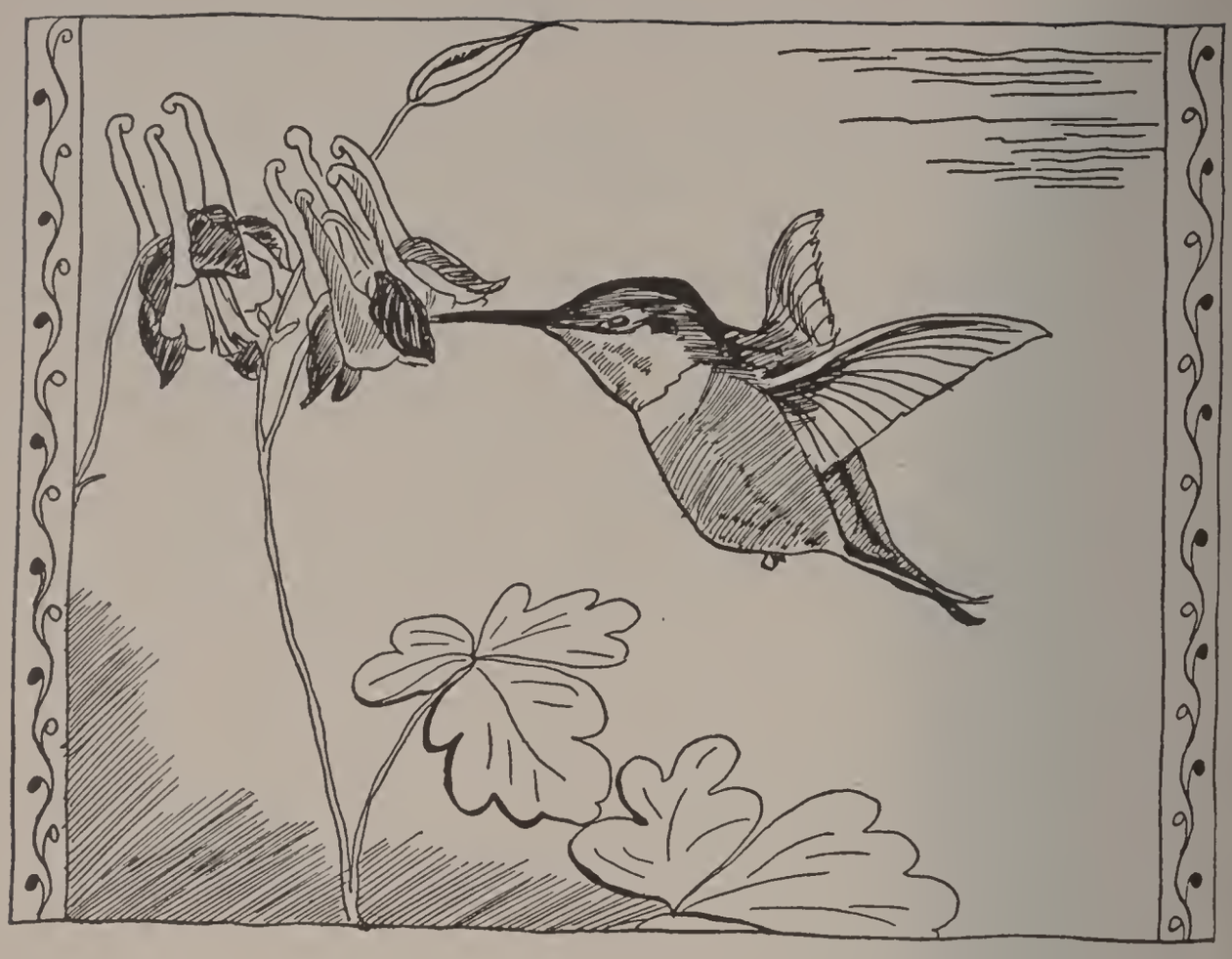
usually near a stream. The nest is formed with very little skill and is awkward and bulky, but serves the purpose of a home. Four rather large buff-colored eggs are laid, marked with brown. Early in spring while his mate sits on the nest the male entertains her with all kinds of antics. He is almost as lovely and as good a diver as the lark, darting into the air he alights crying "pink, pink" in startling tones, then up he goes again, his body pointing every way. Darting, circling, swaying, diving he plunges through the air, his short stiff wings no longer awkward, and all the while whistling as he goes higher and higher.

The bride looks on in admiration. Faster and faster, higher and higher he goes, sweeping in erratic circles, and then with a sharp whistle he comes abruptly down. Finally he alights and after singing "pink, pink" in his best tones he is off again. Toward evening there comes a time extending over a number of days before the cares of parenthood crush the buoyant spirits of the woodcock, when the male darts through the air, changing his song from the day to "blaik, blaik," followed by the more musical "paip, paip."

When disturbed the woodcock escapes with an owl-like flight and often when danger seems near the nest the bird will pretend it is lame or hurt, thus trying to lead the intruder in the opposite direction. In time the fluffy, long-billed birds are hatched, and it is a pretty sight to see them with their parents searching for food. The little birds peep about like

a chicken. Often when the parents think their brood is in danger and wish to move them they will take the young birds between their thighs.

The European woodcock is larger than the American species and its habits and characteristics are wholly different. It is found in Java, New Guinea, Great Britain and the frigid wilds of Sweden, Russia and Norway, even going to the icy shores of Greenland and the heaths of Iceland. The female is greatly attached to the nest, and has been known to have remained when a person was near enough to touch it. These birds have been hunted so severely that they are fast disappearing, being considered one of the best game fowls.



THE HUMMING BIRD

SCIENTISTS claim that there are more than four hundred species of humming birds in existence, but of these only about eighteen inhabit the United States. All but one group, the ruby-throated humming bird, belong to the southwestern and Pacific coast states. Humming birds are found only in the American continents, and all are tiny creatures, the largest being eight inches in length. This species is found in South America. All members of this family have been named with reference to the whirring sound made by their tiny wings when in rapid flight.

Mr. Ruby-throat is a wonderful creature wearing a metallic green cloak above, his wings and tail being the darkest, with ruddy, purplish reflections,

and dusty white tips on his outer tail feathers. His throat is a brilliant red in one light, a flaming orange in another light, and looks another color in another light. His sides are greenish, full of reflections and shades, and underneath he is light gray with a whitish border outlining his brilliant breast. Mrs. Ruby-throat, like so many other lady birds, wears a less brilliant garment, lacking the bright feathers on the throat, and being deeper gray underneath.

Of them Mrs. Claribel Weeks-Avery has written:

Golden and green like a daffy-down-dilly,
Bright as a jewel of topaz and jade,
Poising on whirring wings, under a lily,
Gold in the sunshine and green in the shade.

It is not really the shade of the feathers which gives the humming bird its beautiful color, but the refraction of light on the tiny feathers.

Most of the humming birds winter in South or Central America, traveling northward in May, when the flowers that they love best begin to bloom, and going back in October, when goldenrod and asters are making the waysides bright. Any one with a garden can plant flowers that will coax these little air children to visit their homes, and as they are very social birds, they become quite tame. Any garden in which gladioli are grown is sure to have humming birds among its visitors, and how they seem to delight going down into the deep flowers and swaying back and forth in them.

Strangely enough, these little creatures seem to prefer the bright-colored flowers, and probably because the more fragrant flowers contain the most nectar, they are favorites of these birds. The jewel weed, coral honeysuckle, bee balm, cardinal flower, columbine, trumpet vine, magnolia, and jasmine seem to be great favorites, but the birds will visit the canna, nasturtium, phlox, narcissus, rose, and various other flowers.

Nearly all humming birds are accomplished travelers, and fly over great stretches of country. No bird is more clever in the air, and some of their flights and actions when flying are marvelous. Often you see one of these little creatures poised in mid-air whirring his tiny wings back and forth.

Few birds have such irritable tempers, and a fight between two of these tiny creatures in the air is a sight that will never be forgotten. They dart at each other with their long, sharp bills with all the fury and force of two great armies opposing each other. In defending their nests they are vicious little creatures, and fight with courage till either they are overcome or route the intruder. When stripped of their feathers, the smallest humming birds are no larger than a bumble bee, and one marvels how so much vitality, endurance, and individuality can be found in such a little body. But no bird is better fitted for a pioneer life, and all humming birds take long journeys, even in the most stormy weather.

The humming bird's stomach is much smaller in proportion to its body than that of other birds, and

its liver much larger, which indicates a nectar diet. But not all the humming bird's food is gathered from flowers, even though it has been given such a long bill and forked tongue to enable it to extract the honey from the deep-throated blossoms. If one watches carefully, he will see these tiny creatures dart about, when on the wing, like flycatchers, gathering tiny insects. Then they can often be seen hovering about in front of cobwebs, waiting to snatch some unfortunate spider or other minute insect.

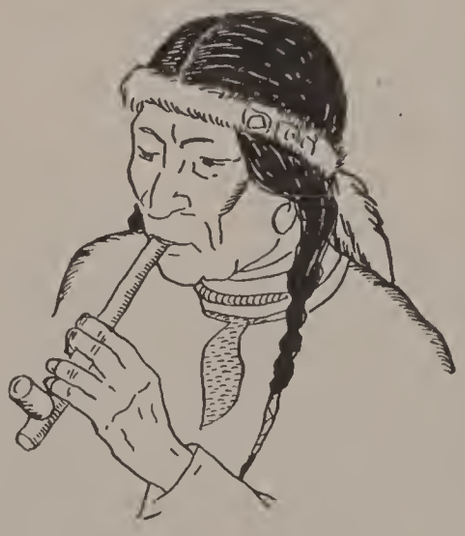
No bird seems to like to bathe better than do the ruby-throated humming birds. In the morning they often take a splash in a dew-filled flower cup. Then at night the little creatures may be seen taking another bath and preening their feathers. Perhaps Nature thought she had given humming birds more than their share of beauty, so she bestowed upon them no kind of song. The only sound they make is a rather faint, sharp cry.

Mrs. Humming Bird is one of the most expert house-builders among the bird families, and her home is like an exquisite jewel. The tiny nest has been compared to a lady's watch, and the small eggs to diamonds. Shreds of bark, soft grass, bits of plant down, and cat-tail are used in the construction of the tiny round home. It is often built over a branch, looking like a tiny knot on the limb of the tree. Frequently the mother covers the outer side with lichen and bark to make it blend more harmoniously with the background and surroundings. During the nesting season the father is bolder than

ever, and is a fierce little soldier, using his bill as if it were a mighty sword.

In June two tiny white eggs are laid, which soon hatch, and the babies keep their parents busy. The young are fed like pigeons, the parents pumping the food down their little throats. They are scarcely larger than a big fly, but they grow very fast, and in about three weeks' time are ready to fly.

Anna's humming bird, a California species, is one of the most widely known species in the Western States. It is even more brilliantly colored and active than the ruby-throat.



THE WOOD THRUSH

IN speaking of the melodious flutelike voice of the wood thrush, Dr. Chapman, a naturalist, says, "It is a message of hope and good cheer in the morning, a benediction at the close of the day." The wood thrush belongs to the highest order of songsters, and possesses one of the finest voices in the bird kingdom, having a wide range of songs composed of many notes.

Often two birds in trees some distance apart keep calling back and forth from one to the other: "Here am I, here am I, here am I." Three times sound the clear, delicious, rich bell-like tones, pure and penetrating like the chords of a harp. But it is in the evening, and especially during the mating season,

that they sing their finest. What a beautiful liquid, "Nolee-a-a-o-lee-lee-nol-lee-aeol-ee-lee," rises and falls in the air, then is caught up again and goes echoing far away, leaving behind a dreamy quietness. The birds sing well into July.

In his book, *Useful Birds and Their Protection*, Mr. E. H. Forbush has written: "The song of the wood thrush is one of the finest specimens of bird music that America can produce. Among all the bird songs that I have heard it is second only in quality to that of the hermit thrush. It is not projected upon the still air with the effort that characterizes the bold and vigorous lay of the robin, or the loud and intermittent carol of the thrasher. Its tones are solemn and serene. They seem to harmonize with the sounds of the forest, the whispering breeze, the purling waters, or the falling of raindrops in the woods. As with most other birds, there is a great difference in the excellence of individual performers, and while some males of the species can produce such notes as few birds can rival, this cannot be said of all.

"At evening the bird usually mounts to the higher branches of the taller trees, often upon the edge of the forest, where nothing intervenes to confine or subdue his 'heavenly music.' There, sitting quite erect, he emits his wonderful notes in the most leisurely fashion, and apparently with little effort. 'A-olle,' he sings and rests; then, unhurried, pours forth a series of intermittent strains, which seem to express in music the sentiment of nature; powerful,

rich, metallic, with the vanishing vibratory tones of the bell, they seem like a vocal expression clothed in a melody so pure and ethereal that it can neither be imitated nor described. The song rises and falls, swells and dies away, until dark night has fallen. The alarm note of the bird is a sharp pit, pit, several times repeated; this alarm often rises to a long roll. A soft cluck, also repeated, is sometimes heard. A mellow, liquid chirp is another common note."

Wood thrushes are the largest, most brightly colored, and probably the most neighborly of a large family of birds including two hundred and forty species. They are about eight or eight and a third inches in length, being not quite so large as the robin. They range throughout the eastern part of the United States, breeding from southern South Dakota and New Hampshire south to Texas and Florida. They winter in southern Mexico, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, but are sometimes found as far north as New Jersey. Throughout the south this bird is better known as the *woodrobin*. These birds especially like to inhabit swamps and moist woodlands, from which they probably received their names.

The upper part of the wood thrush's head is a shining brown, shading into a brownish red on the shoulders, which gradually runs into an olive brown toward the tail. Underneath the bird is white, marked with very characteristic spots, and heavily spotted on the breast. Every gesture and motion is graceful and charming.

Wood thrushes are well protected by the government, for they consume quantities of destructive insects, beetles, bugs and larvae. Grasshoppers, snails, potato bugs, caterpillars, spiders, and the larvae of many moths help to make up the varied diet. They also eat some wild fruit and berries, and now and then may steal into the cultivated garden and help themselves, but they do such a great amount of good that they deserve the greatest protection.

The little home is usually built in the fork or horizontal bough of a tree from six to ten feet from the ground. The building of the nest is a hard task, for wood thrushes are particular architects, and it takes a good bit of labor for them to get the nest as they want it. Dead leaves, bits of paper and rags, weeds, grass, and other materials are used to make the nest, twigs being used to make the framework of the little mansion. The inner materials are plastered securely together with mud, and then lined with soft rootlets.

Four light greenish-blue eggs are laid, and while sitting, the mother bird becomes quite tame, and may be easily approached. The babies are nervous and fidgety, and seem to give the mother and father considerable trouble. But by and by, when they get a little larger, the proud parents seem to take great pride in their active little brood.

THE MEADOWLARK

THE English settlers often told their legends to the Indians. Many of these English legends became a part of the lore of the Indians. One of these legends is a quaint story of the coming of the meadowlark, that shy, elusive bird known so well to many country girls and boys. It is said that at the beginning of the world all the birds were gray, but through various transformations they came to their present coloring. One day a little old man, with rather gorgeously colored clothes of yellow, brown, black and white, was tramping through the fields, when one of the myriads of gray birds circling around flew down and lit on the man's hat.

The little fairies, laughing and dancing in a near-

by field, saw the bird and clapped their hands in glee. At last a wise-looking little fairy spoke and this is what she said: "We have tried so hard to help make this world better and more beautiful that I have just been wondering if I might suggest something to the queen." The queen, a most charming little midget, was present and readily gave her consent, for she was very eager to do all she could to help make everything good and attractive.

"Well," began the fairy who had first spoken, "as I stood here watching that bird on that funny man's hat I just wondered why we couldn't change its gray feathers into those nice colors of the man's coat and other clothes. They are really too bright for him to wear, and they would look beautiful on the bird."

For a minute the queen stopped and looked more closely at the approaching man, with the bird still sitting on his shabby black hat, and then she raised her wand and waved it. A minute later the plain little gray bird had been changed into a meadowlark with a conspicuous black crescent on his breast. The bird wore no other colors, except those that had been in the clothing the man wore.

Meadowlarks generally breed from Newfoundland to the Gulf of Mexico and westward to the Plains. The Western meadowlark is found from the Plains to the Pacific, while the Florida meadowlark is found in the southern states. The birds winter from the Ohio and Potomac Valleys and District of Columbia southward, but are sometimes found as far north as Massachusetts and Illinois. They are among the

earliest of birds to migrate northward and frequently arrive in the central states in March, though April is their regular migrating month. They are in no hurry to return to their southern homes, not leaving till late in October.

Our meadowlarks, though differing much in song, resemble one another closely in plumage and habits, but the Florida species is smaller and darker. The western species is more brilliant and vari-colored, and its song is much louder, clearer and more melodious. There are few people who live in the country who are not familiar with the flute-like whistle of this bird, which is heard frequently, especially early in spring, and although not a marvelous song, sounds very pleasing at that time of year. It is true that many of the songs of birds sound very sweet to us in the springtime, which later on when we become more accustomed to their music again, sounds rather grating and harsh.

These little creatures have several carols that they whistle in about the same note sounding like "tseeu, tseeu," or something like "spring-o'-the-year, spring-o'-the-year." Children like to fancy that the bird calls out the latter notes when the soft blue April skies and threatening rain clouds make them think of May flowers. When alarmed the bird utters a nasal, sputtering note, and quickly flies away, then a short time later alights on a fence rail or low perch.

This bird is not a true lark, nor are they even closely related to the famous larks of the Old World.

Meadowlarks really belong to the same family that blackbirds and orioles do, though one would never suppose such a relationship. In many localities this attractive little bird is classed and shot as a game bird, a very cruel and unjust practice. The farmers have few better friends than these birds who destroy a large amount of obnoxious and injurious insects and beetles. Grasshoppers seem to be their favorite food and it is surprising what a large amount they consume every month of the year. Caterpillars too are eaten nearly every day and for as many meals as they can be found. Boll weevils, the little insects that cause so much annoyance and devastation to cotton growers, are devoured by meadowlarks, as is also the alfalfa weevil. These birds vary their diet with a bit of vegetable food made up of waste grain and weed seeds. Meadowlarks are even more useful birds to the farmer and fruit grower than most, for if need be the bird can exist on either a whole vegetable or exclusively on animal food, without any serious effect.

Meadowlarks prefer living in grassy plains and uplands covered with a thick growth of grass or weeds, near water. It is in these surroundings that they can glean the most desirable food, and not being fond of flying, they dislike to travel far for their meals. Their long, slender bills are a great help in snapping up insects, and their short tail and long, strong legs make walking easy. They have large claws, that also are well adapted for walking purposes.

The birds vary in size, measuring from ten to eleven inches. Mr. Meadowlark is more brightly dressed than Mrs. Meadowlark, but both wear about the same colored clothes, which is more gray in winter so as to be less showy. The upper parts are brown, varied to chestnut, deep brown and black, while the crown is streaked brown and black, with a queer cream-colored streak through the center. Above the eyes appear two different lines, one being dark brown and the other yellow. High up on the breast is a round black spot looking like a bib, and underneath the bird is yellow. The outer tail-feathers are white, and scarcely show while the bird is walking about, but are quite conspicuous in flight. The birds have a queer habit of turning their backs to a person, when they see him approaching, as if to hide the bright yellow spots on their breast.

The nests are made of grass in a meadowland or marsh, and are frequently arched over with grasses. No other bird's home is in such danger of being destroyed by passersby as is the meadowlark's.

Three to five white eggs, speckled with brown, are laid, and the mother hovers over them in anxious eagerness till the babies appear. The first brood is usually large enough to skip about, out of harm's way by the time the mowing machines come through the grass fields and over the little home but by that time, usually, another nest of eggs has been laid. The frightened little mother jumps up, just before the sickle is ready to crush her, runs a few feet and then flies away, sadly crying for her lost home.

THE INDIGO BUNTING

IT is almost impossible to realize that the indigo bunting is a near relative of the drab-colored sparrow, possessing many of his traits, and feeding mainly on seeds of grasses and herbs, and insects and larvae found on the ground. Thoreau called the male's beautiful coat of blue, "glowing indigo." It has frequently been compared to the sky, but is more intense. Mr. Indigo Bunting's plumage is difficult to describe, for in various lights his coat, with the exception of his head, seems to undergo an entire change.

Sometimes the color ripples and changes like the waves on a lake, and then the blue seems to be tinted greenish shades and reflections, then other

markings and hues show, but part of the wings and tail feathers are always a brown, and the head and chin a rich indigo. The bill and feet are dark. But Mrs. Indigo Bunting dresses much like a sparrow, having a brownish back and a yellowish gray-green breast, only faint indications of blue can be seen in her wings and tail.

A queer change takes place in the plumage of the male when he is two years old or older. Alexander Wilson, the great American ornithologist, describes it in this manner: "There is one singularity, that in some lights his plumage appears of a rich sky blue, and, in others, of vivid verdigris green; so that the same bird in passing from one place to another before your eyes seems to undergo a total change of color. . . . From this, however, must be excepted the color of the head, which is not affected by the change of position."

Indigo buntings are found east of the Rockies, being most abundant in North America from the Hudson Bay to Panama. They winter in Central America and Mexico, migrating north about the latter part of May and staying until September. They like best to live along roadsides lined with small trees and bushes, or in pastures along the edges of swamps. Indigo buntings are not quite so large as the common field sparrows, nor yet as small as the chippies. They are rather timid birds, and are never seen around a dwelling, nor do they seem to be very sociable, each family living to itself.

Mrs. Indigo Bunting builds the little home, while

her husband sits upon a high bough, which seems to be his favorite perch, singing to her. The nest is made very loosely of grass, twigs, roots, hair, bits of bark, and dead leaves, and is placed low in a bush or shrub. It takes twelve days for the eggs to hatch, and while the mother is sitting, her husband sings to her from a tree top in the neighboring field. But he seems carefully to avoid the nest, and never tries to hide, probably thinking that his bright coat could never be hidden.

The mother feeds the babies little green worms and grasshoppers, and it keeps her quite busy to provide enough food for her growing family. Indigo bunting babies are very active, and the second day after they are hatched, hop all about the nest, and soon start trying to fly. Apparently the only help that the father gives in rearing his children is in helping to teach them to fly. The flight of all buntings is short, and seems to be rather hard, lacking grace and ease of motion.

The song of this bird is pretty but not extraordinary. It varies with different birds, some appearing to be much better singers than others. Their usual note sounds like a series of canary-like warbles, constantly repeated and rising in height with each new utterance. They also have a metallic call that resembles "cheep, cheep," uttered in slow repetition.

Alexander Wilson calls the bunting a "vigorous and pretty good songster," as he sits in the highest tree top and chants his lay.

THE CUCKOO

IN Europe cuckoos are known as "the darlings of the spring" because there they are as much harbingers of the gladsome springtime as the bluebird and robin are in this country.

There are about two hundred known species of cuckoos living in warm countries, of which only two inhabit the United States and eastern Canada. These two species, the black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoos, are not really well known, because of their quiet and retiring habits. It is rather hard to make the acquaintance of these birds, as they flit about in the deepest recesses of the woods. Even when they feel sure no one is watching them, they fly stealthily from tree to tree, as if afraid of being seen or

heard. At the slightest noise they disappear among the leaves in the topmost branches, where they can scarcely be seen.

Cuckoos are rather slender, shapely birds, being about a foot in length. They are easily distinguished from any other bird by their sharp, arched bills, which are as long as their heads. The color of the bills is the chief distinguishing mark between the two species found in this country. The under part of the yellow-billed cuckoo's bill is a deep yellow, while that of the black-billed species is black. They have peculiarly shaped toes, two of them turning forward and two backward, which especially adapts them to clinging instead of climbing.

The plumage of both species of birds is olive brown with bronze tints, making a shade known as rufous when applied to the color of birds. The yellow-billed cuckoos are a shade lighter than their relatives, and they also have white outer tail feathers tipped with black, like thumb-nail marks, while the black-billed species have reddish spots about their eyes.

Both families of cuckoos are known as rain crows, for many people think they can foretell the weather, because on damp, cloudy days they can often be heard singing. But the real reason is that the cuckoos prefer misty weather to sunshiny days. On account of their deep, mournful notes they are looked upon by many people with superstitious awe. The song of the European cuckoo, which really is sweet and melodious, has inspired many poets to writing beautiful poems.

The song of the yellow-billed cuckoo sounds like "kuk-kuk-kuk," but it lacks any sweetness and beauty. The black-billed species chants, or rather croaks in a guttural tone "con, con, con, con," many times, raising and dropping its broad flat tail with each repetition. The song soon becomes monotonous and wearisome.

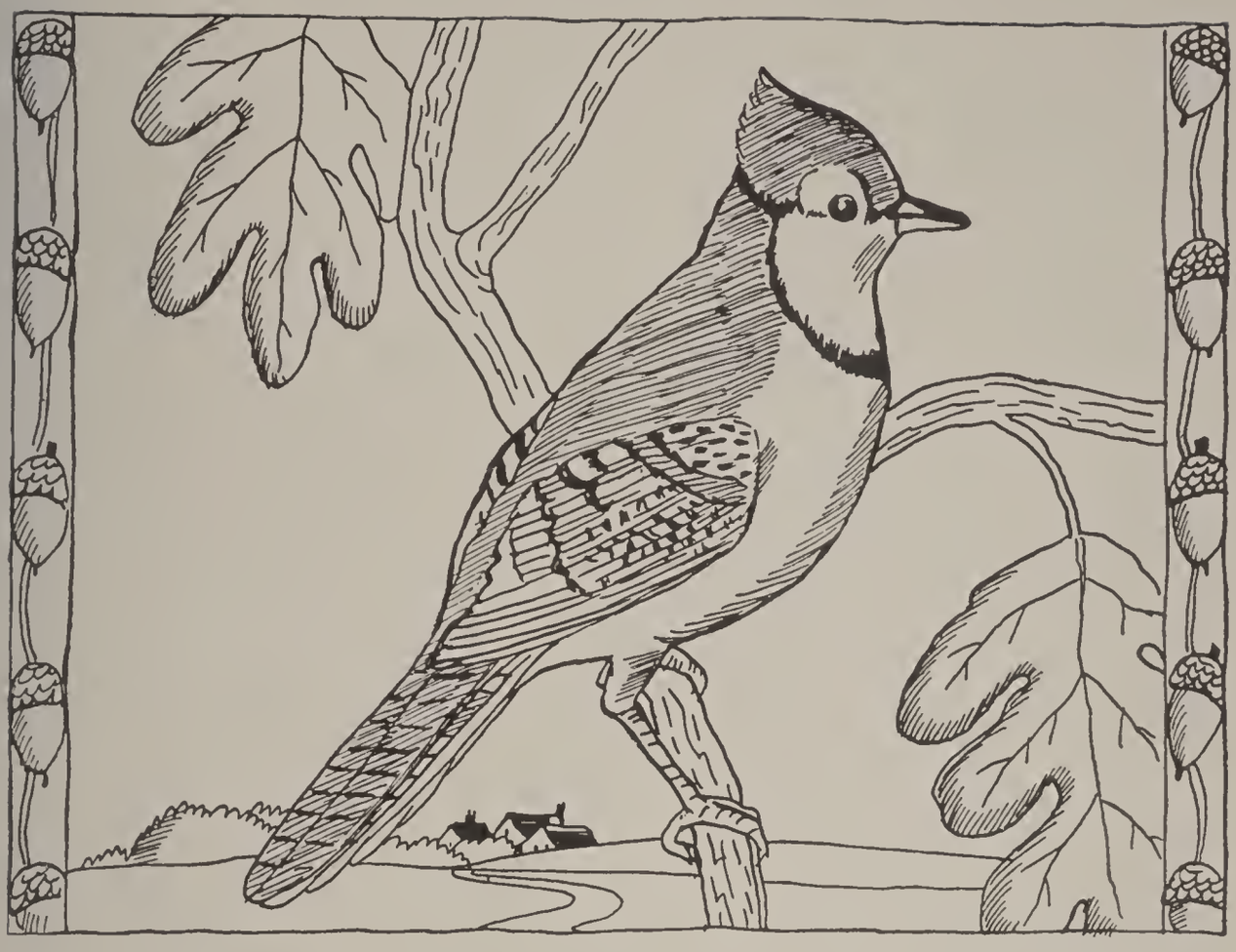
The yellow-billed species is the most abundant in the southern part of its range, breeding from the Gulf to southern Canada and wintering in Central America. The black-billed species is found from the eastern part of this country to southern Canada and west to the Rockies. They migrate northward in May, leaving again for their winter homes in September.

In some places the cuckoo is looked upon with disfavor, because it is thought that, like the European species, it lays its eggs in the nests of other birds. But this is not true of these cuckoos, for though their home is very rude, still it serves the purpose of a nest. A flat, shabby platform of twigs placed at a low elevation in a thicket or the lower branches of a tree is all the nest they make. Mrs. Cuckoo does most of the work, and, though the house is rather untidy, the birds seem to be very proud of their little domicile. But they are very sensitive about having their home touched, and if they are aware that their nest has been examined, they will desert it.

Four dull greenish-blue eggs are laid, those of the yellow-billed species being a lighter shade and a bit

larger. The day before the babies leave the nest, they are thickly covered with sharp-pointed pin feathers, which makes them look like tiny porcupines. But in twenty-four hours they are garbed in a fine coat of shining feathers, and a few days after they start flying, they are strong enough to make the long trip from the northernmost part of their range to their winter homes. It is amazing how fast the babies do grow.

Cuckoos are among our most valuable birds, consuming large quantities of hairy caterpillars that are so destructive, and which so few other birds will eat. They also eat large numbers of beetles, grasshoppers, katydids, locusts, and other harmful insects. The larger part of their food consists of these insects, but they will also eat wild fruits, and seem especially to relish wild mulberries.



THE BLUE JAY

IN southern France they tell the boys and girls a queer legend about the coming of the blue jay. Once there were two little girls, who were very dear friends, named Zacia and Tourtourelle. They told each other of their dreams in which they thought they were birds, so one day in fun they planned that the first one up in the morning should be a bird. Zacia went to bed early and to sleep, hoping to be the first one up, but Tourtourelle was afraid she would oversleep if she went to bed, so she did not go at all. When the first sunbeams came streaming through the window, Zacia awoke and the first thing that she noticed she found she was covered with soft blue feathers. She was so happy, and hearing a lark

sing, mocked him, and that is how the little girl was turned into a jay and has been happy ever since.

Blue jays are members of a family consisting of about two hundred species, including ravens, crows, and magpies, and are found in every country of the world except Australia. The vivacious blue jays are found on the eastern coast of North America, westward to the plains, from northern Canada to Florida and eastern Texas, subspecies being found in other parts of this country. They are permanent residents throughout their ranges, though often one sees flocks of them flying about, they are only in search of better feeding grounds.

With the exception of the cardinal, none of our winter birds wear quite as handsome gowns as do the blue jays, and no bird is more dignified and kingly looking. The birds measure from eleven to twelve inches in length, being somewhat larger than a robin. Mr. and Mrs. Blue Jay wear the same handsome clothes, being a metallic blue above, and wearing a black band around the throat, which joins with more black feathers on the back of the neck, like a pair of beads with a locket at the end. Their waistcoats are a dusky white, contrasting beautifully with the rich blue upper portions. The wing coverts and the tail are a wonderful blue, like a bit of the bluest skies of October or June, and are barred with black, giving them a handsome appearance. The tail is very much rounded and contains many feathers, each carefully tipped with white; few birds can boast of such a wonderful tail.

ZACIA AND TOURTOURELLE WERE VERY DEAR FRIENDS.

No bird is more vigorous, alert, and dashing in winter and autumn, but during the mating and nesting season they are rather shy and timid. As soon as the courting days are over and the little family has grown up, the harsh voices can be heard, but in summer they are as quiet and retiring as any bird. Unfortunately, through the ignorance of some people, this bird has been given rather a bad reputation, which it does not deserve at all. After a careful survey by the government experts it has been found that the blue jay is far more beneficial than destructive, and deserves the fullest protection. It is seldom, if ever, that the blue jay kills other birds, and although they may sometimes, when driven by hunger, take the eggs of other birds, this cannot make it worth while to destroy the blue jays.

Nuts of various kinds form a large part of this bird's diet, acorns predominating. But they are very fond of beechnuts, chestnuts, chinquapins, and hazelnuts. Blue jays will gather nuts, just as the squirrels do, and store them away for winter use, showing that the bird has an intelligence above that possessed by many feathered creatures. In winter the eggs of the destructive tent caterpillar and the hibernating larvae of the brown-tail moth are eagerly sought for by the blue jays.

More than one-half of the bird's food in summer is made up of insects, many of them of injurious character. During the month of August it was found that the larger part of the blue jay's food was made up of grasshoppers, and during the summer

months caterpillars make up about a tenth of their diet. But the best service that the bird gives is in eating grasshoppers late in the season, and feeding on hibernating insects and their eggs. Some fruit and grain is eaten, but this is mostly wild or waste material.

Blue jays are quite as good mimics as the mocking birds or cat birds, and are fearful teasers. How they do love to chase a blinking owl about in the day time, or repeat the cry of a poor, distressed bird. Their most common note is a two-syllabled whistle, or harsh, jingling scream, sounding something like "jay, jay," hence the name given them. But they have a variety of other notes that they like to pour out, especially in winter, when they really do not sound so discordant even to the finest music-loving ears.

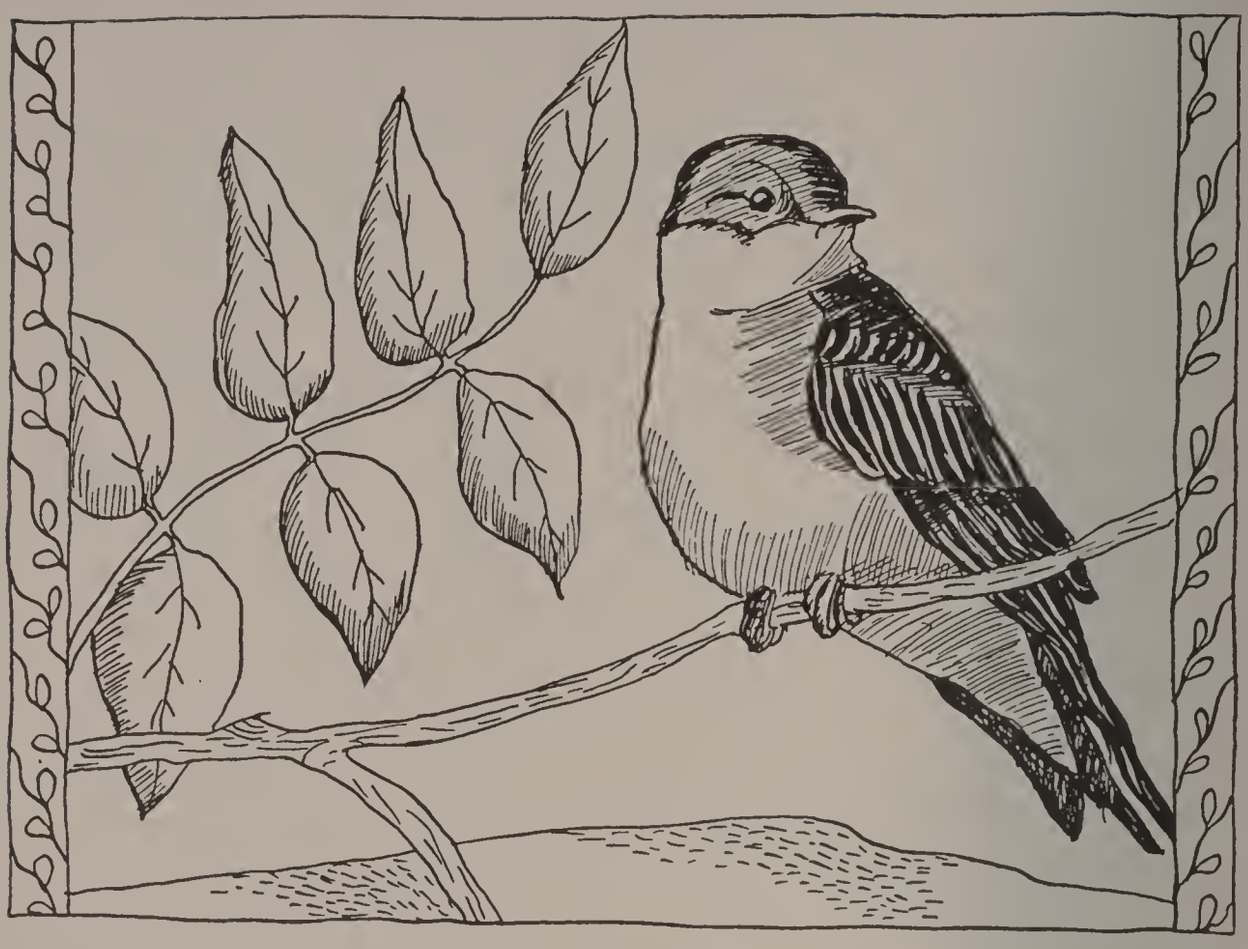
The strong little home is made of twigs and sticks in bushes or low trees. Pines are a favorite nesting place, and they afford a good shelter. Four pale green eggs, spotted with brown, are laid. When in the vicinity of their nests blue jays are always cautious and silent.

The Florida blue jay is smaller and has less white on the wings and tail than the blue jay. It is a resident of the middle and southern portions of Florida, chiefly along the coast. These birds eat more animal matter than their northern relatives, and like best to live in scrub oaks. The children who are familiar with both of these jays will readily observe that these birds are slower in flight than the blue jays,

and spend more of their time on the ground. Their habits and song are about the same as the other jays.

The green jays are fairly common in Texas and other parts of the states around the Gulf. They are very pretty birds, a bit larger than the blue jays, and they wear a greenish gown. Their song is as varied as that of the mocking bird, and their nest is very hard to find. They are very fond of the eggs of other birds, and it is said kill many baby birds.

The Canada jay is found in eastern North America from the United States northward, and is a familiar bird to trappers, hunters, and campers in the northern woods. The lumbermen call them by various names as *whisky jack, moose bird,* and so forth. The birds are great favorites with the lumbermen, for they are always lively and cheerful and play all kinds of pranks.



THE TREE SWALLOW

The swallow is come!
The swallow is come!
O, fair are the seasons, and light
Are the days that she brings,
With her dusky wings,
And her bosom snowy white!
—Longfellow.

AFTER hearing the legend told about the tree swallow we no longer wonder why this little bird looks so much like a kite as it darts and plunges through the air. As we all know the fairies are wonderful little creatures and it is said that one time as they watched a little boy flying his kite, years and years ago, they thought it would be wonderful if a

bird could circle and dart about like the kite. So the fairies took the idea to the queen and as she stood watching the kite sail in the air, then turn and sway downward and then up again, she thought the same thing. Through her magic power the boy's green and white kite was changed into the tree swallow.

These birds are small, graceful creatures, with long powerful wings which enable them to fly a great distance. It is nearly inconceivable to think that so small a bird will travel so far to avoid cold weather, or in search of food. They fly higher in the air than do the barn swallows, and all swallows can readily be recognized by their way of flying, or darting from place to place, and their twittering notes.

As Emily Huntington has written:

As swift as the light he is flashing along,
High up in the glimmering blue,
Then low at my feet, where the blossoms are sweet,
And the meadows are sparkling with dew.

Tree swallows are probably the most abundant members in this family of birds, and breed in the northern half of the United States and northward to Labrador and Alaska. These are the only members in the swallow family to spend their winters in this country, being the first to come north and the last in the autumn to leave for their winter homes. Even then Edmund C. Stedman missed them so much, that when he saw them traveling southward he poured out his heart in these words:

Wither away, swallow
Wither away?
Canst thou no longer tarry in the North
Here, where our roof so well hath screened thy nest?
Not one short day?

As far as is known and can be ascertained these birds migrate by day, traveling in large flocks, which often stop to rest on telegraph or telephone wires. It is not an uncommon sight to see thousands of them together in one of these fall migrations, and it is quite marvelous to see so many of these gay little creatures swaying back and forth on the wires. At night they seek the shelter of a woods or marsh, and thus travel leisurely southward.

At a little distance these swallows appear to be black above, but as they suddenly dart past you it can be seen that their feathers above are a steely blue or a lustrous dark green. Mrs. Tree Swallow is slightly duller than the male, but all wear a white waistcoat. They are about six inches in length, and have very weak feet, suited only for perching. It is from their wings and tail that they get the power and momentum for their long and rapid flights. Their tail is long and forked, and their wings when outspread are very wide for so small a bird. They have large mouths which are adapted for insect capturing. It is wonderful to watch the birds skimming and circling over meadows and streams in a perfect ecstasy of flight, and scooping up insects as they speed along. Insects make up their main

diet—they consume a countless number of mosquitoes.

Tree swallows take almost as kindly to building their nests in boxes as do martins, wrens, bluebirds, and other birds. But some of the birds are still primitive in their habits and prefer their original homes, a nest in the hollow of a tree. And some, though they live in the boxes provided for them by people, still rest in their old ancestral homes. The birds nest both in colonies and pairs, and make their houses of grass, lined with feathers. Four to five plain white eggs are laid, and as the birds come so early northward they have plenty of time to rear two broods, which accounts for the great size of some of the flocks we see.

The first babies hatch out about the Fourth of July, and usually help to celebrate that great day with their noisy clamor for food. The babies are brownish gray, but even they have white breasts, which has frequently given them the name of *white-breasted swallow.* In a short time the little fellows start hunting their own food, and their mother begins sitting again. After the second brood is hatched out, the parents and other children join the youngsters and they have a happy time together.

THE YELLOW WARBLER

THE yellow warbler or summer warbler is truly a bird of the sun as the legend which is told about it proves it to be. At the beginning of the world when all the birds wore gray frocks, a group of the sweetest singers of the warblers one day went out to the edge of their forest home and were astonished to see how bright and beautiful the sun was as it drifted higher in the eastern skies. "If we were only half as pretty and cheery as the golden sun god," sighed one of the birds, "what happiness we could give to the earthly children." And the other warblers piped sweetly, "che-wee, che-wee," meaning yes, yes.

So hour after hour the birds twittered among the

trees skirting the forest and watched the sun as it grew brighter and brighter. At last a stray sunbeam touched the birds and seeing their sorrow asked them why they were grieving. "We want to be as bright and cheery looking as you are," confessed one of the warblers. "Our coats are so dreary looking they will cheer no one and we want to make the earth people happy." Then the little sunbeam asked the birds to come out and so turned their dresses into the beautiful yellow plumage these birds now wear. Perhaps that is the reason why these active, restless little birds will travel two thousand miles or more in a single season just to follow the sun.

Probably the yellow warblers are the most abundant of the members of this vast family, which includes seventy or more species. These sprightly, gay-colored little birds are found nearly everywhere after their migrations northward in May, and usually can be seen in parks, orchards and gardens everywhere except in the southwestern states, where another species replaces them. Unlike most of the other warblers this vivacious little creature will stay around our homes nearly all summer, and its energy and good nature seems only to be increased by the heat. Perhaps it is because there are more insects in the summer, which make up the main diet of these birds, that makes them work so hard during the warm weather.

These warblers are about the size of an English sparrow, or a bit smaller and the upper parts of the male are olive-yellow, being the brightest on the

crown, while the underparts are a bright yellow streaked with reddish-brown. The tails and wings are a dusky olive-brown edged with yellow. Mrs. Yellow Warbler wears the same colored gown, but has less reddish-brown marks, so at a distance the two mates cannot be told apart. Perhaps it is because these little creatures spend so much of their time in the sun that they look so much like a stray sunbeam as they dart in and out of the shrubbery and trees around our homes. Their feathers, as well as their happy voices, seem to have absorbed all of the sun's brightness.

Yellow warblers are probably the best singers in this large family of birds and Mr. Yellow Warbler is especially musical and melodious while wooing his mate. Ticell has said, "In lulling strains the feathered warblers woo." Seven times in rapid succession does Mr. Yellow Warbler sing "sweet-sweety-sweet-sweet-sweet-sweeter-sweeter" to the bride of his choice. After a while the same notes become monotonous to most other listeners, but the little birds seem never to tire of hearing them. At other times the warblers chant a sharp, hearty "che-wee, che-wee."

Being among the last of the birds to migrate northward it is usually late in May before these warblers start making a nest. They seem to like best to make their neat, dainty little home in a willow tree along a creek, preferring always to build near water. Both of the birds help to build the little mansion, which is a strong, compact structure of

milkweed down, soft grasses and leaves, ferns and other soft material, lined with hair and feathers and firmly quilted together. The tiny cradle is usually fastened to an upright fork or branch at a low elevation. From three to five tiny eggs are laid, and the mother is one of the most gentle and amiable parents in birdland.

JUNCOES

ONE day a group of fairies were having a delightful picnic in the midst of a dark woods when they heard someone crying, so one of the fairies went to search where the sound came from. By and by she returned bringing with her a little girl wiping her tearful eyes.

"My dear, what is the matter?" asked the leader of the fairies, taking the little girl's hand in hers and patting it.

"I tried so hard to make some one happy and I couldn't," sobbed the little girl. "I couldn't do very much, but I tried so hard," she added.

Then the little fairy stooped and kissed her and put in her hand a sparkling wand. "The first thing

THE FAIRY FOUND A LITTLE GIRL WIPING HER TEARFUL EYES.

whatever it is, you wish on the wand shall be yours," said the fairy. "It is the only way in which I can give you any joy, and you can choose whatever way you want to give others happiness."

The little girl thanked her and smilingly skipped away, but long before she reached home she heard a bird singing joyfully and she murmured, "I wish I were a little gray bird who would stay here and be happy all winter," and immediately she turned into a junco.

Juncoes are one of the most familiar and well-loved winter visitors in eastern North America and are also found in Siberia and Alaska, but are not known in the warmer climates. They breed from the Catskills and New England states and northward, and spend their winters as far south as the Gulf. With the first snowstorm they come drifting back to the states like a falling snowflake. Like the cheerful little chickadees these birds are protected by a layer of fat just below the skin, so even in the coldest weather they are active and cheerful.

These little winter messengers may be easily distinguished by their pinkish bill and white outer tail feathers, which are very conspicuous in flight. These birds are very gentle and unassuming in their quiet, drab plumage. Mr. Junco wears an upper waistcoat of slate color, which is darkest on his head. Sometimes it is nearly black and looks like the cowl that a monk wears. His breast is gray, and farther underneath he is whitish-gray. Mrs. Junco wears a lighter-gray gown tinted with black.

The little homes are built low in hollow stumps or logs or even on the ground, and are constructed from grass, hairs and feathers. The birds are active, tidy little workers and the tiny cradle is a charming, well-built home. Four or five white, or bluish-white eggs, evenly marked with small reddish-brown spots are laid.

The most common note used by the juncoes is a crisp, sharp sound resembling "tsip, tsip," and is always uttered as an alarm call. Their song is a sweet, low, rippling trill, which is especially beautiful when given by a whole flock in unison when the earth is covered with snow.

With the exception of the chickadees none of our winter birds are more sociable or will respond more readily to encouragement than juncoes. They will visit feed boxes day after day. Most of their food is made up of a vegetable and animal diet and because they destroy a great many harmful and obnoxious insects they are very useful birds. Among the animal life they destroy are beetles, weevils, wasps, caterpillars, grasshoppers and spiders.

A species known as the Catolina Junco is found in the Alleghany regions from Virginia to Georgia, while other species are found west of the Rockies, so all the boys and girls in this country can have a chance to become acquainted with this charming little creature.

THE SNOWFLAKE OR SNOW BUNTING

MANY, many years ago two little girls were watching the snow hour after hour as it came drifting down from a leaden-colored sky.

"If only something beautiful would come down out of the sky, instead of just snow, heaps and heaps of snow, I would be so glad," complained the taller of the girls, closing her tired eyes with a long sigh.

"But how can that be, sister, for all the birds have long ago gone south?"

At last tired of watching the falling snow the girls put on their wraps and went outside. By and by they began making all kinds of objects from the soft, clinging snow and finally they made some birds and threw them up into the air.

"Oh, just look, look sister," cried the younger girl in excitement as two little whitish-brown birds came fluttering to the ground near them. "Our snow birds have changed into real birds." And ever since these little snowflakes or snow buntings have preferred living in the Arctic regions.

Of these birds Ernest Thompson Seton, a great naturalist, has written: "In midwinter, in the far north, when the thermometer showed thirty degrees below zero and the chill blizzard was blowing on the plains, I have seen this brave little bird gleefully chasing his fellows, and pouring out his sweet voluble song as he flew, with as much spirit as ever skylark has in the sunniest days of June."

These sturdy little birds breed from Labrador to the Hudson Bay and northward, seldom coming south as far as the northern states, except during an unusually heavy snowfall or cold winter. In Canada they are one of the most familiar, popular and well-loved birds and spend their summers in the coldest Arctic regions. When they come to the United States they drift in like falling snowflakes, making their name truly appropriate.

Snowflakes, when grown, measure about seven inches in length and have a sparrowish appearance. In summer the adults wear a white gown trimmed heavily in black and in winter the black is washed with brown. The birds are usually found in flocks and they feed on seeds, usually finding some old weed stalks above the deepest banks of snow, on which they joyfully feed where other birds would

starve. The little creatures are very restless and rather timid and often when feeding will start up and flit away, the whole group rising at the same time. The least noise will start all of the flock.

Instead of hopping about as do most of the sparrow tribe, snowflakes walk over the frozen fields. The birds seldom sit in trees or other perches higher than a low shrub or rail fence, for they are ground birds.

These little creatures are very quiet and about their only song is a short sweet whistle when they are flying, and a low twittering while they are feeding.

The dainty little home is made of grass and moss and neatly lined with feathers, and the whole is sunk into spagnum moss, a soft covering found in abundance in the Arctic regions. Three to five greenish-white, brown speckled eggs are laid. The babies are quaint little birds, but they grow rapidly and are soon hopping and skipping about quite as active as their parents and delighting in cold, icy blasts.

THE CHIMNEY SWIFT

MANY grandparents tell the quaint little story of the coming of the chimney swift. Many, many years ago a little boy and girl were playing with a wooden toy bird.

"I wish the little bird could fly," said the little girl, and the boy wished the same thing.

"And was all pretty colored," he added, and then a happy thought came to him, and opening the door of the little heating stove he threw the unpainted toy on the burning coals. "Run out doors quickly, Mollie," he commanded, "and see what a pretty bird will come out of the chimney."

Shutting the stove door quickly he followed his little sister outside just in time to see a bird, as

gray as smoke, come fluttering out of the chimney. "Oh, see how it flies, brother," shouted the little girl, and for a long time they watched the bird as it darted and skimmed around the chimney. From that day to this the chimney swift is always associated with chimneys.

Many call the chimney swift the "chimney swallow," but the birds are not even related to the swallows, though both are such marvelous fliers. This bird is a relative of the nighthawks and whippoorwills, though differing so much in habits. No other bird can surpass or equal the chimney swift in powerful flight, and often it flies many thousand miles in a single day. And the strangest part of the journey is that nowhere does the bird rest except in chimneys, no matter how tired it gets. Their flight is rather peculiar, and spines on the end of each tail feather enable the birds to cling upright to any wall, and slowly hitch their way upward. When flying, the motion they make somewhat resembles rowing, for first one wing is brought forward and then the other. Compared to the swallow's flight the swift's flying looks awkward and ungraceful, but in power and swiftness they can put these birds to sorry plight.

These little birds are found in North America, east of the Plains, breeding from Labrador to Florida, Panama and Central South America. Their favorite months of migration are April and October. Like the swallows, originally these swifts dwelt in the hollows of trees, and some of the old-fashioned birds

still prefer living there. But with the advent of man and chimneys many have chosen the latter as their homes. The unused chimneys of old dwellings are of course preferable as nesting places for these smoke-colored birds, but often these little creatures will build their homes in a chimney that is occasionally used through the nesting season, and the heat of the fire will melt the glue that holds their home to the walls, and down come "babies, cradle and all."

Chimney swifts are small birds measuring from five to five and a fourth inches in length, but their long wings make them appear much larger. The wings extend even an inch and a half beyond the long tail, and give the bird a slender appearance. Both Mr. and Mrs. Chimney Swift wear a gray, sooty cloak, with patches on the throat a trifle lighter. No bird has a more modest, Quakerish gown, and few have quieter, less enthusiastic habits. Their feet are exceedingly muscular and have sharp claws, adapted for clinging. These birds resemble bats more than they do any other birds, and being so unobtrusive often are not noticed as they creep about the chimneys of houses. They are seldom seen near the ground.

Early in the morning and late in the afternoon myriads of chimney swifts may often be seen flitting about for insects, but at night they always go back to their chimneys. One sometimes wonders why the birds prefer a dirty, smoky chimney to a nest in the clean out-of-doors, but perhaps having been born in a chimney, according to our grandparents' tales,

they prefer living there for the remainder of their lives.

Like the swallows, the swifts have not been gifted with a great song, but they utter a continuous and musical twittering while on the wing, and also from the depths of the chimney.

The birds gather the material for their nests while in full flight, snapping off little twigs and branches of trees as they flit past them. The nests are semi-circular affairs, shaped something like an old-fashioned cradle, and are glued to the walls by a saliva excreted by the parents during the nesting period. Three to five long narrow eggs are laid, and usually two broods are reared in a year. The babies are rather weak and not until they are a month old do they ever get out of their dark home. But these swifts, despite their gloomy nesting place, seem always to be happy and contented and are never heard quarreling.

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT, SAILOR OF THE AIR

MOST of the bird legends relate that long, long ago all birds had gray plumage, and one day a white-throated swift, which at that time had no white throat, was flying over a desert. It was very hot and so the bird flew to a steep precipice to rest. By and by a donkey came along and stepped on the swift's tail and cut it off short; and in trying to get away the bird broke her leg and then plunged down into the deep canyon. She cried piteously for help, but not till the next morning did a mountain goat come to her aid. The goat brought the swift some water on the ends of his horns, and when she felt a little better the goat kneeled down and the swift managed to hop on his back. The little swift clung

THE LITTLE SWIFT CLUNG TIGHTLY TO HER FRIEND'S BACK.

tightly to her friend's back, fearing she would fall off, and so closely did she cling that her throat became all covered with the goat's fleece; and that is the reason these swifts have had white throats ever since.

There are nearly one hundred species of swifts known and they are found in all parts of the world. They are especially noted for their rapid, graceful flight, but the white-throated swift flies faster even than most of its relatives, being one of the fastest flying of all birds. The birds have strong, flexible wings, made so from constant use, but weak feet. They delight in perching on steep cliffs, their feet clinging to the slippery walls and bracing themselves on their short, stout tails. They fly all day without seeming to tire, catching most of their food on the wing and eating an enormous amount of insects, flies, bugs and other air creatures. At dusk these swifts return to their huge nesting places in large flocks, circling and whirling and flying in every way imaginable.

White-throated swifts are about six and a half inches in length and wear a mousey-brown or greenish-black frock trimmed with the white on their throats and a spot on their tails. These swifts are found from the eastern foothills of the Rockies on to the Pacific Ocean, and are not well known in the western states.

These birds nest in communities, often a thousand or more group together at the top of some steep cliff, which is inaccessible. It is said that these

swifts gather the twigs, with which they build their nests, in their beaks while flying. They build curious semicircular, or saucer-shaped nests in the crevices of the cliffs, and as high from the ground as possible. The little homes are placed in the crevices found among the rocks, and as far back as the holes go; sticks, leaves and so forth are used in the construction and the whole is cemented together with saliva. All the swifts are provided with this fluid, and in some countries it is certain species of swifts' nests that make up the "edible nests" which one often hears mentioned. The snug little dwelling is then carefully lined with feathers and four to six white eggs are laid. Usually two broods are raised in a season.

Perhaps because swifts are such wonderful fliers they have not been given a musical voice, and the notes that white-throated swifts utter are little more than bird chattering. Usually while flying the birds keep uttering a shrill, loud, rapid twittering.

THE CROSSBILL

THERE are many quaint and beautiful legends told about the crossbill, and about one of the most interesting of these Longfellow wrote a poem, *The Legend of the Crossbill.* This is a fanciful tale of how this bird tried to draw the nails from the hands of Christ as He hung on the cross, and in so doing crossed its bill and stained its feathers with Christ's blood.

Crossbills are curious birds with many odd and eccentric ways and habits, but they are very gentle and friendly, and every winter may be found in flocks on the outskirts of cities. They live mostly in coniferous trees, where one may see them clinging to cones in almost every conceivable way, often

with their heads pointing downward or at some peculiar angle. Frequently broken cones, upon which they are working so busily, will come rattling down to the ground. One of the American crossbill's most curious habits is for a whole flock to take flight, and circle about, without any apparent cause, only to alight again in the tree that they have just left.

These birds are members of the finch family, and were named from their queer crossed bills. The American crossbill is about six inches in length and breeds from northern New England, westward, and south to the mountains of Georgia. It prefers cold weather to warm and winters in the northern half of the United States.

The male is beautifully garbed in a coat of brick or Indian red, with brown tail and wings, and it always looks bright and modish. The females' reddish gowns are slightly mottled with dull yellow, and underneath they are a dull white. Though not as handsome as the males they look quite stylish and very neat.

The little home is built in some kind of evergreen tree, and is made of spruce twigs, shreds of bark, moss and grass. Three or four greenish-white eggs spotted with brown are laid, and the young birds are cared for very attentively by their parents.

Their call is a short flute-like whistle, which is rather thrilling, while at other times they make a low twittering sound that is not at all unmusical. When in flight, a whole flock utters in unison the flute-like whistle it is quite charming.

It is said that all crossbills are very fond of salt, and may be lured near a house in that way. Their food consists mainly of buds, berries and fruit. They seem to prefer a vegetable diet to one of meat.

The white-winged crossbills are rather rare birds, being true inhabitants of the frozen regions, breeding in the northern states and northward, and wintering in the northern half of the United States. The male is of a more rosy shade than the American crossbill, and the female more yellowish. They are also of a more roving disposition than the other species, and even more eccentric, and usually are seen in smaller flocks, but sometimes one or two may be found in company with a flock of the American crossbills. They are often seen in one locality one year and they may never visit it again. Their song is similiar to the American crossbill, and so are their nesting habits, but their eggs are a little larger and more blotched.

THE CHIPPING SPARROW

NO bird has a prettier and more sacred legend told about it than does the tame little chipping sparrow. It is said that Christ and some of His playmates delighted in modeling birds out of mud, trying to make as many different shaped birds and colors out of the same ingredients as they could. But try as hard as they would none of the other boys could make birds that would fly, for only the brownish-gray birds that Christ made would soar away. This is why, the little Indian children are told, that the chipping sparrows are so modest, unassuming and well-loved.

Chipping sparrows are one of the commonest and most useful of our many birds. They are found

throughout North America, east of the Plains, breeding from Mexico on northward to Newfoundland and the Hudson Bay. They winter in the Gulf States and southward, where they are as welcome visitors as they are throughout their range. West of the Rockies a sub-species is found, so the boys and girls throughout our country should be familiar with this humble, gay little bird. Everywhere this little messenger has endeared itself by its gentle, confiding ways, its cheeriness and from the habit it has of never getting into mischief.

Like all the members of the sparrow family the little chippies are very quietly garbed, wearing a reddish crown which is bordered with black, and wide gray eyebrows, with a black line through the eye. These distinct markings will help you to distinguish this bird from the other members of the sparrow family. Beneath, the birds are a dirty grayish-white. Like all sparrows and other seed-eating birds they have cone-shaped bills which enable them to crush and break open hard-shelled seeds.

These little birds were named from their call note, which is a sharp "chip, chip" sound, rapidly repeated for several seconds at a time. When uttered in unison by a flock, the sound resembles the music of an orchestra playing rather lightly. But this bird's greatest talent is its high, wiry, trilling song, which resembles the buzzing of a locust, and is chanted almost incessantly.

From early morning when the sun first touches

the earth, or even before, when the gray dawn is streaking all of nature with its ghost-like dimness, the chipping sparrows begin to sing and continue till midnight. "Chirup, chirup, chirup," pipes each little chipping sparrow with an exuberance that it is hard to realize can live in so small a body. They never seem to tire, and sometimes after listening for hours to the gay, throbbing song, it grows rather monotonous, yet even then we cannot help but admire the birds' energy. But in the very midst of summer there comes a time when it is usually so hot and dry that even the undaunted little chippies hush their song, and so sometimes it is almost with as much joy as we welcome the spring that we listen to their first bright "chip, chip, chip" again.

Both birds carry twigs with which to build the little home, which is a small cup-shaped structure. Long horse hairs are gathered and coiled around and around inside for a lining. From this habit these birds have received the nickname of "hairbird." The little home is placed in bushes, trees or vines, often very near to a porch or a house. Three to five bluish-green eggs, which are profusely speckled with brown on the large ends, are laid. When the babies appear no parents are kept busier than they searching for food for the youngsters, which consists entirely of seeds.

Chipping sparrows eat large quantities of insects, worms, wasps, beetles, weevils, plant lice, ants, moths and grasshoppers. Caterpillars seem to be their favorite animal food and they dine on them

every day in the year. They eat some seeds, which is mostly waste grain, and of all the birds that the government examined to see what kind of food they ate in the greatest quantities, only one had eaten a bit of wild fruit. So we see why this little bird with the pretty legend should always be protected wherever found and encouraged to stay.

THE PAINTED BUNTING

THE legend that is told in connection with the coming of the painted bunting is quite as enthralling as any fairy tale. Once upon a time a little girl took her box of paints and went to a near-by woods to practice her drawing lesson. By and by she saw a pretty butterfly and went dancing after it, leaving her unfinished picture, paints, and brush. The mischievous elves that had been playing about and watching the girl came dancing to investigate her things as soon as she was out of sight.

The fattest little elf cried in glee when he saw the paints. "Such wonderful colors!" he shouted. "Just like the rainbow! Now if I only had something to paint."

Hardly had he said the words when two little gray birds came flitting down from the trees, for it is said that at the beginning of the world all of the birds were gray.

"Why not try painting these birds with those bright colors?" asked another elf. "You catch them while I pick out the paints."

A short time later the whole merry group of elves were busy painting the birds, and never was a bird seen with such brilliant colors as they gave to Mr. Painted Bunting. When they came to Mrs. Bunting they had only two colors left, brown and green and not very much of that, so that is the reason she wears a drab-colored gown and her husband wears such a gorgeous suit.

Painted buntings belong to the finch family, a popular name for the seed-eating birds, including about five hundred and fifty species found in all parts of the world, excepting Australia. These birds are especially abundant in the United States and Canada and include such familiar birds as the sparrows, goldfinches, linnets and so forth.

Among these species are many beautiful songsters, some with brilliant colors and others garbed in somber robes. But all can be distinguished by their sharply-pointed, conical bills, which have been made strong for the crushing of seeds and hard objects. Because of its seed-eating qualities, attractive song, and bright colors the painted bunting is a favorite cage bird, but loses much of its brightness and joyousness in captivity.

By some bird authorities it is claimed, that without exception, the male painted bunting is the most gaudily feathered bird in North America. Some think that the bird is harshly colored and that the shades clash violently, while others admire the showy colors. It is hard to describe the brilliant coat of Mr. Painted Bunting, for his head is a bluish-purple, his eyes are red, his beak gray, and the upper part of his back is a yellowish-red running into a bright pink-red farther toward the tail, and extending around to his breast. His tail is a grayish-brown, about the shade of his bill, while his wings are a yellowish-gray. Mrs. Painted Bunting, strange as it may seem, does not seem to envy her mate's flashing clothes, and appears to admire him quite as much as he does himself. The birds average about five and a half inches in length and are shaped similar to an English sparrow.

These birds are found in the southwestern part of the United States, breeding from the Gulf of Mexico north to Virginia, Ohio and Kansas. They winter in Central America and are among the last of the birds that migrate northward.

Like their near relatives, the indigo buntings, these little creatures are fond of living in thickets and hedges, or in shrubbery along roadsides and in pastures, or in swamps, where they can always find plenty of seed. They are not as sociable as some birds, and are rather shy little fellows, but they always seem to be happy and in their way welcome a human visitor.

They make their little homes of grasses, leaves, bits of bark and rootlets, woven together and placed in a low elevation in a small tree or bush. Their tiny eggs are whitish, speckled and spotted with brownish-red, and the parents are very devoted and tidy homemakers.

The painted bunting has a canary-like song, which is not quite so brilliant, maybe, as the indigo buntings, but is quite sweet and melodious. Mr. Bunting seems to like to do nothing better than to sit in the top of some tree, and swaying back and forth, sing and sing to his little mate or children. Their call and conversation among themselves is a sharp little chirp, that sounds like some foreign language to a listener.

THE BROWN THRUSH, OR THRASHER

A BEAUTIFUL Indian legend is told about the brown thrush. In the old days it is said that two warriors went on a long journey. One beautiful day in March when the earth was awakening from its long sleep and everything was throbbing with life and beauty, they saw, as they passed near a forest, a brown thrasher sitting in a tree, singing.

One of the braves stopped and remarked, "I wish you a good day, thrush!"

"I have no time to thank you," chirped the thrush, "for I am busy making the summer."

The warriors looked up in astonishment, and started to protest, but the thrush retorted: "I am making the summer. It is I! I! I! who made the

green grass grow and the flowers bud. Look how even now the world is growing beautiful in answer to my song." And the gay fellow continued to warble while the two braves went on their way.

This was early in the morning, and before midday the heavens became clouded, rain began to fall, and a biting wind began to blow. By night, snow was falling thick and fast, and the thrush took refuge in heaps of dead leaves, shivering and shaking.

The next morning the braves, plodding through the snowdrifts, came upon the thrush again, and once more the friendly brave called: "I wish you a good day, thrush." The poor, discouraged bird was glad enough to return the greeting this time, and also to admit that the Great Spirit, and not himself, was responsible for the summer and all the changing seasons of the year.

Of course this is only an Indian legend. But it gives us something to think about.

Brown thrashers are near relatives of the wrens, and all members of the thrush family are near cousins. In some localities this bird is called ground thrush, from the habit it has of building its nest on the ground in wild, unsettled places. In the south, where it is found in abundance, it is known as the sandy mocker, because of its great variety of notes sounding so much like the song of the famous mocking bird.

Brown thrashers are more retiring, and probably quieter, than either catbird or the mocking bird.

They breed from the Gulf to southern Canada and west to Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, wintering in the southern half of the United States. They are among the first birds to migrate northward, coming soon after the bluebirds and robins, and returning in October. The brown thrasher was given its name from the habit it has of thrashing its long tail on the ground when excited or searching for food.

Few birds have a more handsome and neater-looking garb to wear than do the brown thrashers, both the male and the female. One seldom sees an untidy-looking, shaggy-appearing brown thrasher. Instead, they usually look as if they had just completed a careful toilet.

Mr. Brown Thrasher is rusty-red above, being darkest on his wings, which are crossed with two short white bars. His breast is white, heavily streaked, all except his throat, with dark brown, arrow-shaped spots. His bill, like his tail, is long and curved at the tip. Mrs. Brown Thrasher wears about the same colored garment, only it is a bit paler beneath.

Brown thrashers are among our most useful birds, one half of their diet consisting of animal food, including grasshoppers, crickets, caterpillars, cutworms, spiders, millepedes, wireworms, May beetles, rose beetles, rice weevils, figeaters, and other destructive and harmful insects. Most of the fruit they eat, with the exception of a few cherries, perhaps, is wild fruit.

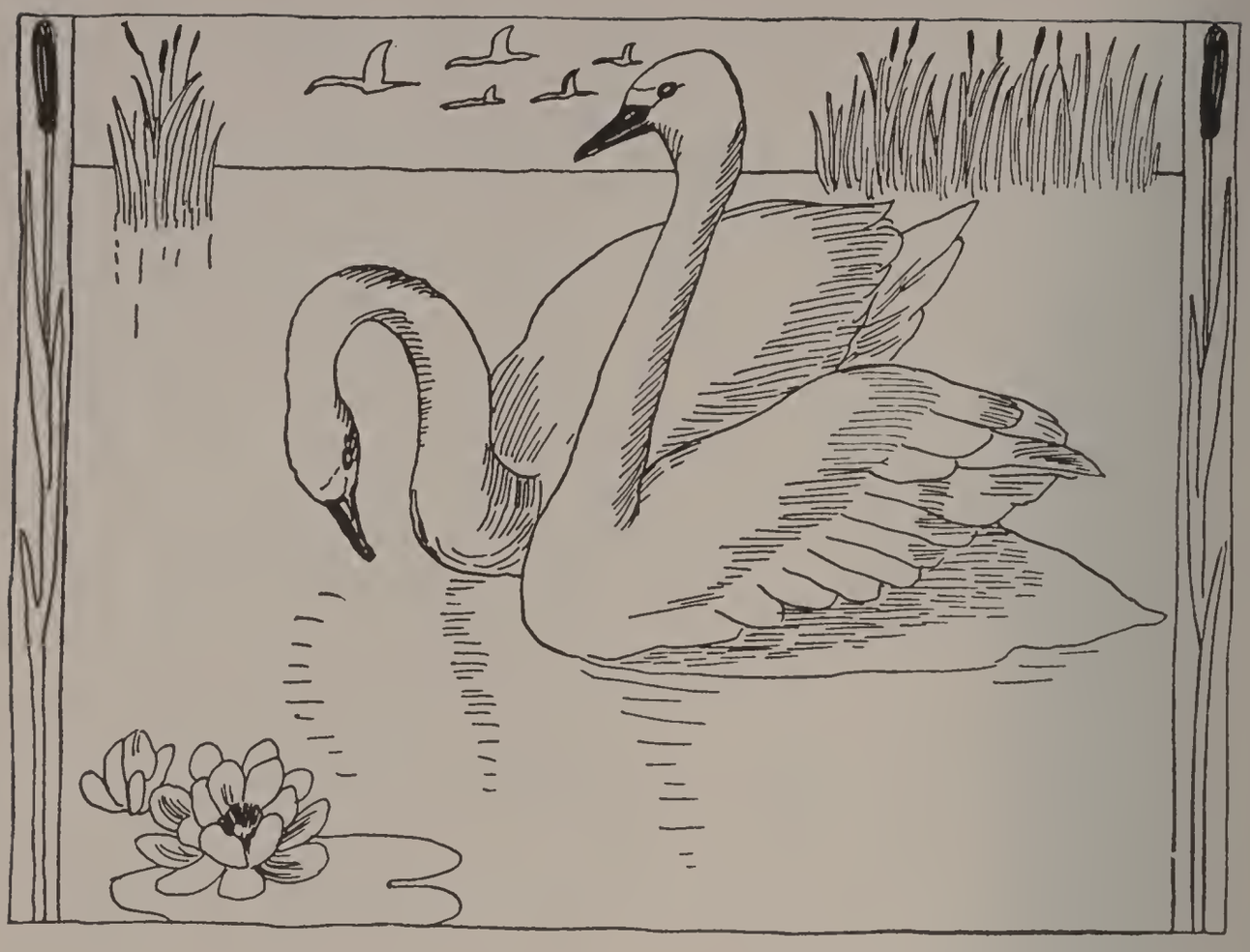
Unlike so many birds, both Mr. and Mrs. Brown Thrasher help in the building of the little home. The mother fixes the inner lining of the structure. The nest is made of twigs and grass, and is lined with fine rootlets, hair, feathers, wool, and small grasses. The eggs are of a whitish color, speckled with brown. For a few days the babies are covered with a fuzzy fur. Both birds defend their home bravely, flying back and forth between the nest and the intruder, uttering plaintive cries. Many times as a last resort, when they see their home is to be attacked, they will strike with their bills or wings.

The brown thrasher has a bright and cheerful carol, which is often long continued, but which is always sweet and clear.

The bird's favorite singing time seems to be early in the morning. When perched on the top of a tall bush or a low tree, he sways back and forth and makes joyous music. It has been the inspiration of a good many poems by well-known writers.

E. R. Sill must have felt the glad thrill in the thrasher's song when he wrote:

All the notes of the forest throng,
Flute, reed, and string, are in his song;
Never a fear knows he, nor wrong,
Nor a doubt of anything.



THE WHISTLING SWAN

And over the pond are sailing
Two swans all white as snow;
Sweet voices mysteriously wailing
Pierce through me as onward they go.
They sail along, and a ringing
Sweet melody rises on high;
And when the swan begins singing
They presently must die.

SO wrote Heine, the great German satirist, about the graceful and majestic swan, one of the most beautiful of birds. From Homer to Tennyson, poets have written about the swan, and especially about the wonderful song the birds are supposed to sing

just before they die. This, however, is an erroneous belief, for those who are familiar with swans know that they chant this wild, indescribable melody with its haunting echoes at certain times of the year, and do not expire thereafter as the poets would have us believe.

There are eight species of swans and the different families are found in various countries. The European or whistling swan, the Berwick's swan which is a smaller species, and the mute swan, which is the bird usually seen in zoological gardens and in parks and estates, are all members of the eastern hemisphere. It is said that some species of swans lose their voice when in captivity, but that the mute swan never does, hence it is the most popular for such places where swans are wanted.

The black swan, a native of Australia, has a scarlet bill banded with black, while the rest of the bird is a glistening coal black. The black-necked swan is found in South America. The trumpeter swan is even larger than the whistling species, and has a more western range in this country, being rarely found east of the Mississippi River. Its song resembles the tones of a French clarion. All swans belong to the same family of birds as do ducks and geese, and all have loud, trumpet-like notes.

The whistling swan is found in North America, nesting as far north as the Arctic Ocean and migrating to the Southern states and Gulf of Mexico in October, returning to their northern homes in April. The birds measure about fifty-five inches in length,

having a wing spread of from six to seven feet, and they look like kingly airplanes as they sail in the sky. Scientists have estimated that these birds sail along in their graceful flight at about a hundred miles an hour. Like geese and ducks the swans fly in wedge-shaped flocks, following a leader with a particularly loud, commanding voice. When swimming on a lake or some other placid body of water the swan is very graceful and lovely, and as Wordsworth wrote:

The swan, on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow.

The bill, legs and feet of the whistling swans are black, while their plumage is a spotless white, making a striking contrast. There is usually a yellow spot between the nostrils and eyes, which is lacking in the trumpeter swan. The swans are rather shy and timid, yet the domesticated swans will fight courageously when attacked and a mature swan can break a man's legs with one flap of a wing. A grown swan can throw down an average fifteen-year-old boy.

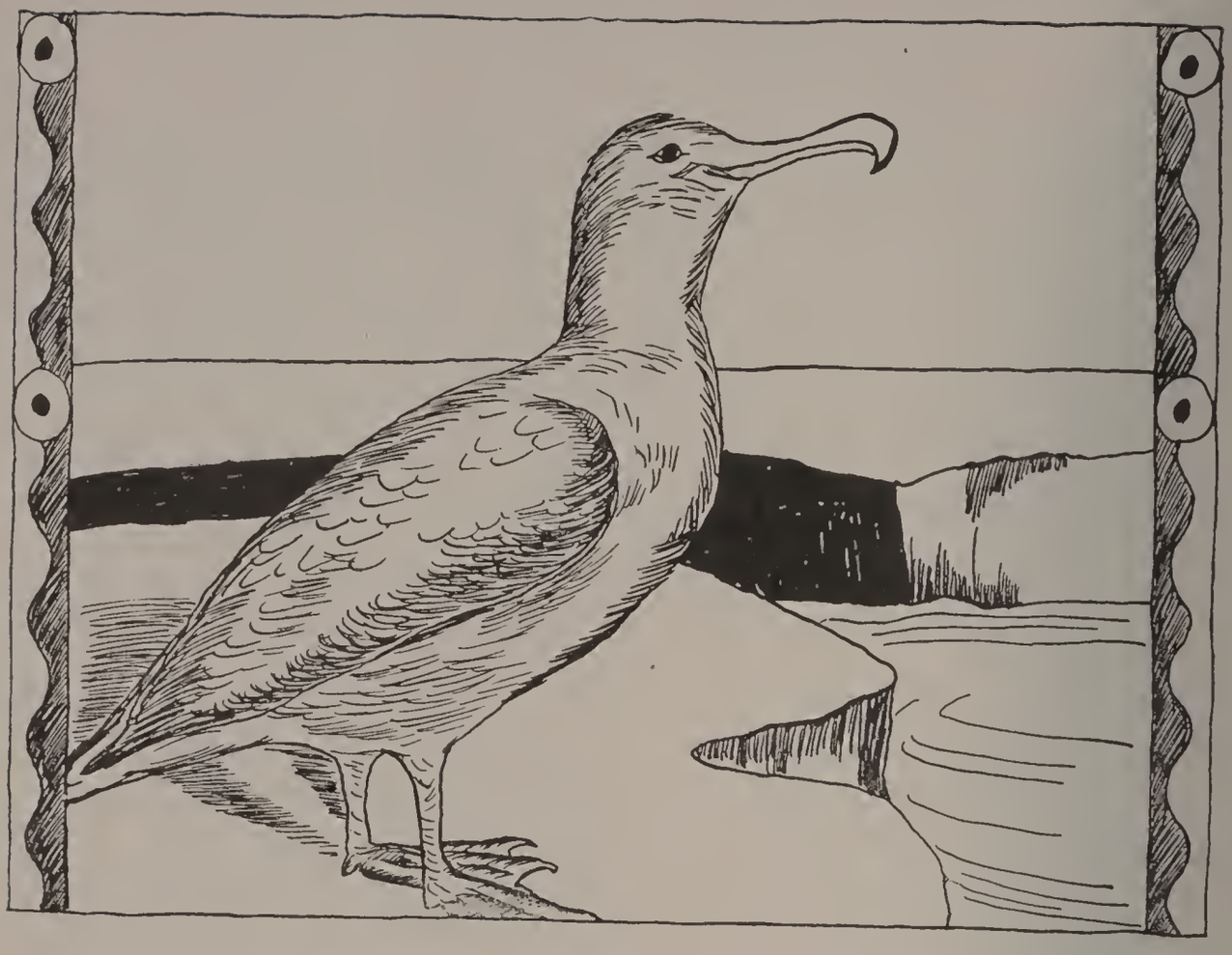
All species of swans feed on roots, water plants, worms, mollusks, and other objects found in the water, craning their long, beautiful necks far beneath the water in search of food. It is said that in the beginning, swans had no longer necks than geese and ducks, but that they were not content with the food that they could thus obtain and kept stretching and stretching their necks until they got the

long necks that they now have. No bird has a prouder, more charming manner, or a more graceful curving neck.

According to a popular myth the beautiful Helen of Troy had the semblance of a swan during the time she was wooed by the king of all gods. We are all familiar with the reference that the author of *Annie Laurie* makes to the heroine's neck being as white as a swan.

Swans are especially noisy while preening their feathers, and stopping every few moments will chant a few notes, then proceed to put each feather carefully in place. They also like to sing and call when feeding or flying, and the whistling swans fill the air with notes varying from a deep bass to the shrillest tones of a clarinet.

The swans begin house building in May, and both birds help to build the nest, which requires an enormous amount of labor. The birds gather together a pile of sticks two feet in height and often six feet across, which they line with down. Two to six rough grayish eggs are laid in June, which take five weeks to incubate. The cygnets, as the young swans are called, are of a brownish-gray color until they grow older.



THE ALBATROSS

NO bird is regarded with more superstitious veneration by sailors than the beautiful albatross, and to injure or destroy it in any way is supposed to be followed by great affliction to the destroyer. In his poem *The Ancient Mariner,* Coleridge has included this queer fancy and tells about a wanton sailor who in spite, shot down an albatross that had followed a ship. His companions praise and honor him for the deed, and so they are all punished with death, while the sailor meets the far worse fate of having to sail alone, "Alone on a wide, wide sea," as Coleridge has it, until in desperation he learns to live and reverence every moving object about him. Then at last he is mercifully released, and ever

afterward seeks men to whom he may tell his story.

Seven species of this family of birds are recorded, of which the common or wandering albatross is the best known, being most frequently seen in the seas of Southern Africa. Other species of albatross are found in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Pacific, four species being found on the waters along the western shore of this country. But all the species found along the United States are smaller than those found in the Southern seas. The sooty albatross is found chiefly in the Antarctic regions, and is often called by the sailors the *Quaker bird* on account of its prevailing brown plumage. The yellow and black-beaked albatross and the albatross of China are not known in this country.

The albatross is a cousin of the snowy and giant petrels, the skua gulls, penguins, and cape pigeons and was named from the port of *Alcatras,* meaning a *pelican.* Sailors capture this graceful bird for its long wing bones, which are made into tobacco pipe stems, and the entrails are often blown up as buoys for nets. Although the meat is dry and almost tasteless it is often eaten by the natives.

All members of the albatross family seek land only to breed, and then they usually select some lonely or isolated island, or some desolate coast. No nest of any kind is made, but the birds usually select a natural hollow or a circle of earth piled together in the open ground, on which to lay their solitary white egg. The egg is four to five inches long and spotted at the larger end, requiring forty

days to incubate. The tiny baby is covered with a sooty, fluffy down, and does not get the beautiful plumage of its parents for several months. The babies grow very slowly and require much tender care.

All birds of this family have heavy, powerful bills four inches or more in length and sharp-edged, the upper mandible terminating in a large hook which enables them better to take up the food from the water. The bills are pale yellow flushing to pink, while the feet and membrane between the toes are flesh-colored. None of the albatross have hind toes and the three anterior toes are webbed, making them truly aquatic birds. While on the water they are among the most graceful and charming of birds, but on land are rather awkward and clumsy.

It is as Doctor Arnott wrote, "How powerful must be the wing-muscles of birds, which sustain themselves in the sky for hours together." No bird has greater powers of endurance than the albatross and they will often follow a ship for days, seeming rather to float than glide in the air. It has been known that some birds have flown seven hundred and twenty nautical miles in a day, and they often come near vessels, proving objects of great interest to the voyagers.

The albatross has a hoarse cry which is often compared to that of a pelican, but probably sounds more like the braying of a mule. Immense flocks of albatrosses are found in the Behring Strait and around Kamchatka about the end of June. They

are attracted to these parts by the immense schools of fish, and the birds follow their migratory movements. When the birds first appear in these parts they are usually haggard and lean, but finding such an abundance of food they gorge themselves and rapidly become fat.

They have voracious appetites and will often swallow a salmon four or five inches long, becoming half-choked in the process, and unable to move are easily knocked down by the natives with a stick, or even picked up in the hand. They also eat other sea animals and fish, and fish-spawn seems to be one of their favorite dishes, but they never attack other birds. Large as are some of the species an albatross will never fight with another bird, thus proclaiming their good nature.

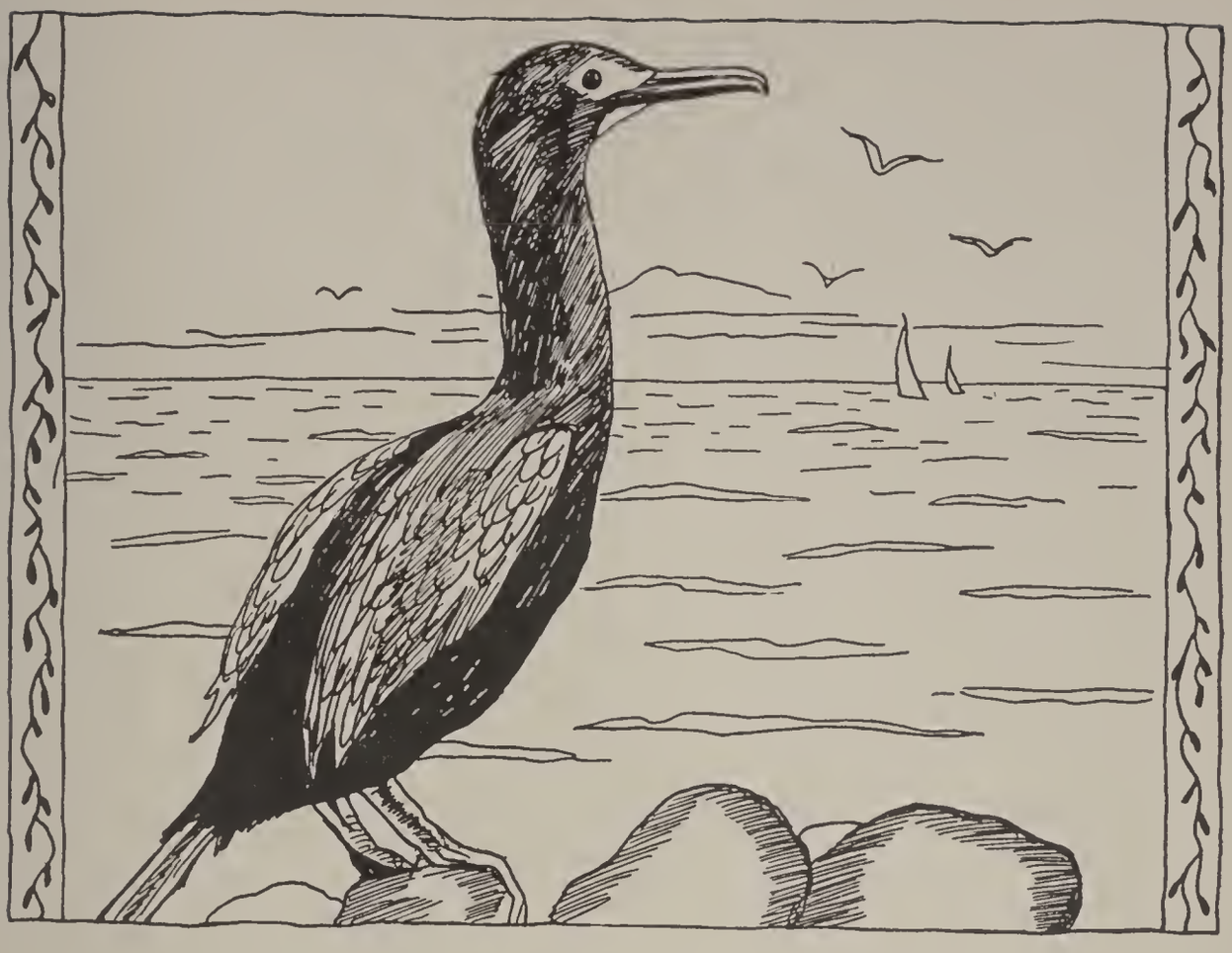
The common or wandering albatross is the best known of this family of large graceful birds, and is the largest and strongest of all sea birds. The body is about four feet long and the distance between the tips of the extended wings of adults varies from ten to seventeen feet, and they weigh from fifteen to twenty-five pounds. With the exception of several black bands across the back and a few feathers in the tail this albatross is white with a ruddy gray head. The plumage is soft and abundant, giving the bird a beautiful appearance.

This great albatross is found chiefly in the stormy waters of the Southern Ocean, where it often accompanies ships for whole days without resting. Not only does it glide along, but wheels in large

circles, dives and gyrates in various ways without ever being observed to touch the water. Its powers of flight are marvelous and it is often said that it sleeps on the wing.

It is a true bird of the water, and on land it is as Charles G. Leland has so appropriately written:

Great albatross!—the meanest birds
Spring up and flit away,
While thou must toil to gain a flight,
And speed those pinions grey;
But when they once are fairly poised,
Far o'er each chirping thing
Thou sailest wide to other lands,
E'en sleeping on the wing.



CORMORANTS

CORMORANTS are related to the pelican family, and there are about twenty-five species distributed all over the world. Although associated with semi-tropical and tropical regions, at least eight species of cormorants are found in North America. When breeding in large masses on the cliffs along the sea the double-crested species is a very interesting bird, and in the Bay of Fundy they are found by the hundreds. As one bird lover has said, there standing erect, resting on their tails they look like "rows of black bottles stood out to dry." All cormorants are water birds and prefer living near the sea coasts, but they are often found far inland, where they have flown, as all of the birds of this

family are very strong and powerful fliers.

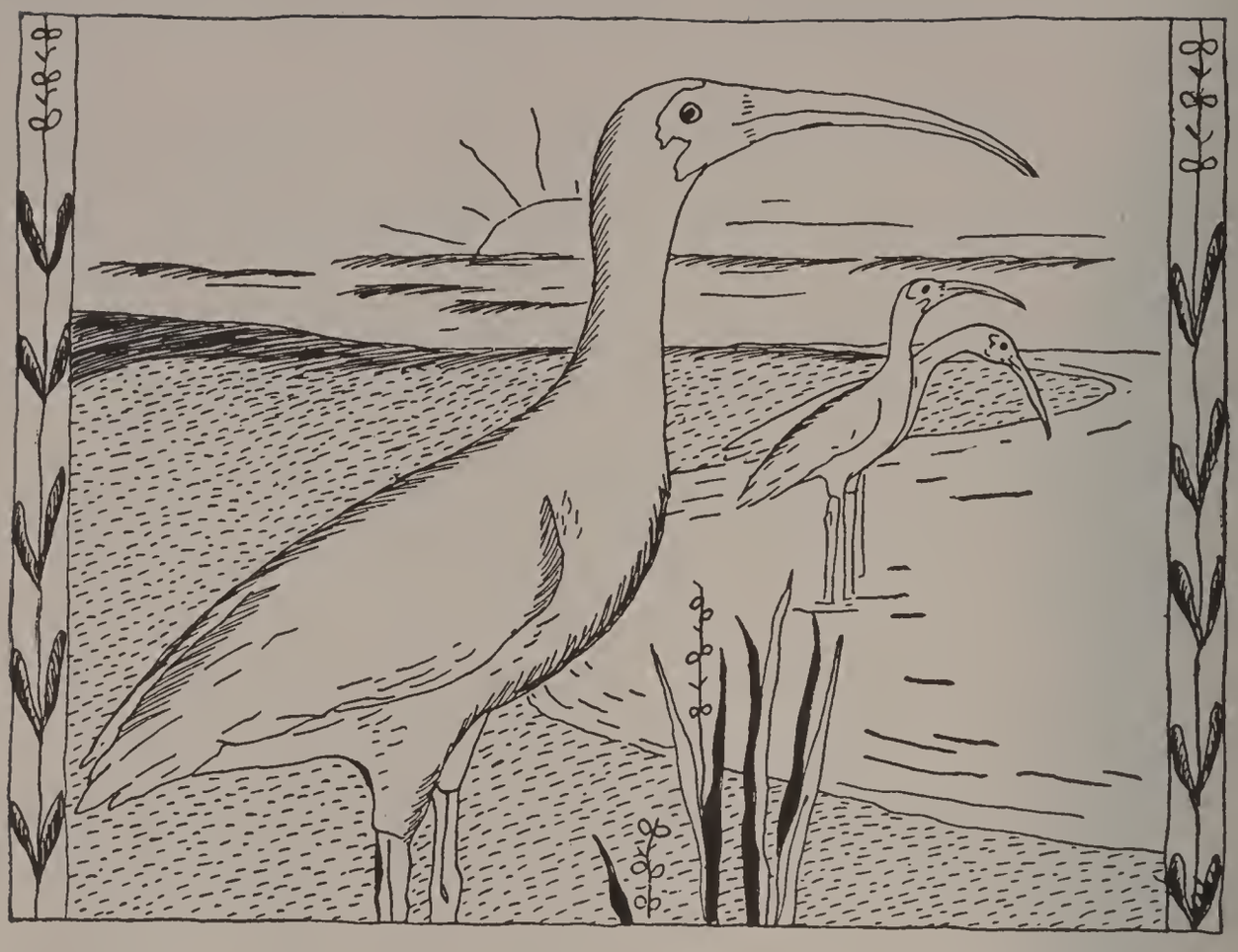
The common cormorant is about thirty inches in length, or about the size of a goose. The distinguishing characteristics of all members of this family are their toes, which are united by membranes, and by the middle toe being notched like a saw to help in the holding of its prey. All cormorants have long, strongly-hooked bills, long necks, short wings and short rounded tails, with thick and heavy bodies. The common cormorant is black or dark-colored with a head and neck of sooty blackness, while the double-crested species is bronze-tinted and has a crest of black curved feathers behind each eye and its pouch-like throat is of orange.

These birds are voracious eaters, and having a quick digestion their appetites seem insatiable. On the approach of winter great bands scatter along the sea shores and ascending the mouths of rivers gulp down every fish they see. They usually dive for the fish, and they have been known to stay under water for a long time in pursuit of a finny prize. The birds use both feet and wings while swimming. Usually the cormorants fly close above the water, waiting to spy a fish, but sometimes perched on an overhanging branch of a tree, they wait for a fish to pass by. This habit inspired Milton to liken this bird to Satan in his *Paradise Lost:*

Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life,
The middle tree, and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant.

In China the birds are raised in captivity, and there they are used to fish for the people. A man can easily manage a hundred of the domesticated fowls. When a fisherman is ready to go out with the birds, a hemp collar or string is tied around the birds' necks, tight enough so that they cannot swallow the fish that they catch. The birds are carried out into the lake, or stream, where the fishing is to be done on the gunwale of the boat. Here they sit very calmly waiting for orders from their master. When the boat has arrived at the proper place and the master gives the orders each bird flies in a different way at a signal and fulfills the task assigned it in a hurry. Quickly the bird searches about for a fish, then plunges and rises to the surface, doing this again and again until it catches its prey, then seizing the fish in the middle with its beak it carries its prize to the fisherman. Now and then the collar about the birds' necks is loosened and they are permitted to eat some of the less satisfactory of their catches.

Cormorants nest in great colonies, being gregarious at all times. The nests are usually built on the highest part of a cliff, overhanging the sea, and three to four pale green eggs, about the size of a goose egg, are laid in each nest.



IBIS

PEOPLE who are not familiar with water birds or those living near the shores are probably not acquainted with any of the various species of ibis, a stork-like wading bird. These birds are close relatives of the spoonbills and curlews and distantly related to the storks and herons. All species like to live in swampy places, where they catch fish, young alligators, frogs, reptiles and other animals that live in such places. All members of this rather strange family of birds have long, slender bills, curved toward the base and thick, with a rather obtuse point. They have long necks, which are usually bare of feathers to the first joint, and three of their toes are partly united in front, leaving one ex-

tending behind. The tail is rather short, while the wings are long enough, and strong enough, to make them graceful, quick fliers.

Perhaps the scarlet ibis, a tropical American species, is the most remarkable and the most beautiful of this family of birds, and is so called from its brilliant scarlet plumage. The wings are marked with glossy black, while part of the bird is pure white, making a remarkable contrast.

The ibis does not move in large flocks, and often a pair or several pairs are seem together in an isolated spot, far from any others of their own species. The white ibis, probably the most common of these birds in the southern part of the United States, seems to delight in living together and often forty or more pairs will build in the same tree. As these pretty birds glide through the air they make a remarkable picture.

The straw-necked ibis, a native of Australia, wears a beautiful garment, which is made especially attractive by the stiff yellow feathers on the neck and throat of the birds.

The ancient Egyptians used to worship the sacred or Egyptian ibis and when it died they embalmed and worshiped it. This bird is an African species, frequently measuring over two feet and six inches in length, though the body of the bird is very small in proportion to its length, being about the size of an ordinary fowl. The Egyptians still regard the bird as an emblem of purity and reverence it.

The glossy ibis is one of the smallest members of

this interesting family of birds and is a native of Africa, but migrates northward into Europe and sometimes as far as Great Britain. It is also a North American bird, and strangely enough has many of the habits of the sacred ibis. Its black frock with reddish-brown and purple-green hues is very pretty.

The wood ibis is probably the best known species of this family in the United States, especially in the lower parts of Louisiana, Carolina, Georgia and Florida. It is also found in various parts of this country, but seldom migrates north of Virginia. These birds nest at various heights above water, but usually near the end of branches, where their rudely built homes sway back and forth with every breeze. The little home is really strongly built of woven sticks.