

variety in colour as any flower growing, and keep in bloom for months.

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By the beginning of April, the birds that visit us during the summer months add their songs to those birds who stay with us throughout the year. The sand martin comes first, then the swallow, and after these two the martin, the swift not putting in an appearance until the end of the month. The cuckoo, which is such a herald of spring, is heard about the second week in April, and as the evening comes on the nightingale begins its well-marked song with its trill, guttural, and whistle. The outskirts of woods or small plantations and spinneys are favourite building places. The nightingale's song is very striking when heard in a wood, as they call to each other, one cock bird answering a near one until the whole place echoes with them. Singing through the night when other birds are quiet, everyone notices its song, and I think that is the reason it has such a reputation as a songster, rather than its superiority over other feathered singers. One remembers Mrs. Browning's lines, "The fire-flies and the nightingales sang each to other, flame and song," in speaking of this bird, and if we substitute glowworm for firefly—though glowworms do not make any sound—the association of the two is true of April in this country.

Birds are all busy building now; indeed, several, such as the blackbird, thrush, and some of the finches, have hatched their eggs by the end of April, and even earlier if the spring is a mild one.

Our migratory birds begin building very soon after they land on our shores; and it is while building operations are progressing, and more particularly while the hen is sitting on her eggs, that the cock birds fill our woods, hedgerows, and gardens with their notes. April and May are the months that birds sing at their fullest, and it is now that they are in their finest plumage. The brilliancy of a chaffinch (to mention one familiar example) in the spring would astonish those who have not seen one in April, and particularly those who know them best from stuffed or caged specimens. The colouring of all birds fades after death, and caged specimens are rarely so large or full-coloured as wild ones. I had occasion to make a sketch of a goldfinch, and went to a cottage where some were kept; but to have painted literally from such specimens would have been a libel on this handsome bird.

The blackcap and whitethroat are two of our garden birds that come in April. The former is a most sweet singer, and has been christened the mock-nightingale. I do my utmost to encourage birds in my garden; and



though my fruit buds suffer, it is very pleasant to be able to watch birds building in front of your windows, and to see them coming around the house for crumbs. I had two thrushes build on two small firs in front of the house, and from my bedroom window I could look into one of the nests and see the old one sitting on the eggs. I will allow that gooseberry and currant trees suffer somewhat through the finches picking out the buds; but some old fish net thrown over the trees will protect them. But to watch a thrush creep under a yew hedge, find a snail, and then bring it out and crack its shell on the tile sedging until he can get the body clear of its covering, and then, after rubbing it up and down on the gravel path, swallow it with all

the relish of a gourmet, is worth a gooseberry or two.

Birds very soon get to know whether they are molested or not, and act accordingly. It is a pleasing sight to see the sparrows in the public promenades in Paris alight on the hands of those who daily take food to them. The London sparrow is tame, and in the parks we can soon get a hundred round one by throwing down a few crumbs; but I have never seen a bird actually alight on one's hand. Birds in towns get very fearless, and I have known wood pigeons build and bring off two broods in a season in a London square; yet this bird is one of the wariest we have in the country, as those know who try to shoot them.

FRED MILLER.

A ROMANCE IN THE NOBLE HOUSE OF BRANDON.

SOME four centuries and a half ago, when the Tudors were on the throne, few families in England could hold their heads higher than the Brandons, Dukes of Suffolk. It is probable that they originally came from Brandon, a small town on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk; but their pedigree is not very clear before the reign of Henry VII., when we find a Sir William Brandon married to a lady who was one of the Wingfields of Letheringham and of Wingfield in Suffolk, and who must have been a person of consequence, being a granddaughter of a former Duchess of Norfolk. One of this gentleman's sons, Sir Thomas, was an

"esquire of the body" to the sovereign, and a Knight of the Order of the Garter, and "Marshall" of the Court of Common Pleas. Another, the eldest, who bore his father's Christian name, was standard-bearer to Henry at the battle of Bosworth Field, in which he fell, slain by the hand, it is said, of King Richard himself.

This Sir William's son and heir, Charles, if we may believe the historian Dugdale, "being a person of comely stature, high of courage, and conformity of disposition to Henry VIII., became so acceptable to him, especially in all his youthful exercises and pastimes, as that he soon attained great advancement both in titles

of honour and otherwise." In the very first year of the new reign he was made one of the "esquires of the royal bodyguard," and Chamberlain of the Principality of North Wales; three years later he gained great distinction in a naval engagement off Brest; and in the next year, attending the King on the expedition to Tournay, he was raised to the peerage as Viscount L'Isle, and appointed to command the *vanguard* of the army, in which campaign (writes Sir Bernard Burke) he behaved so valiantly that in the following February (1514) he was promoted to the Dukedom of Suffolk.

Not long after this we find him again in

France, assisting at the coronation of Henry's sister, Mary, and of her husband, Louis XII. of France, at St. Denis. A princely tournament was part of the entertainment which followed the ceremony; and here he showed much skill in the tilt-yard, where he jostled with and unhorsed one of the most gallant of the French knights. This success gained the comely young duke the favour of the Queen, who, on the death of Louis soon after, bestowed on him her hand, with the full consent of King Henry himself. It was easy, in the days of the Tudors, to find some estates for the King to settle on the newly-married pair; and it so happened that those of De la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, were vacant, the latter having been attainted and beheaded only a few years before. And, as Sir William Brandon had already the title, what more natural, seeing that he was the King's favourite, than that he should have the broad acres also which once had belonged to it? He attended Henry at "the Field of Cloth of Gold," and took a leading part in preparing the articles against Cardinal Wolsey. He was also made a Knight of the Garter, and Chief Justice in Eyre of the royal forests, and got more than his fair share of the spoil at the dissolution of the monasteries. He was married no less than four times in all, the Lady Mary Tudor being his third spouse, and the other three being all members of noble and titled houses.

The greater part of the life of the Duke's father, old Sir William, was spent in a retired and sequestered spot in Hampshire, on the borders of the New Forest, and his favourite son Charles was his chief com-

panion, for he had long been a widower. He had, however, early in life, adopted an orphan child, the daughter of a deceased friend; and very naturally this young lady fell desperately in love with Sir William's other son. One day, as she was wandering through the glades of the New Forest, this young lady was savagely assaulted by some robbers, and the King, who happened to be hunting in the neighbourhood, heard her screams. Without waiting to make himself known, he at once drew his sword on the robbers and called lustily for assistance, as he had to fight single-handed against three. The noise arrested the attention of Charles Brandon, who ran up to the aid at once of the lady and the King; and the latter lost no time in arranging for his reward. At once he made him one of the Royal household, and followed up the appointment by heaping on him the other honours and favours mentioned above.

The King proved himself his friend throughout the Duke's life, and showed the steadiness of his friendship by gracious words of kindness when he heard of the Duke's death. He was sitting in council when the news of Suffolk's death was brought to him; and he publicly took occasion then and there, in the royal palace of St. James', to express his own deep sorrow for his loss, and to celebrate the merits of the deceased. He declared that during the whole course of their long acquaintance his brother-in-law had not made a single attempt to injure an adversary, and had never whispered a word in his hearing to the disadvantage of any of his compeers

and rivals. "And how many of you, my lords (added the King), can say as much?"

The Duke, at his death, in 1545, left by his fourth and last wife two sons, Henry and Charles, the former of whom succeeded to the ducal title and to the broad acres and mansions which belonged to it. But he did not live long to enjoy his honours and estates, for while still under age he died of "the sweating sickness" at the Bishop of Lincoln's palace of Buckden, in Huntingdonshire, in July, 1551, a few hours after his younger brother Charles. And so the dukedom, after an existence of less than forty years, became extinct.

It will interest my readers to learn that by his royal wife, Mary Tudor, the Duke had a son, the Earl of Lincoln, who died young, and also two daughters, of whom the younger married Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, and the elder married Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, in whose favour the dukedom of Suffolk was revived soon after its extinction. But that honour would seem to have been singularly unfortunate; in fact, the dukedom of Suffolk seems to have been as luckless and as perishable as that of Buckingham, for within three years the new Duke was attainted and beheaded, leaving three daughters—the unhappy Lady Jane Grey, who aspired to the Crown on the death of Edward VI., but paid the penalty of failure on the scaffold; while her next sister, Lady Katharine, died a prisoner in the Tower; and her youngest sister, Lady Mary, made an unfortunate match with one of Queen Elizabeth's groom-porters, but died childless.

—E. WALFORD.

"A FELLOW-FEELING MAKES US WONDROUS KIND."

By "MEDICUS."



I HAVE been out of it for the last fortnight—out of the world, I mean. And I am out of it still. During that time there has been nearly all sorts and conditions of weather.

It has rained, and hailed, and snowed; there has been frost, and now there is thaw. But it affects me but little, because, unfortunately, I am out of it, and in a little world of my own, bounded by four picture-hung walls; a world in which medicine bottles, and pill-boxes, and glass dishes containing jelly, figure prominently; a world in which the fire in the grate is a very *great* factor indeed. I can assure you, that pun came quite unconsciously. I would no more think of making a pun in my present condition, than I would think of giving a party. A fortnight in bed has taken pretty nearly all the "go" out of me, and all the fun as well, leaving behind only a weary, chastened kind of a feeling.

Yes, most assuredly my "go" seems all gone, for if "to go" means "to walk"—and it sometimes does—walking is what I am worst at. And yet this day fortnight I had as usual gone for a three-mile "spin" with the dogs and the children. A fortnight, did I say? It feels more like forty years ago. A long dreary space of time, filled up with racking pains and wretchedness, with snatches of dream-perturbed slumber at intervals, at the end of every four or five years, for instance. And yet only a fortnight ago no ship's mast stands so high aboveboard that I could not

have gone to the top of far more easily than I can now turn myself in bed.

Was it an accident, then? some one may ask. No; it was and is lumbago; but I was cut down as suddenly as if struck by a six-pound shot, and the paroxysms of pain could only be compared to forcible dislocation of the spine by the old-fashioned torture of breaking on the wheel. And the slightest movement brought them on.

Stay, though; I do not mean to weary you with my complainings. The force of the storm, I think, is past, and if body were as willing as mind, I'd be up and out. It is such a lovely day to-day; the snow has all gone, and it seems indeed as if spring were on the wing, and cold winter on the wane. I look from my pillow at a clear opal sky out yonder, at my poplar trees bending gently in the breeze, at quivering arbor vitæ, at deodar cedars moving their green-fringed fingers, and dark pine trees, studded over with golden cones, waving to and fro, and at bare bright fields and far-off hills and woods all asleep apparently, or dreaming in the spiritualising haze of distance. But the trees and the woods will all wake up by-and-by when winter goes, and I cannot help wondering whatever they will do if I am not with them and among them to lovingly watch the output of bud and burgeon and little leaflet green. And wouldn't my wild birds miss me too, and my russet-brown squirrels, with their black beads of eyes, that hop so perkily from beechen bough to beechen bough away in the woods, and my rufous weasels that stand on end among the withered pine needles the better to see me and the—Hullo! here is "Queen," my pet Newfoundland, who every morning comes up to pay her visit, who places

her two great fore-paws on the bed, licks my ear, then stands there looming high above me like a statue of jet. I dare say that, after her own canine fashion, she is thinking and wondering how it is the world has chazged so, and her master does not come out to cross the hills and dells as in the days of yore.

Heigho! Well, one naturally feels dull and heartless when one is ill. And yet how much one often has to be thankful for even when laid upon a bed of sickness. I believe I am truly grateful that I am able to read, ay! and write, as I lie here, to my indulgent readers of the GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

"A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." I never knew personally till now how excruciatingly painful was the complaint called lumbago; how low it can bring one; how sick and weary even of life itself it can render the sufferer; and, as many thousands suffer from it, both young and middle-aged, it occurred to me to-day to say something about rheumatism, from which those afflicted with the terrible complaint may gather some hope and a hint or two for its alleviation.

Rheumatic fever itself, usually called acute rheumatism, is a most dangerous malady, and the sufferings of a patient therein are not to be described in words. I was out in India when I was struck down by this terrible fever. I had been in the jungle, and sleeping in the dew, and doing every daring thing with my constitution—I was a very young man, and of course imagined I was immortal. I attribute my recovery to the kindly attentions of an army surgeon, to the brightness of the climate, and the faithfulness of a native servant, who was positively dog-like in his fidelity to me, all through those pained and racking weeks,