



THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CANARY INTO EUROPE.



THE introduction of the canary into Europe was attended by an uncommon amount of romance.

A merchant ship, containing a large number of the then marvellous "golden birds," was wrecked off the coast of Italy. The waves were triumphant, and the poor ship, ceasing to struggle against its doom, was settling down to its deep grave, when one of the crew, a mere lad, bethinking him of the imprisoned birds, opened the door of their cage and gave them their liberty. As the ship went down the glad birds rose in the air, fled to the nearest land—the island of Elba—and there took up their abode; the climate being favourable, no doubt they would have speedily increased and multiplied but for two obstructions.

First, the rage that speedily beset the inhabitants for snaring and possessing the curious "golden birds," and the utter ignorance that naturally prevailed as to how they should, when secured, be housed and fed; secondly, the fatal fact that, among the multitude of shipwrecked canaries, there were not more than two or three hens. However, enterprising traders speedily brought more of the birds from the Canary Islands, so they gradually found their way through Europe.

It is believed that the original colour of the canary was not the bright yellow with which its feathers are generally tinted, but a kind of dappled olive green, black, and yellow. By careful management, however, the bird fanciers are able to procure canaries of every tint, as is well-known by our annual shows at the Crystal Palace.

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"THE GLAD BIRDS ROSE IN THE AIR."