

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section First: Birds—The Starling, and all about it—Jays, Jackdaws, Rooks, and Ravens—My loving and affectionate Magpie, Maggie.



JAYS.

It would answer no good purpose to open up or attempt to discuss the question in these papers as to whether it be right or wrong to keep birds captive in cages. Let me merely say, however, that I quite disapprove of the practice of robbing poor wild birds of their young—it is cruel, it is sinful; and the fact that it always has been done, from time immemorial, and probably always will be done, does not tend to make it less so. At the same time, the statement which I have more than once heard made by ladies, to the effect that they would like to liberate every bird, is simply—I was going to say ridiculous, but that would be rude—but it is a statement made thoughtlessly. For after birds have been kept for some time in confinement, to turn them adrift into the world would only be to kill them.

But if you really wish to do good to even one little waif and stray of a bird, that you see hung up in some bird shop, buy it and treat it with such care and kindness that its life will be all happiness and joy. You can do this, and do it easily, and the affection and love your feathered favourite will evince towards you will amply repay you for all your trouble and outlay.

Nor is there any need why a bird should be always confined to its cage or aviary, be its domicile ever so big. I have yet to learn the name of the bird that cannot be sufficiently tamed by gentleness and kindness to fly about a room, to perch on the head or hand, or feed from the mouth or fingers, and to return joyfully to its cage when required to do so.

Perhaps there are few wilder or more erratic birds in these islands than the *starling*. To be sure these birds come pretty nigh our dwellings, they even build in our chimneys, and sing there, and, silly things, they sometimes even lose their balance and fall backwards down the chimney into a bedroom, probably; but just catch one of these unfortunates and see the look of intense fear in that big bright bead of an eye of his, and listen to his joyous but unmusical scream when you throw him out into the air, and he flies away once more into freedom.

To give any detailed description of the British starling would be a mere waste of

time and type. My readers all know the appearance of the beautiful creature, his coat of steel-blue, his speckled back, his lovely breast and head and shoulders, that, in the sunlight, are for ever changing from blue to crimson. They know, too, how graceful his shape is, and how long and strong his bill.

Quite a wonderful weapon is that bill of his. Just watch him stalking across the dewy lawn of a morning early, intent on his matutinal meal; the bill is inserted into every tiny hole, then opened like a compass, which widens the hole so that Dick can peep in and see if anything alive and edible is to be found within—a worm, or a beetle, or a grub. Dick is the early bird that picketh up the worm, and when he finds one he gives quite a little scream of delight. If he has a nest and young ones he flies directly to it, and gives it to the hungriest; if he has no young ones, he eats it himself and

goes to look for another. But all the time he is thus engaged seeking his food he keeps—as sailors say—his weather eye lifting. Yonder is a wicked boy looking for a stone to throw at him. Dick knows he can dodge that stone most artistically, and so he does. Yonder, under that Austrian pine tree, lies pussy *perdu*. "If," thinks the cat, "that bird would only come just a few feet nearer, what a nice luscious breakfast I would have!"

"Yes," thinks Dick, "you may lick your lips, old lady, but you'll never manage to lay one of your nasty, thorny hands on my back—so there!"

Pussy seldom, if ever, succeeds in outwitting the starling; sparrows are common game with her; she gets a thrush only too often, and an occasional crocus-billed blackbird, and sometimes even catches poor cock robin; but the starling is too clever by one half for her.

This bird likes a hole to build in under the eaves of an old thatched house, for example, or even in a chimney-pipe, when he can find one that surmounts a room where a fire is never—to the starling's knowledge—lighted. To be sure, if a fire be lighted after the nest is built, Dick finds it awkward, and necessary to look out for other apartments. If you hang a long-shaped box in a neighbourhood frequented by starlings, it is almost certain to be appropriated as a nesting place. But the hollow of an old tree is the favourite position with these birds in which to erect their habitation. In my own poplars I have starlings build-

ing every year. The nest itself shows little knowledge of the science or beauty of architecture. But it is comfortable—straw, hay, and dried weeds form probably its foundation; rags, paper, wool, hair, and feathers its lining. In this dimly-lighted recess or cave the female sits all day long patiently on her blue-white eggs, while attentive, loving Dick perches on a bough above bickering to her—I cannot call it singing—and flying away at intervals to bring her food. I believe, too, that he occasionally keeps guard himself over the eggs, while she goes away for half an hour to stretch her legs and scare the cramp away from her pretty wings.

Now, it is not without a reason that I have given the starling first place in this paper, but because I consider it better suited than any other bird to be mentioned herein for a Girl's Own Pet. And this for many reasons. There is no bird I know more loving and affectionate towards its owner, whether mistress or master; there is no bird more amusing; and, with the exception of the parrot, none can talk so well or clearly; while his capabilities of learning to pipe tunes are very great. One particular trait of the starling's character is inquisitiveness. That wonderful bill of his must bore into everything. You have been out shopping, for instance, and have just come in and deposited the articles purchased on the table. While you go to change your dress Dick is on the outside of his cage whistling "Duncan Gray" to himself. He has simply greeted you with the words, "Hullo! darling, back already?" then gone on piping, looking all the while as innocent as a ba-lamb. But no sooner have you retired than "Bravo!" cries Dick, flying down to the table, and commencing in quite a business kind of way to examine the little parcels. Here is a packet of sweets; he undoes them, eats a few, and scatters the rest all over the table. He pulls out a tooth-brush, and drops it over the edge on to the floor. He bores about forty round holes in a cake of scented soap; then he finds a pair of kid gloves, ventilates them well, and tries to swallow the buttons. Next, a carefully-labelled and neatly got up parcel of camphorated chalk attracts his attention. You had meant to use this as tooth-powder, but Dick finds a different use for it; he tears open the paper and scatters the contents to the winds, powdering all his pretty plumage as he does so till he is a very good representation of that *rara avis* a pure white starling; and just at this moment you re-enter to find your pet the *very picture of guilt and contrition*. He would fly away to his cage if



THE MAGPIE.

he could, but he has got both his feet entangled in a Shetland wool neckerchief, which he found among your other parcels. No wonder you say, more in sorrow than in anger—

"Oh! Dick, dear, what have you been doing?"

The domesticated starling need hardly ever be confined to his cage. The bird enjoys his liberty, and will never abuse it by flying away. Indeed, he comes to look upon his cage as a very handy retreat in times of danger, as well as a useful dormitory, so he really loves it.

My own pet starling used to have his cage hung out of doors all day, when the weather was fine. Dick himself, however, was seldom in it; he would be found in all sorts of odd places, wandering among the flowers, or between the pea rows, or perched on a tree trying over his lessons in talking and singing, or perhaps strutting about on the garden walk, and calling a neighbour's cat "You rascal," with tremendous emphasis on the "r," because she was venturing too near to him. Out for a country walk I never thought of going without my "darling starling," as he called himself. He would perch on my shoulders all the way, sometimes going for a little fly, but soon returning when called upon. I mention these facts merely to prove to you how very tame a starling may become when properly treated. This bird took an intense pride in learning to pipe and speak. The great secret is to have your bird thoroughly fond of you to begin with, and to give him his lessons regularly, bearing in mind that your pet can be easily taught that certain words bear reference to certain actions. If, for example, you are giving him food or water, ask him if he is hungry or thirsty, and do not say "good morning" or "good night," &c., except at the appropriate times. As to teaching him to pipe, a bird organ may be used; whistling a tune to him is better, but this is hardly an accomplishment that young girls excel in; let him, at all events, learn the tune note by note and bar by bar. When one begins to whistle or play a tune to a starling, the bird crouches down in an attitude of the most rapt attention, which is truly wonderful to behold. After listening thus, as soon as I had finished, my own pet used to ejaculate—"Bravo! Bravo! Doctor, BRAVO!" most emphatically. You will find the starling a most industrious scholar, so that it will not be his fault if he be not speedily an accomplished one as well.

The Starling's Cage.—This should be as large and as roomy as possible, or else the bird will break his tail and lose other feathers, to the great detriment of his plumage and beauty. The cage may be a wicker-work one, or simply wire, but the bars must not be too wide. However much liberty you allow Master Dick in your presence, during your absence it will generally be as well to have him inside his dwelling place; let the fastening of its door, then, be one which he cannot pick. Any ordinary wire fastening is of no use, the starling will find the cue to it in a single day. Tin dishes for the bird's food will be found best, and they must be well shipped or else he will speedily tear them down. A large porcelain water fountain should be placed outside the cage; he will try to bathe even in this, and I

hardly know how it can be prevented. Starlings are very fond of splashing about in the water, and ought to have a bath on the kitchen floor every day, unless you give him a proper bathing cage. Afterwards place him in the sun or near the fire to dry and preen himself.

Cleanliness.—This is most essential. The cage and his feeding and drinking utensils should be washed every day. The drawers beneath must be taken out, cleaned, washed, and dried before being put back, and a little rough gravel scattered over the bottom of it. If you would wish your bird to enjoy proper health—and without that he will never be a good speaker or musician—keep all his surroundings dry and sweet, and never leave yesterday's food for to-day's consumption.



THE ROOK.

Food.—Do not give the bird salt food, but a little of anything else that is going can always be allowed him. Perhaps bread soaked in water, the water squeezed out, and a little new milk poured over, forms the best staple of diet. But, in addition to this, shreds of raw meat should be given, garden worms, slugs, &c. Carry him round the room on your finger, stopping when you see a fly on the wall or a picture frame, and holding the starling near it. He will thus soon learn to catch his own flies, and take such delight in this kind of stalking, that, as soon as he can speak, he will pester you with his importunities to be thus carried round.

White fish these birds are very fond of, and also fresh salmon. Fruit should be given to them now and then, a fig being considered by them an especial delicacy. A little chickweed or other green food is also relished; This may be placed on the top of the cage. Finally, starlings, no matter how well you

feed them, will not thrive without plenty of exercise. The male bird is the better talker, and more active and saucy, as well as more beautiful and graceful in shape and plumage. Be assured the bird is very young before purchasing it.

Rooks and ravens, jays and jackdaws, all make exceedingly nice pets, and have many strange and amusing ways. I shall have a word or two to say about them in my next. But meanwhile here is Maggie wanting to put in her oar. Maggie is a pet magpie, and has been sitting on the back of my chair looking over my shoulder all the time that I have been writing. She says she prefers speaking for herself, if I will kindly write, she herself never being able to hold a pen properly, though she has oftentimes tried.

"I fully endorse," says Maggie, "all you have written about the starling, especially as regards their treatment, and if you had added that they are pert, perky things, you wouldn't have been far out. Well, we magpies build our nests of sticks on the tops of tall trees, lining it first with clay, then with grass; our eggs are five in number, and if they weren't so like to a crow's they might be mistaken for a black-bird's. The nests are so big that before the little boys climb up the trees they think they have found a hawk's. In some parts of the country we are looked upon with a kind of superstitious awe. This is nonsense; there is nothing wrong about us; we may bring joy to people, as I do to you, dear Doctor, by my gentle loving ways, but we never bring grief. We like solitude, and keep ourselves in the wild state to ourselves. Perhaps if we went in locks, and had as much to say for ourselves as those noisy brutes of rooks, we would be more thought of. Even in the domestic state we like our liberty, and think it terribly cruel to be obliged to mope all day long in a wicker cage. It is crueller still to hang us in draughts, or in too strong a sun; while to keep our cage damp and dirty cramps our legs and gives us such twinges of rheumatism in our poor unused wings, that we often long to die and be at rest.

"The treatment, Doctor, you prescribe for starlings will do nicely for us, and you know how easily we are taught to talk; and I'm sure I do love you, Doctor, and haven't I, all for your sake, made friends with your black Persian cat and your big Newfoundland dog?"

"No, I'm not a thief; I dery the charge. Only if you do leave silver spoons about, and gold pens, and shillings and sixpenny-bits—why—I—I borrow them, that is all, and you can always find them in Maggie's cage.

"We can eat all that starlings eat; yes, and a great many things they would turn up their supercilious bills at. But, remember, we do like a little larger allowance of animal food than starlings do.

"No more at present, dear Doctor, but remains your loving and affectionate Magpie, Maggie."

N.B.—The grammatical error in the last sentence is Maggie's, not mine.

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Section Second: Characters and Anecdotes of Rook, Raven, and Jackdaw—My Raven "John"—The Nightingale—The Skylark—A Word About Cages.

"Throb, throb, wild voice, through passionate twilight hours;
Love is thy gift from the Eternal Powers."



HAT exceedingly old-fashioned bird the rook makes a really nice pet. Nor is it difficult to tame, but it is better to have a young bird from the nest before it is quite fledged. About the

month of May is the time to procure one, or even earlier; ask some country boy to get one, and to bring you a male, not a hen bird, or to fetch two if he is not quite certain in his own mind which is which. I myself when a little boy have often sat for half an hour at a time swinging on the topmost branches of a tall fir tree, with my waistcoat pocket filled with garden worms, watching the ways and motions of a nest of young rooks, and probably I would have to repeat my aerial visit more than once before I could quite make up my mind which to choose. I always took the sauciest, noisiest young rascal of the lot, and I was never mistaken in my choice. Is it not cruelty on my part, you may inquire, to counsel the robbery of a rooks' nest? Well, there are the feelings of the parent birds to be considered, I grant you, but when you take two from five you leave three, and I do not think the rooks mourn many minutes for the missing ones. An attempt was made, once upon a time to prove that rooks can't count farther than three. Thus: an ambush was erected in the midst of a potato field, where rooks were in the habit of assembling in their dusky thousands. When into this ambush there entered one man, or two men, or three men, the gentlemen in black quietly waited until the last man came forth before commencing to dig for potatoes, but when four men entered and three came out, the rooks were satisfied and went to dinner at once. But I feel sure this rule of three does not hold good as far as their young ones are concerned. I know for certain that either cats, or dogs will miss an absentee from a litter of even six or more.

Well, when you have procured your rook—and the same treatment holds good with ravens—feed him all day long if you can, as often as he will eat, with worms, insects, table scraps—anything, in fact, that is not salt. He will very soon turn out a fine fellow in

deed, and as rooks are of an exceedingly inquiring turn of mind, he will learn more in a week than many birds will in months.

Rooks are very affectionate towards their owners, but tricky and highly amusing. They are great thieves, but they steal in such a funny way that you cannot be angry with them. Our good friend "Medicus," whose monthly contributions I daresay we all read, tells me that laughing is one of the best tonics in the world. Very well, if you want to get strong keep a rook; he is a highly tonic bird, and will save a small fortune in quinine and iron.

Jackdaws, and rooks, and ravens are all three of them tonic birds, and it would take me weeks to tell you all I know about them as pets, and all the fun I've had with them. As to their characters individually, I may tell you that neither of them is honest, that the jackdaw is probably the most amusing of the trio, the raven certainly the most mischievous, while the rook has a serious side in his nature, which is difficult to describe. The rook, in my opinion, looks quite a respectable member of society walking up and down a garden path, or perched on the back of a chair. He is always in evening dress, his wings looking just like a swallow-tailed coat. One that I possessed when a boy—Borlem was his name—I used to adorn with a small white necktie, but sometimes Borlem came home of an evening with the bow all on one side; then he looked highly disreputable. Poor Borlem! My uncle sat down on him one evening and killed him. I know what happened next evening. My uncle sat down on the same chair, and there was a pin in it, and I was whipped and sent to bed. I have on more than one occasion, both in this country and in India, tamed wild rooks from the flock. One in Scotland, who used to meet me daily and be fed, at last took up his abode indoors with me, and one in the suburbs of Bombay used to come to me any time I chose to call him out of his banian tree.

But, pardon me, I'm getting gossipy, and yet I must tell you about John. John was a rogue of a raven, who had lost a leg and got a wooden one. It was amusing to see him walking about—he looked like an old sailor who had been in the wars; but I'm sure, from the way he used to sit and eye that "timber toe" of his, with his silly head all on one side, that he was more proud of it than he was of the other. But John, or "Old Dot and Carry One," as the servants called him, was never out of mischief, and when he finally took a fancy to deprive my canine friends and favourites of their eyesight, I thought it was time that John and I should part. So we did.

I never had a cough. It is a kind of crow, about as big as a jackdaw, jet black, with purplish head, vermilion beak, and legs and feet of the same colour. I am told they are highly entertaining. N.B.—The name is not pronounced "cow" nor "cough," but "tshuff."

Jays are funny birds, and pretty, too. They are excellent mimics, but seldom talk. They want either their entire liberty or a large and roomy cage.

From birds like the above to the different species of hawks and owls the transition is or would be easy. They are, however, no more suited for girls' pets than is the bulldog.

Wagtails I have kept, and cuckoos, but never found them satisfactory as pets, so I will not recommend them.

Kingfishers—those bright starry-winged birds with superfluity of bill and apology for tail—I mean to try to rear some day. But apart from their great beauty and bright colours there is little to recommend them as pets. Besides, I would far rather see them in

their native wilds with the sunshine glinting from their bonnie backs as they dart across the ponds or pools in search of their natural food—fish.

But much more likely pets for girls are nightingales. It may be generally but not universally known that these sweetest of all bird songsters can not only be kept in confinement, but that they sing delightfully when well treated.

I daresay many of my readers have never seen a nightingale, and very likely would be somewhat disappointed in its appearance. Not that its shape is not elegance personified, its bill straight and pretty, and eyes large, earnest, and speaking; but its colour is humble russet-brown, grey beneath, and as it darts from bough to bough it exhibits a glimpse of orange under the wings that is taking enough. Nightingales come to my orchard and shady lawn in April, generally early in the month. The males come a few days before the females, and from the time of the arrival of the former till nearly the end of May their wild melodious throbbing never ceases through all the livelong night. There is no bird-music equal to it, and, indeed, I should think that fortune was dealing hard with me if I were compelled to live in a spot where I should miss their charming song in May. I have convinced myself over and over again that these birds sing by day as well as by night, though their voices are not so easily heard. I have noticed, too, that our wild thrushes learn to mimic a few notes of the nightingale shortly after that bird's arrival, but soon forget them again when the music ceases.

The nightingale's nest is difficult to find. They do not build with me, owing to the cats, perhaps, but in an adjoining and larger, more shrubby orchard. I have found their nests in a bank, a rough-looking little heap of rubbish, last year's leaves, hay, twigs, and lichens.

Is it cruel to take the young out of the nest for the sake of rearing? There, you have cornered me again, and I feel I will not get so easily out of it this time as I did in the matter of the rooks. But if you take the young nestlings when only half-fledged, they will not be aware of the change, and the mother will speedily console herself with her husband's song, and immediately set about building another nest, to hatch another brood. But not in the same place—oh, no!

Nightingales are insect-eaters, and I believe they feed their young on the softer kinds. The young birds, when taken from the nest, should have a variety of food given them, such as ants' eggs, mealworms, scraped beef mixed with a little pea-flour and yolk of egg, and made into a paste. By-and-by add soaked hempseed, rubbed up with the paste, but not in any great quantity. At first, make a kind of nest for them with hay, &c., in an old band-box, and when they are more fully fledged you can transfer them to the cage.

About the feeding of the older birds I have a few words to say. Never make more than will do for a day in summer, or two days in winter. Change the food often, keep their dishes always sweetly clean, and give them pure fresh filtered rainwater every day. As to the kind of food best for them, let the staple of the diet be German paste—several good recipes for which I promise you in my next—raw meat scraped, and mixed with a little hard-boiled egg-yolk and finely-ground lunch biscuit. But, in addition to this, give maggots and mealworms, ants' eggs, beetles, &c. But mind that everything is fresh, and that food and water is placed handy to the perch, without the possibility of being soiled. A piece of brown paper scattered over with sand should be put in the bottom of the cage.

Do not give the paste too thick, nor should it be sloppy, but a happy medium. During moulting-time be very careful the cage is not hung in a draught, and give rather more egg and bread-crumbs. It is a good plan to have a little green blind in the front of the cage, to pull down at night or when you want to let your favourite enjoy privacy.

I may mention that old nightingales are often captured early on their arrival to this country, crammed with meat food to keep them alive, and gradually tamed. I but mention the practice to condemn it. People who treat the poor birds thus ought to be made to remember that the Wild Birds Act is in force between the 1st of March until August, and that the fines for molesting birds during the season are sweetly heavy.

Few bird-songs are more charmingly beautiful than that of the skylark. The melody is certainly most agreeable when the pretty songster is warbling, dimly seen in the blue vault of heaven, while soft spring winds are blowing, and down beneath him in that field of wheat of tender green his mate sits cosily on her nest of grass; but, nevertheless, the bird retains his song, even in the obscure captivity of a cage. Yet I never could deprive a lark of its young, and neither, I think, could you; but there are skylarks innumerable for sale in the markets, and if you would possess yourself of a really charming bird pet, why, you could hardly do better than purchase one. Only be quite sure it is a songster before you part with your money. A good singing bird of this kind should either be one that has been captured in winter and is of age, or one that, having been taken young, has been brought up under the tutelage of an old bird, and not permitted to learn the notes of birds of other than his own species. Hear him sing, then, before you buy; and, even after this, do not keep him

in a room with canaries, else he will desert his own wild melody and try to learn theirs.

Cages for larks should be as large and roomy as possible; think of the freedom the bird has in its natural state. They ought, too, to have liberty to fly about through the room occasionally. If you grant them this, they will become far more tame and affectionate. They require a green clovery turf placed in the cage every morning, if you can manage it; if not, every second day. They are far from delicate birds naturally, and, therefore, in the domestic state, they must not be coddled and kept in too warm rooms, while all the summer, when the weather is not boisterous, the cage should be hung out of doors.

While discoursing on cages, I may as well mention one or two of the kinds used for other birds. I copy the following from "Cassell's Domestic Dictionary," and as I am the author of the article from which it is transcribed, I can hardly be accused of plagiarism.

"For thrushes, mavis, and blackbirds," I say, "cages are usually built of little rails, square in shape, with a wooden back and a slanting wooden roof like that of a village church. Little boxes for food and for the water-glass project from each side, and the bottom draws out. The skylark's cage has also the same kind of roof and back;" the sides may also be wood. "It is, however, perchless, and has the front side projecting in the form of a bow. This 'bay window' of the lark's is kept carpeted with nice fresh turf, and here the bird delights to sit and trill his song. The bars of this cage are made of wire."

The starling's cage is almost too well known to need description. It is usually made of wickerwork, round, and supplied with plenty of perches. The starling of all birds likes plenty of room and plenty to do; the bottom of the cage should be covered with hay or straw, and he likes a turf as well. The nightingale's

cage is somewhat peculiar: it is the same shape as the blackbird's, only three sides are made of wood as well as the roof. The door opens in the back, and there is a little shelf inside with two holes in it for the reception of the utensils for food and water. The inside of the roof must be padded, and the perches covered with green baize or flannel, so that the bird may not hurt himself in his attempts to fly. The perches are placed from one side of the cage to the other, and not from back to front.

If instead of rearing the nightingale young from the nest, you make up your mind to purchase an adult bird, take care that it is a male one. If you cannot get the advice of an experienced bird fancier, hear the bird sing if possible, and choose a shapely bold bird with a big bright eye.

The food of the skylark may be as a staple German paste, with crushed hempseed, and powdered lunch biscuit in a paste, with minced egg, morsels of potato, bread-crumbs, mawseed, and morsels of old mitey cheese now and then. But if you want to have them particularly happy and healthy, give meal-worms now and then, or spiders, ants' eggs, &c., or even tiny bits of scraped beef.

Gravel in the cage should not be forgotten, nor a daily supply of fresh clean water. And be very careful of the bird in moulting time.

The skylark in Scotland is called by a very pretty name—the laverock, as in that charming song:

"Sweet's the laverock's note and loud
Lilting wildly up the glen;
But aye, to me, he sings ae sang
Will ye no come back again."

I hope, my gentle girls, to come back again next month, and tell you all about the merle, the mavis, and the linnet—the shy wee "linter," that builds its nest and sings so sweet in early summer among the "gowden" gorse.

A DAUGHTER NAMED DAMARIS.

By MAGGIE SYMINGTON.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE BROODS THE HALCYON.



DURING the calm which precedes the winter solstice a little species of kingfisher lays her eggs on rocks or reeds in the neighbourhood of the sea. "She seizeth these days," old ornithologists tell us, "in obedience to that marvellous wisdom which God

hath implanted in the breasts of birds and beasts, because she knoweth that the winds are holden and the storms at rest." Hence we can find no better name to bestow on days of deep uninterrupted sunshine and calm than the

name which this little bird bears. Days which one is apt not to note especially while they are passing, but upon which one looks back from some clouded after-time, wondering that one could have been so insensible to their tranquil depth of happiness while they lasted. For does not the past always more or less win

"A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein."

Halcyon days indeed were those which followed the arrival of La Marquise and Damaris at the *château*. There was sunshine without and sunshine within its ancient walls. Damaris' glad heart brightened up the dingy old rooms into such cheerfulness as they had not known for many a year. She was under no restraint whatever. Full liberty was accorded her to do just as she liked in all things, and with the assurance made doubly sure that in her gladness everyone else rejoiced, she gave full rein to the joy that possessed her.

She wished for flowers to fill the rooms, and *carte blanche* was given her to cut where and what she liked from the gardens. Only to see her coming

across the bridge singing, and with her arms full of roses, as Monsieur St. Just once saw her, went so far towards dissipating his gloomy fancies for a while that a mine of gratitude was sprung in his heart. She wished for fruit and wines to carry to some of the sick poor in the hamlet below, and the key of the wine-cellar and the contents of all the greenhouses were placed at her disposal, and orders were given that Mademoiselle should have whatever she pleased to demand.

During the long leisure mornings Damaris executed her intention of visiting and becoming acquainted with the peasantry of St. Aubin. She found much to delight, to pain, and to absorb her interest. The people, especially the women, were very hard-working, and the simplicity and severity of their lives gave a tragic touch to their commonest details. It grieved her to find how little the people actually knew of their seigneur, although he had resided amongst them for years. They spoke of him with reverence, as of someone altogether too great and good to be interested in their common affairs. They were proud of him, but of attachment such as he was worthy to inspire, and they capable

little biscuits fastened in rows on paper, and glasses of cold water with the chocolate; but feeling rather famished, I should prefer some of that nice-looking potted meat, please."

"Ah, I have just invested in a mincing machine and cannot think how I ever managed without it," said Margaret. "All scraps of meat of all kinds, and bacon and ham and everything of that sort, are minced up together, and seasoned with pepper and salt, then pressed into small glass pots, a very little liquefied butter poured on the top, and it is a capital dish for breakfast or luncheon. Fish is very nice in the same way, and for a hot dish of mince the machine is most useful. But, Do, I do not wish to appear grasping, only did you not say you had *two* tokens of affection for me?"

"Yes, here is the second; it is for the piano, and I hope you will always use it, for really you do not take half enough care of that instrument. Why, it stands against an outside wall, and I have often seen it open on a damp day, with a draught from the window or door blowing right on to it!"

"Poor dear thing, it never occurs to me how delicate it and the rest of its race are, and I do rather neglect it, I know. But what can this long strip be for?"

"It is made of wash-leather, embroidered, you see, and it is to lay on the keys, before closing the instrument. There is a piece allowed to hang down in front of the keys, as well as to be on the top, and it keeps out damp and dust, and prevents the ivory going yellow. As you have to keep your piano in a room that is inclined to be damp, it would be best to get a set of glasses, one to be placed under each corner or foot, and pull it a little way out from the wall, for damp is the very worst thing for it, and sudden changes of temperature are almost as bad."

At this moment Anne appeared at the door with a note for Margaret. It was a rather dirty and disreputable-looking missive, on the outside, at any rate, and Dorothy Snow watched with surprise how Margaret first flushed rosy red, and then turned very pale as she read it. They were still sitting at the luncheon-table, though Anne had begun to clear away the things.

"Who brought this note, Anne?" asked Margaret, with a suppressed eagerness in her tones.

"A poor-looking, ragged child, m'm, and I hope she won't come hanging about the place, m'm, for she answered me quite impudent when I asked her who she came from, and I'm sure her hands were that dirty, I thought twice before I took the note from her. Some of them beggars I expect, m'm, from the looks of her."

Dorothy was not without a fair share of the curiosity of her sex, but it seemed that Margaret was not inclined to gratify it on this occasion. Wondering at her friend's unaccustomed reticence, Dorothy soon took her leave.

It was not remarkable that Margaret was discomposed, for the dirty little missive was in Tom's handwriting, and signed with Tom's name.

He was in London, he said, and craved to see her; he would be at a certain spot at seven o'clock that evening, and if she had any sisterly feeling left for such a miserable fellow, he asked her to be there to meet him. "But do not tell a single soul that you have heard from me," the note went on. "If I find that you have even hinted it to Wilfred or anyone, I shall make my way abroad, and you will never hear from me again."

This was decidedly awkward, and Margaret's delight at hearing from her brother was almost checked.

"Seven o'clock is our dinner hour, and how strange Wilfred will think my being out!"

she mused. "Well, I must leave a note to explain, yet I dare not tell him the truth till I have Tom's permission. It is just like a boy to fix upon the most inconvenient time!"

She wrote a few lines to Wilfred, saying vaguely that a poor person had suddenly sent for her, and she did not like to refuse so urgent a call; she would explain fully on her return, which would be before long. Thinking how her husband would rejoice with her when he knew the truth, she set out, and seven o'clock found her at the trysting-place. But there was no Tom. She paced up and down for some minutes, and began to grow hot and uncomfortable, for perhaps that poor wretched tramp who had been there crouching against the wall all the time might be seized with a design upon her purse; she wished he would go away; at any rate, she could not wait much longer, for he was looking at her—nay, approaching her—and saying in faltering tones, "Don't you know me, Madge?"

Could this pale, gaunt creature, with shabby clothes and hollow eyes, be indeed her bright handsome brother? Yes, there was still the old, frank, straightforward look, though the face was pinched and thin.

"It's no wonder you don't know me," he said, quietly. "I've been ill, and six weeks roughing it does alter one; but, Madge, say you trust me; I can't bear it if you are against me."

She threw her arms round his neck and kissed his poor pale cheeks again and again. "My darling boy, I shall always trust you, as I always have done. But why did you leave us? We could soon have cleared you if you had only stayed."

"No chance of that," he answered, with decision. "I know the fellow who took the notes, and he put those three in my desk; but I could not prove it. Besides, Madge, I would not have done so if I could; he shall never be found out if I can prevent it. I can't tell you why, but I'd endure anything first. It was foolish to run away, and cowardly, I dare say, but you don't know what it was, Madge—I couldn't bear it," and his eyes filled with tears.

There was much to hear on both sides. He told how he had been living as best he could, selling one by one his few valuables, and earning a few pence as porter and errand boy. The little girl who had brought his note, the child of parents as poor as himself, was a staunch friend, he said. She had tended him during his illness, and was always eager to share with him her scanty meals.

Tom, on his side, learned Mr. Macander's view of the matter, and that his father remained abroad with the idea that he, Tom, might be making his way out to him.

The clock in a neighbouring church rang out eight.

"Oh, I must go home now," said Margaret, startled to find the time had flown so; "but you must let me tell Wilfred, and then you shall come home to us till we decide what can be done."

Tom drew his arm from hers, and a hard look came over his face as he asked, "Does he believe me innocent; or does Joanna, or any one of them but you? No, Madge, you can't say they do," he went on, passionately, "and it's not likely I shall come begging and praying them to help me, whom they think a thief!"

Arguments were of no avail; nothing would induce him to alter his mind, and Margaret, bewildered as to the right course to take, and afraid of losing him, reluctantly promised to keep his secret. She pressed upon him all the little money she had with her, the tears raining down her cheeks as she parted from him.

"Good-bye, dearest darling brother. How can I leave you like this!" Taking a wrap from her shoulders, she folded it about his neck,

for he was shivering with cold, and with one last embrace she ran off home. No girl in London was so miserable as she, she thought, for her brother was almost starving, and she was going to deceive her husband.

(To be continued.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Third: The Mavis or Thrush—The Blackbird.

"All through the sultry hours of June,
From morning blithe to golden noon,
And till the star of evening climbs
The grey-blue East, a world too soon,
There sings a thrush amid the limes."

"Far ben thy dark green plantin's shade
The cushat croodies am'rouslic,
The mavis down thy bughted glade
Gars echo ring frae tree to tree,
Thou bonnie wood."



THINK it no waste of our precious space to quote the above verses. They prove that, whether in Scotland or England, the mavis or thrush is one of the especial favourites of the pastoral poet and

lyrist. And well the bird deserves to be. No sweeter song than his awakes the echoes of woodland or glen. It is shrill, piping, musical. Tannahill says he "gars (makes) echo ring frae tree to tree." That is precisely what the charming songster does do. It is a bold, clear ringing song that tells of the love and joy at the birdie's

heart. If that joy could not find expression in song, the bird would pine and die, as it does when caught, caged, and improperly treated. When singing he likes to perch himself among the topmost branches; he likes to see well about him, and perhaps the beauties he sees around him tend to make him sing all the more blithely. But though seeing he is not so easily seen. I often come to the door of my garden study and say to myself, "Where can the bird be to-night?" This, however, is when the foliage is on orchard and oaks. But his voice sometimes sounds so close to my ear that I am quite surprised when I find him singing among the boughs of a somewhat distant tree. This is my mavis, my particular mavis. In summer he awakes me with his wild lilt, long ere it is time to get up, and he continues his song "till the star of evening climbs the grey-blue East," and sometimes for an hour or more after that. I think, indeed, that he likes the gloaming best, for by that witching time nearly all the other birds have retired, and there is nothing to interrupt him.

In winter my mavis sings whenever the weather is mild, and the grass is visible. But he does not think of turning up of a morning until the sun does, and he retires much earlier. I have known my mavis now nearly two years, and I think he knows me. But how, you may ask, do I know that it is the selfsame bird? I reply that not only do the members of my own family know this mavis, but those of some of my neighbours as well, and in this way: all thrushes have certain ex-

pressions of their own, which, having once made use of, they never lose. So like are these to human words, that several people hearing them at the same time construe them in precisely the same way. My mavis has four of these in his vocabulary, with which he constantly interlards his song, or rather songs. They form the choruses, as it were, of his vocal performances. The chorus of one is, "weeda, weeda, weeda;" of another, "piece o' cake, piece o' cake, piece o' cake;" of the third, "earwig, earwig, earwig;" and of the last, sung in a most plaintive key, "pretty deah, pretty deah, pretty deah."

On frosty days he does not sing, but he will hop suddenly down in front of me while I am feeding my pet Newfoundland.

"You can spare a crumb," he says, speaking with his bright eye; "grubs are scarce, and my poor toes are nearly frozen off."

Says the great lyrist—

"May I not dream God sends thee there,
Thou mellow angel of the air,
Even to rebuke my earthlier rhymes
With music's soul, all praise and prayer?
Is that thy lesson in the limes?"

I am lingering longer with the mavis than probably I ought, simply because I want my girls to love the bird as I love him. Well, then, I have tried to depict him to you as he is in his native wilds; but see him now at some birdseller's door in town. Look at his drooping wings and his sadly-neglected cage. His eyes seem to plead with each passer-by.

"Won't you take me out of here?" he seems to say, "nor you, nor you? Oh! if you would, and were kind to me, I should sing songs to you that would make the green woods rise up before you like scenery in a beautiful dream."

The male thrush is the songster, the female remains mute. She listens. The plumage is less different than in most birds. The male looks more port and saucy, if that is any guide.

The mavis is imitative of the songs of other birds. In Scotland they say he *mocks* them. I do not think that is the case, but I know that about a week after the nightingales arrive here my mavis begins to adopt many of their notes, which he loses again when Philomel becomes mute. And I shouldn't think that even my mavis would dare to mock the nightingale.

I have found the nest of the mavis principally in young spruce trees or tall furze in Scotland, and in England in thick hedges and close leaved bushes; it is built of moss, grass, and twigs, and clay-lined. Eggs, four or five, a bluish-green colour with black spots. The missel thrush, or Highland magpie, builds far beyond any girl's reach, high up in the fork of a tree; the eggs are very lovely—whitish, speckled with brown and red. I do not recommend this bird as a pet. He is too wild.

The merle, or blackbird, now claims our attention. He frequents the same localities that the mavis does, and is by no means a shy bird even in the wild state, though I imagine he is of a quieter and more affectionate disposition. It is my impression that he does not go so far away from the nest of his pretty mate as the mavis, but then, perhaps, if he did he would not be heard. The song is even sweeter to the ear than that of the thrush, although it has far fewer notes. It is quieter, more rich and full, more mellow and melodious. The blackbird has been talked of as "fluting in the grove." The notes are certainly not like those of the flut'e. They are

cut or "tongued" notes, like those of the clarinet.

You can tell the difference between male and female easily enough, because the former is black with a yellow crocus-coloured bill, the latter a dark brown with a lighter bill.

The blackbird thinks that soft grass is more congenially comfortable than clay, so she lines her nest with that. She likes to be the same height from the ground, however; but a few summers ago I had a nest in the grass on a bank. It did well, and the young were half-fledged, but on going to look at it one morning I found the weasels had been before me, and had sucked the blood of every one of them. In canary breeding we often find a wilful hen, who *must* have her nest in a certain part of the cage, and nowhere else. We also find wilful pigeons. Perhaps this unfortunate blackbird was wilful, and the catastrophe points a moral.

The blackbird is far more imitative than the mavis, and can be taught quite a deal in the way of music. In order to teach him you must get one about two months old, or only a very little more. You must always feed him

the water squeezed off, then mixed with milk. Also little bits of lean meat cut fine, and garden snails, small slugs, and worms. In cold weather mix a little nicely bruised hempseed with the food. Break the snail before you give it to the bird. In summer ripe fruits, especially cherries, will be greatly relished.

Do not forget to change the water and food daily, and to clean the dishes. Do not forget the bath, either, of which these birds are very fond. Remember, if you be kind to the bird, whether mavis or thrush, it will love you and reward you with its song. There is many a poor, hard-working girl in our towns and villages who has nothing else to love her but her bird. Well, it is pleasant to have even that. But there are hours in every girl's life, whether rich or poor, when it is very pleasant to know there is one tiny heart that throbs only for her.

MY PRETTY CHARGE.

BY ALICE KING.

CHAPTER II.

It seemed but yesterday that I was going my round of commonplace daily work through the London streets, and yet here I am, settled down and feeling quite at home in a foreign land, and in a quaint old house that might have dropped out of a fairy tale, watching over a child who was as winsome as a fairy princess, and who had a secret hanging round her. I could hardly believe that it was all a bit of reality, and yet I was by this time as used to my position as if I had been born to it.

When I thought it all over, as I did now and then, when I was sitting by my pupil as she drew or read—and her whole mind was so immersed in what she was doing that she did not speak—I could hardly give myself any distinct reason for having accepted this post which was so foreign to my former antecedents. The strong interest and liking which Alba excited in me the moment I saw her and talked to her had, no doubt, much to do with the matter, and perhaps also a thread of romance which was woven in among the fibres of my nature, though no one ever suspected it—and I was universally called a most eminently practical and work-a-day sort of person—may have had something to do with it too. My

dear father, who knew me as no one else ever could or did, would sometimes say to me—

"Janey, little woman, you are like a book with a useful commonplace binding, but with some of the pages inside printed in a foreign character which only a few can read."

Mr. Bridlington had accompanied Alba and myself on our journey, and had not left us till he had seen us safely established at Belleville; that was the name of the old *château*, our present home. That journey with Mr. Bridlington was, if truth must be told, an experience that I should not exactly wish to repeat. He was always either rushing into wrong railway carriages, and having to be pulled out by frantic guards just as the train was moving, or kicking over a travelling bag upon the platform and sending bottles and packets of sandwiches flying wildly in every direction; or leaving his great coat at the hotel, and going in hasty search for it just as the train was starting; and all the while he was favouring Alba and me with such speeches as the following:—

"My dear Miss Allanby, calmness is the first great indispensable quality in a good



THE THRUSH.

yourself, and coax and talk to him, and in every way teach him to love you. He must be kept in a room by himself, where he can hear no other bird or any unseemly noises. The tune must be whistled to him or played on flute or ocarina, note by note and bar by bar; the result, if persisted in, will be charming. But whether you care to teach him or not, you will find in the blackbird a most loving companion and pet.

Either blackbird or thrush *can* be kept in a wicker cage, but there are regular cages for each of them procurable at any bird shop. Be sure to get a big, roomy one.

Now as regards the care of these birds while kept in a cage. When you get the cage, which *must* be before you get the bird, put clean, dry gravel in the bottom; cover this with dry grass or hay, which must be changed every day, if possible, or the odour will be unpleasant; fill the water glass with pure, fresh water, and put German paste in the food tin. Keep this state of affairs always up. Everything must be clean and dry and tidy. As a change of diet, oatmeal draggled with water may be given, and starchy bread soaked,

you. But supposing it were binding, and supposing you could not gain Anne's leave to speak, what was to hinder you from taking either Cecil or Mr. Crewe into your confidence, and telling that you knew of a fall in *your* presence, refusing to blame anyone else?"

"They would have guessed about Anne directly?"

"And if they had—what then? Was it of the greater importance to shield an unprincipled girl from the results of her own careless conduct, or to save little Hugh, if possible, from life-long suffering and loss? Did you ever seriously weigh the matter, Dessie? Did you ever really *wish* to tell—until perhaps lately?"

She shook her head.

"That was it. You made the most of your promise, as a means of sheltering yourself from blame. There is where the real sin and evil lie. I am not underrating the importance of one's given word, and I would not do so on any account. A promise is a solemn thing. But here was a promise which you had no right to make. You ought at once to have seen or written to the girl—at once, I mean, when you woke to the fact that it was wrong,—telling her frankly that you could not and would not keep it, and giving her the option of making the confession herself. You say you would have told if you could, but it is plain that you made no efforts to be free."

"I know," said Dessie, mournfully. "It is as bad as can be."

Harry's manner changed. "You must not think me unkind," he said. "I do pity you from my heart—even more than I pity Ella and Cecil. My only marvel is that you could have been, or at least have appeared, so cheerful, with such a weight on you, and my fear is that you may explain away the evil to yourself, and make little of what really is much."

"I don't think I shall," said Dessie. "I have *not* been happy for a long, long while, whatever I seemed. I couldn't be—how could I?—with such a secret. And indeed I did think often about God's forgiveness, but I didn't dare to ask or look for it, till I should tell Ella all—or, at least, till I really meant to tell."

"You will pray now, Dessie?"

She was sobbing too much for words, but presently she managed to say: "If I could only be sure—"

"There is the promise," Harry said, in a low voice. "And there is the cleansing blood, Dessie. No sins are too great for that."

"But it has gone on such a long while—"

"Yes—only not *too* long for God's forgiving love," was Harry's answer.

(To be continued.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Fourth: The Linnet or Lintie—The Robin.

"Ye'ken where yon wee burnie, love,
Runs roarin' to the sea,
And tumbles o'er its rocky bed
Like spirit wild and free.
The mellow mavis tunes his lay,
The blackbird swells his note,
And little robin sweetly sings
Above the woody groat."

W. Cameron.

"The gladsome lark o'er moor and fell,
The lintie in the bosky dell,
No blyther than your bonnie sel',
My ain, my artless Mary."

Idem.



COTTISH poets cannot keep birds out of their love songs any more than they can the gloaming star, the bloom of flowers, the scent of golden gorse, or soft winds sighing through woods in summer. And well may the lovely wee linnet be compared to a young and artless maiden, so good and innocent, so gentle and unobtrusive is the bird, and yet withal so blithe. Nor could a better pet be found for girls of a quiet, retiring disposition than the linnet. Some call it a shy bird.

This hardly coincides with my own experience, and I dearly like to study the characters of birds and animals of all kinds, and have often discovered something to love and admire even in the wildest beasts that ever roamed o'er prairie or roared in jungle. No, the linnet is not shy, but he is unostentatious; he seems to have the tact to know when a little music would be appreciated, and is by no means loath to trill his sweet song. He is also most affectionate, and if his mistress be but moderately kind to him, he may like other people well enough, but he will *love* but her alone, and will often and often pipe forth a few bars in so low a key that she cannot but perceive they are meant for her ear only.

Even in the wild state the rose-linnet courts retirement. Thinking and writing about this bird brings me back to the days of my boyhood. I am a tiny, tiny lad trudging home from the distant day-school, over a wide wild moorland with about a stone of books—Greek and Latin classics and lexicons—in a leathern strap over my shoulder. I am—as I ever wished to be—alone. That is, I have no human companionship. But I have that of the wild birds, and the thousand and one wild creatures that inhabit this great stretch of heathy wold, and I fancy they all know me, from yonder hawk poised high in the air to the yerlin that sings on a branch of broom; from the wily fox or fierce polecat to the wee mouse that nestles among the withered grass. I have about a score of nests to pay a visit to—the great long-winged screaming whaup's (curlew's) among the rushes, the mire-snipe's and wild duck's near the marsh; the water hen's, with her charming red eggs, near the streamlet; the peewit's on the knoll; the stonechat's, with eggs of milky blue, in the cairn; the laverock's, the woodlark's, and the wag-tail's, and last, but not least, the titlin's nest, with the cuckoo's egg in it. But I linger but a short time at any of these to-day, for on my way to school I saw a rose-linnet singing on a thorn, and have been thinking about it all day. I have been three times thrashed for Cicero, and condemned to detention for two

hours after my schoolmates are gone. I have escaped through the window, however. I shall be thrashed for this in the morning, but I should be thrashed for something, at all events, so that matters nothing. The sun is still high in the heavens, summer days are long, I'll go and look for my linnet's nest; I haven't seen one this year yet. The heather is all green as yet, and here and there on the moorland is a bush or patch of golden furze, not tall and straggling like the bushes you find in woods, that seem *to stretch out* their necks as if seeking in vain for the sunlight, but close, compact, hugging the ground, and seeming to weigh down the warm summer air around it with the sweetness of its perfume.

Now, on one of those very bushes, and on the highest twig thereof, I find my cock linnet. His head is held well up, and his little throat swells and throbs with his sweet, melodious song. But I know this is all tact on the bird's part, and that his heart beats quick with fear as he sees me wandering searchingly from bush to bush. He is trying to look unconcerned. He saw me coming, and enjoined his pretty mate to lie close and not fly out, assuring her that if she did so all would be well.

He does not even fly away at my approach. "There is no nest of mine anywhere near here," he seems to say. "Is it likely I would be singing so blithely if there were?"

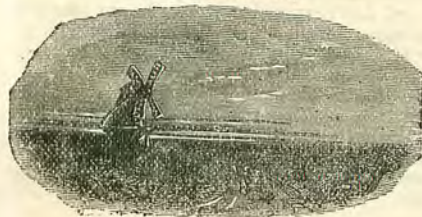
"Ah! but," I reply, "I feel sure there is, else why are you dressed so gaily, why have you cast aside your sombre hues and donned that crimson vest?"

Pop—I am at the right bush now, and out flies the modest, wee female linnet. She had forgotten all her mate told her, she was so frightened she could not lie close. And now I lift a branch and keek in, and am well rewarded. A prettier sight than that little nest affords, to any one fond of birds, cannot easily be conceived. It is not a large one; the outside of it is built of knitted grass and withered weeds, and on the whole it is neat; but inside it is the perfection of beauty and rotundity, and softly and warmly lined with hair of horse and cow, with a few small feathers beneath, to give it extra cosiness. And the eggs—how beautiful! Books simply tell you they are white, dotted, and speckled with red. They are more than this; the groundwork is white, to be sure, but it looks as if the markings were traced by the fingers of some artist fay. It looks as though the fairy artist had been trying to sketch upon them the map of some strange land, for here are blood-red lakes—square, or round, or oval—and rivers running into them and rivers rolling out, so that having once seen a rose-linnet's egg, you could never mistake it for any other.

And now if I have interested you in this bonnie bird, let me tell you how you are to treat him if you happen to get one, so as to make him perfectly happy, with a happiness that will be reflected upon you, his mistress.

I always counsel anyone who has a pet of any kind to be in a manner jealous of it, for one person is enough to feed and tend it, and that person should be its owner.

Of course, if you mean to have one as a companion you will procure a male bird, and one as pretty as possible, but even those less bright in colour sing well. Let his cage be a square or long one, and just as roomy as you please; birds in confinement cannot have too much space to move about in. Keep the cage exceedingly clean and free from damp, give the bird fresh water every morning, and see that he has a due allowance of clean dry seed. The food is principally canary-seed with some rape in it, and a small portion of flax, but although you may now and then give him a portion of bruised hempseed, be careful and remember hemp is both stimulating and over-fattening. Many a bird gets enlargement of the liver, and heart disease and consequent



asthma, from eating too freely and often of hemp. In summer it should never be given, but in cold weather it is less harmful.

Green food should not be forgotten. The best is chickweed—ripe—and groundsel, with—when you can get it—a little watercress. There are many seedling weeds which you may find in your walks by the wayside, which you can bring home to your linter. If you make a practice of doing this, he will evince double the joy and pleasure at seeing you on your return.

Never leave any green food longer than a day either in or over the cage. So shall your pet be healthy, and live for many years to give you comfort with his sweet fond voice. I may just mention that the linnet will learn the song of some other birds, notably that of the woodlark. Sea-sand may be put in the bottom of the cage, and when the bird begins to lose its feathers and moult, be extra kind and careful with it, covering the cage partly over, and taking care to keep away draughts. After the feathers begin to come you may put a rusty nail in the water. This is a tonic, but I do not believe in giving it too soon.

Let me now say a word about the robin. But I hardly know where or how to begin, nor am I sure that my theme will not run right away with me when I do commence. My winged horse—my Pegasus—must be kept well in hand, while writing on my little favourite, the robin. Happy thought, however! I will tell you nothing I think you know already.

The robin, then, like the domestic cat, is too well known to need description. We who live in the country have him with us all the year round, and we know his charming song wherever we hear it. He may seem to desert our habitations for a few months in the early spring-time, for he is then very busy, having all the care and responsibility of a family on his head; but he is not far away. He is only in the neighbouring grove or orchard, and if we pay him a visit there he will sing to us very pleasantly, as if glad to see us. And one fine morning we find him on the lawn-gate again, bobbing and becking to us, and looking as proud as a pasha because he has his little wife and three of his family with him. His wife is not a Jenny Wren, as some suppose, but a lovely wee robin just like himself, only a trifle smaller, and not quite so red on the breast nor so bold as her partner. And the young ones, what charmingly innocent little things they look, with their broad beaks and their apologies for tails! I have often known them taken for juvenile thrushes, because their breasts are not red, but a kind of yellow with speckles in it.

"Tcheet, tcheet!" cries Robin, on the gate, bobbing at you again; "throw out some crumbs. My wife is a bit shy; she has never been much in society; but just see how the young ones can eat."

Well, Robin is one of the earliest birds of a morning that I know. He is up long before the bickering sparrows, eke before the mavis. His song mingles with your morning dreams, and finally wakes you to the joys and duties of another day, and if you keek out at the window you will probably see him on the lawn, hauling some unhappy worm out of its hole. I have seen Robin get hold of too big a worm, and, after pulling a piece of it out as long as a penholder, fly away with a frightened, "Tcheet tcheet!" as much as to say, "Dear me! I didn't know there were yards and yards of you. You must be a snake or something."

Robin sings quite late at night too, long after the mavis is mute and every other bird has retired. And all day long in autumn he sings. During the winter months, especially if there be snow on the ground, he comes

boldly to the window-ledge and doesn't ask but demands his food, as brazenly as a German bandsman. Sparrows usually come with him, but if they dare to touch a bit of food that he has his eye on they catch it. My robin insists upon coming in to my study in winter. He likes the window left open though, and I don't, and on this account we have little petulancies, and if I turn him out he takes revenge by flying against the French window and mudding all the pane with his feet.

Almost every country house has one or two robins that specially belong to it, and very jealous they are of any strange birds that happen to come nigh the dwelling. While bird-nesting one time in company with another boy, we found a robin's nest in a bank at the foot of a great ash tree. There were five eggs in it. On going to see it two days after, we found the nest and eggs intact, but two other eggs had been laid and deposited about a foot from the bank. We took the hint, and carried away these two, but did not touch the others. The eggs are not very pretty.

While shooting in the wildest part of the Highlands, and a long way from home, I have often preferred a bed with my dog on the heather to the smoky hospitality of a hut; and I have found robins perched close by me of a morning, singing ever so sweetly and low. They were only trying to earn the right to pick up the crumbs my setter and I had left at supper, but this shows you how fond these birds are of human society.

In a cage the robin will live well and healthily for many years, if kindly and carefully treated. He will get so tame that you needn't fear to let him have his liberty about the room.

Let the cage be large and roomy, and covered partly over with a cloth. The robin loves the sunshine and a clean, dry cage, and, as to food, he is not very particular. Give him German paste—for which in my next paper I will write a good recipe—with a little bruised hemp and maw seed, with insects, beetles, grubs, garden and meal worms, &c. Let him have clean gravel frequently, and fresh water every morning. Now and then when you think your pet is not particularly lively, put a rusty nail in the water.

I do not advise my girl readers to rob a robin's nest for sake of getting a bird to bring up, but if you can procure a brancher about June he will soon be reconciled to his new home.

In bird shops you may often see robins for sale. It is really charity to buy one, albeit it may encourage the cruel trade of bird-catching.

AN UNATTRACTIVE GIRL.

By the Author of "Brave Little Heart," &c.

CHAPTER II.



ANNETTE often speaks of you to me. She will I am sure be very glad to see you during the holidays," Mrs. Fletcher said, with a kind yet searching glance at Mara.

"My sister," said Jack, whom Mara had introduced in a short, sharp way, "very greatly needs some young companions. I, for one, shall be very grateful for the invitation you have given her. Mara is inclined to underrate her capabilities of pleasing."

"There is nothing worse for girls than want of suitable companionship," said Mrs. Fletcher, kindly. "I shall always be glad to see Mara."

"That's not true," said Mara, when they had said "good-bye." "I hate conventionalism. She won't be glad to see me."

"Couldn't you try to make her so?" suggested Jack.

"That would be impossible," was Mara's curt, decisive reply.

They found Mrs. Johnstone sitting up in a cold, fireless room darning Mara's stockings. Seven stockings were laid out separately on the table, and the eighth was drawn on Mrs. Johnstone's hand. The sight did not please Mara, who took a swift glance round the room, then darted at the table, caught up the stockings, rolled them all up into a bundle, and crammed them into her reticule with her evening shoes.

"I wish you wouldn't mend my stockings, mother," said Mara. "Why on earth did you sit up? Surely you could have trusted Jack with the key. 'Tisn't as if you had kept up a fire."

Mrs. Johnstone looked over her spectacles at Mara for fully two minutes, during which time Mara, pretending unconsciousness, slowly divested herself of her outdoor garments.

"As for mending your stockings, I do it to disgrace you," she said, severely. "And a great disgrace it is. Don't mention to me about giving Jack a latch-key. Where you get hold of such vulgar present day notions I can't imagine. I should consider myself highly culpable if I were so extravagant as to keep up a fire while my children are gadding about for pleasure."

"Come, mother, you mustn't call this gadding," chimed in Jack, who now entered the room.

"Of course, you haven't taken any prize?" Mrs. Johnstone asked Mara, not heeding Jack's remark.

"If you know so well, there is no need to ask me," Mara said, curtly.

"She has a certificate for drawing," said Jack, "and considering that she has to teach as well as to study, we can hardly expect her to do as well as other girls."

"I didn't try to get a prize," said Mara, with the outspokenness which some people call straightforwardness and others unamiability. "I worked at my drawing because I like it, and not for any other reason."

"It is a pity when such efforts are being made for your education that you should deliberately inform us you do not care to try," Mrs. Johnstone said, coldly.

"Such efforts!" burst forth Mara, bitterly. "Am I to be truly thankful for the enviable position of a shabby, despised governess-pupil?"

"Nannette Fletcher never seems to make any difference between you and the other girls," said Jack.

"No, she doesn't, but she's the only one," replied Mara.

"And that I should say quite rests with yourself," was Jack's reply; "but now, good-night, Mara, and be off to bed," he added, taking her hand and leading her to the door.

When she had gone he sat down opposite his mother, with the table between them. "Mother," said he presently, "I feel anxious about Mara's future, don't you?"

"I don't expect her ever to be any pleasure to me or anyone else," was the equivocal reply. "Her disposition is of the most unfortunate description."

"That is the more reason that it should be carefully watched and trained," replied Jack, warmly. "She needs a wider interest—a happier life. Her interests are concentrated upon herself at present, and it is ruining her."

all before it. Add to this the halo which misfortune throws around her victims, and which is most evident to the noblest and most sympathetic souls, and it is not difficult to imagine the state of exalted feeling into which the Highland districts were plunged by the appearance among them of him *whom they fondly* called their native Prince.

At Corryarrack the young Chevalier rewarded the devotion of his Highland followers by appearing among them in philibeg and sporan, and, tying the latchet of his brogues in the presence of his men, he swore that he would "never loose them until he had fought for his rights with the usurper in London."

All this and much more was reported by letter or by verbal message to Mrs. Stewart, and, whatever she heard that was comforting and inspiring, the good mistress lost no time in communicating to her people, and specially to Elspeth, who abode in great loneliness at the mill. Little Janet was a silent but an attentive listener to all this talk, and turned things over in her mind, rarely showing the workings of it to any one, till a great enthusiasm was kindled in her heart, and a longing that she also might do something to show her loyalty—an enthusiasm which at last burst bounds as she sat one day watching the play of Elspeth's spindle.

"Elspie, darling, cannot a woman go to war?"

"No, Janet, my bairn, women must bide at home and mind the house."

"But, Elspie, when I am grown up, I'd rather go and fight with father than bide at home and mind the house."

"Maybe, child; many a lassie has been of that mind, but ye must take heart and be patient, like your own mother. Doubtless the ledly would rather be away with Stewart and all the bonnie lads at Corryarrack yonder than bide at home with a parcel of silly bairns and weak women like you and me."

Janet's head bowed thoughtfully.

"What would become of house and home," pursued Elspeth, "of wee bairns and old folk, of stock and mill, if madam had left us a' to go to rack and waste, let alone Johnnie Cope and his lawless dragoons, who may be down on us any time?"

"Johnnie Cope? Who is Johnnie Cope, Elspie?"

"Never fash your bonnie head about him, Jeannie: he's no good for much. I'm thinkin' Sandie and Donald will sune settle his business."

"Then, Elspie," said Janet, gravely, "it is Sir John Cope, the general who is come to fight Prince Charlie, that ye mean?"

"Ye have it, my bairn; and I hope ye'll never know more about him or those awfu' Godless carles the dragoon lads."

"What are dragoons, Elspie?"

"They are just English soldiers, my bairn. But it is time ye were back to the house; see, the sun is getting low, so ye must say good-night; and ye'll come down again the morn and tell me if there is any news frae the east—eh, lassie?"

Janet promised, and tripped away on her homeward journey, some three-quarters of a mile through her father's lands, in all of which Janet felt as much at home as in her own nursery. Janet was necessarily rather a solitary child, for her brother, who would have been her companion, had been carried off by a fever, so that there was a gap of four years between her and Sandie, who, with little Marget, was still in the nursery. Janet's thoughtful self-possession, too, and the fact that no harm ever came to her in her wanderings, had secured her an independence and freedom of action which might have surprised Mrs. Stewart herself, if she

had reflected how very little the child was under control.

So Janet took her way home, following the course of the little stream or burn to the loch, her young heart much soothed by the prattle of the water and the sweet, natural sounds of bird, beast, and plant upon its banks. Here a silver trout shot into the air, there a heron patiently watched for his prey, still and intent as though he were cast in bronze; and here and there bunches of heather or broad white flowers with golden centres gemmed the path, or a spray of a raspberry bush tempted the maiden's fingers with its late fruit.

Meanwhile the sun was rapidly sinking, and the clouds were robing themselves in gold and crimson to receive him. Janet stood and gazed her fill at his glory as it flooded earth and sky and water, and the little maid's heart yearned to the infinite—to that spiritual world which she had been told was her brother Malcolm's home. Janet could not have put that yearning into words. She was never a woman of many words, but without her knowing it her soul fed and grew on the beauty of hill and lake and sky, and came to be tuned to a higher tone than she, in her simplicity, dreamt of.

And now the water ceased to glow, the loch was grey and still, the underwood looked of a dark green; only the boughs of the birches and mountain ashes were still radiant in the golden glory. Janet thought of home and of her mother, and she quickened her pace.

The path led up between two rocks, richly covered with ferns. It was in a cave in one of these rocks that Katie Macdonald hid the infant son of Alister Stewart of Invernahyle, surnamed the Peaceful, when Green Colin of Dunstaffnage came upon him by stealth, burnt his house, and slew him and his household. Janet knew the story well. How Katie Macdonald, his nurse, had much ado to steal away with the infant; how, in despair, she tied a lump of lard by a string about his neck, and hid him in this cleft in the rock; how Green Colin's men seized her as she came from the place, and demanded the child; how they kept her closely confined for three days, threatening her daily with death if she did not discover where the child was; how, finding they could get nothing from her, they concluded that the child was dead and let her go; how she stole to the place where she had left the child, thinking perhaps that she might find some remnants of his little corpse and give them Christian burial, for it could hardly be, she thought, but that some wild cat or bird of prey had found the tender creature; how when, in fear and trembling, she lifted the screen of moss and ferns, she beheld no mangled limbs, no lifeless corpse, but her sweet, rosy charge sleeping peacefully, his chubby hand grasping the string that held the lard, reduced to about the size of a walnut.

All this story Janet knew. Did not Elspeth delight to tell it her? And how the infant grew to be the terrible Donnil nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, who called Green Colin to a terrible reckoning, did many fearful acts, and died at last an old, old man, a monk in the Abbey of St. Columba in Iona.

But this evening Janet passed Donald's "cradle" with scarce a glance, for she was in haste to be home; so she ran up the path shaking the dew from the grass as she passed, and disturbing a council of politic hares gathered in a little clearing to the left. When she reached home supper was spread, and her mother was asking for her, but she escaped with a slight reproof, for good news was come from the war. The Prince was in full march for Edinburgh, recruits were continually flocking to his standard, while King George's men,

under Sir John Cope, showed little inclination to join battle, having, in fact, retreated before them, declining a general action.

Mrs. Stewart was too much occupied in entertaining her husband's messenger, in preparing supplies which he had asked for, and in communicating the happy tidings to her people, to take much heed of Janet; but when all that was necessary had been done, and she sat down for a moment to rest, Janet came and stood beside her, and, resting her head on her shoulder, she said—

"Mother, if all's well, father 'll soon be home again, won't he?"

"Aye, Janet, if God so will it," replied Mrs. Stewart, with a heavy sigh, for she was very tired, and knew in her heart the difficulties of the enterprise in which her husband had joined. "Ye'll pray for him, my darling; little Sandie and Marget said their prayers quite early, and Sandie said, quite out of his own head, 'Please God send father home again.' Little Marget tried to say the words after him, but she couldn't manage it, so she folded her hands and looked up to heaven with the prayer in her eyes; and He that is above could see the hands and the eyes just as easily as He could hear poor Sandie's words."

"Mother," said Janet very softly, but with the air of perfect conviction, "you know father is leal and true; do not fear, God will keep him in the hollow of His hand."

"True, my daughter," said Mrs. Stewart, "but ye'll say a prayer for him, nevertheless, for the Father in heaven loves to hear the little ones praying for their parents on earth. Have I not read to you how the Lord said that the angels of the children do daily behold the face of their Father in heaven?"

So Janet Stewart fell asleep that night with a tear on her cheek and a prayer for her absent father on her lips.

(To be continued.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Fifth: The Redstart—A Few Words about "German Paste"—Jenny Wren—The Golden-headed Wren—A Golden Eagle—The Stone-chat and Whin-chat—The Goldfinch.

"They sang, as blithe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never miss'd."

Cowper.



WAS creeping, crawling, and scrambling one afternoon in the days of my boyhood through tall furze at the foot of the Drummond Hill, which in England would be called a mountain. It was the Saturday half holiday, and I was having a fine time of it among the birds. I was quite a mile away from any human dwelling, and, I flattered myself, from any human being either. I was speedily undeceived though. "Come out o' there,

youngster," cried a terrible voice, almost close to my ear. "I thought ye were a rabbit; I was just going to chuck a stone at your head."

I crept forth in fear and trembling.

A city rough of the lowest type—you could tell that from the texture of the ragged, second-hand garments he wore; from his slipshod feet, his horrid cap of greasy fur, and pale, unwholesome face.

He proceeded to hoist a leafless branch, smeared with birdlime, in a conspicuous place, and not far off he deposited a cage, with a bird in it. Then he addressed me.

"I'm goin' away for half an hour, and you'll stop here and watch. If any birds get caught on the twigs, when I come back I'll mebbe gie you something."

When he came back he did "gie me something." He boxed my ears soundly, because I had lain beside the cage, and talked to the little bird all the time instead of watching.

You may guess how I loved that man. I have had the same amount of affection for the whole bird-catching fraternity ever since, and I do a deal every summer to spoil their sport. I look upon them as followers of a most sinful calling, and just as cruel and merciless as the slave traders of Southern Africa. Many a little heart they break; they separate parent birds, and tear the old from their young, who are left to starve to death in the nest.

Never, I beg of you, buy a bird from man or boy in the street, and never buy one from a dealer—unless to set free—that you even suspect has been caught wild in the country.

Now, before going on to say anything about finches, let me mention one or two birds of a different feather that make nice little pets.

There is the redstart, for example. In size and shape not unlike the robin; but the bill is black, the forehead white, the rest of the upper part of the body a bluish grey. The wings are brownish, the bird wears a bib of black, but on the upper portion of the chest and all adown the sides there is red, though not so bright in colour as the robin's breast. That is the plumage of the cock-bird, so these birds are easily known. They make charming cage pets, being very affectionate, and as merry as a maiden on May morning, always singing and gay, and so tame that you need not be afraid to let them out of the cage.

Food in the wild state: insects, beetles, moths, larvae, &c. In confinement, egg food with a little scraped meat, meal worms, flies and insects, and German paste.

I have often been asked for a recipe for German paste, and take this opportunity of giving one which I think is as good, at all events, as any you will find in books, and forms a better diet for birds than that which you buy in shops. I have these objections to the German pastes that are sold over the counter: one does not know what may or may not be in them, nor how old they are, nor whether they be cleanly or not.

Most bird dealers mix up yolk of hard-boiled egg with their pastes, and seeds of various kinds. I do not advise this. I may be wrong, but I have an idea that the seeds are apt to aid fermentation, or sour the mass, causing it to produce diarrhoea in the birds. Seeds, I think, ought to be given separately. As to the yolk of egg, it is not so objectionable. But I like to give it by itself to a pet bird as a delicious tid-bit—a reward, perhaps, for the music it has just been charming us with, or simply as a gift of love, or *billet doux*.

Let me here remind my very young readers that to boil an egg healthily hard for a bird or even for a human being, a whole hour is required, not merely five or six minutes.

German paste, recipe for:—Take of the best pea-flour 4 ounces, finely ground oatmeal 4 ounces, three-day-old breadcrumbs 2 ounces, pure honey 2 ounces, powdered loaf-sugar 1

ounce. Mix together in a mortar, pounding it well, and adding by degrees a little of the best salad oil to form a paste. This should be pressed through a colander to divide it into morsels. Then in the cleanest of pipkins over the clearest of fires fry it till of a light brown colour, frequently stirring it until baked. This, when cold, should be turned into a wide-mouthed stoppered bottle, and will keep for eight or ten days. It would keep much longer, but the fresher a bird's food is the better. Old or young birds will eat this, but the very young require it softened or pastified with a drop of water. I do not approve of giving pet birds dainties; I have known so much mischief arise from this habit; but among the least harmless are the time-honoured morsel of lump sugar and tiny bit of cake, say sponge cake, Scotch shortbread, or, now and then, a little saffron cake. I must add one word of warning, however: pray do not forget that sweets are heating, and if given too frequently are sure to spoil the plumage.

From my study window as I sit here I can see hopping nimbly from branch to branch of the Austrian pines, evidently with an eye to business—for the bird, or one like it, built in a silver holly on the lawn last year—a humble jenny wren.

Dare I admit such a midge of a bird to a place among my girls' pets? I think I may. Some would love the mite for pity sake. It is very pretty and very gay, and possesses a sweet little voice of its own; it needs care, however. It must not, on the one hand, be kept too near a fire or in too warm a room, and on the other it should be well covered up at night; a draught is fatal to such a bird. There is also the golden-headed wren, the smallest of our British birds, but I do not remember ever having seen one kept in a cage. There is no accounting for tastes, however. I knew a young lady in Aberdeen who kept a golden eagle in a cage of huge dimensions. He was the admiration of all beholders, and the terror of inquisitive school-boys, who, myself among the number, fully believed he ate a whole horse every week, and ever so many chickens. While gazing at that bird, you could not help feeling thankful you were on the outside of the cage. I admired, but I did not love him much. He caught me by the arm one day, with true Masonic grip—I loved him even less after that.

Wrens are fed in the same way as robins or nightingales are. In the wild state they build a large roundish nest, principally of green moss outside, and with very little lining. There is just one tiny hole left in the side capable of admitting two fingers. Eggs about ten in number, very small, white, and delicately ticked with red. If I remember aright the golden wren's are pure white. The nests I have found were in bushes, holly, fir, or furze, or under the branches of large trees close to the trunk. The back of the nest is nearly always towards the north and east.

The stone-chat or stone-checker is a nice bird as to looks, but possesses but little song. It would require the same treatment in cage or aviary as the robin. So I believe would the whin-chat, but I have no practical knowledge of either as pets. I will have a word or two to say about some of the more common warblers in my next; meanwhile the goldfinch is waiting.

With the exception of the kingfisher, I do not recollect any British bird with brighter or more charming plumage than our friend the goldfinch. He is arrayed in crimson and gold, black, white, and brown, but the colours are so beautifully placed and blended that, rich and gaudy though they be, they cannot but please the eye of the most artistic. The song of the goldfinch is very sweet, he is withal a most affectionate pet, and exceedingly clever,

so much so that he may be taught quite a number of so-called tricks.

If you wish to keep only one goldfinch, you will of course have a cock, and not a hen bird; but as the sexes are difficult to tell apart, you ought to get some one who really knows these birds to choose and buy for you.

In the wild state the bird eats a variety of seeds of various weeds that grow by the wayside, and at times in the garden of the slug-gard. Dandelion and groundsel seed are the chief of these, and later on in the season thistle seed. So fond, indeed, is the goldfinch of the thistle that the only wonder is that our neighbours beyond the Tweed do not claim it as one of the birds of Bonnie Scotland, as they do the curlew and golden eagle. But, on the other hand, they might on the same plea claim a certain quadruped, whose length of ear exceeds its breadth of intellect.

The young goldfinches may be fed on German paste, moistened, hard-boiled egg, crushed hemp, &c. The adult bird, however, is quite a seed bird, and the fewer varieties of seed he eats the better. Canary, rape, and linseed should be the staple, especially the former, with now and then a little hemp, chiefly in cold weather, and maw or poppy seed. If you can find groundsel, dandelion, and thistles in season, let them have some, only see that they are ripe, that is, just on the eve of casting their seeds. Fresh water must be given every morning, and the cage kept very clean, with sand and gravel in the bottom of it.

Green food should also be allowed, the best being chickweed and watercress.

Sometimes it may be observed that the bird's digestive organs are not quite what they should be, and that a little binding or toning food and medicine are required. Give more maw seed and a little lettuce seed, each of which possesses astringent properties. If this has not the desired effect, about twenty drops of paregoric and half a teaspoonful of the syrup of saffron (*Syrupus croci*) may be put in the drinking water every morning, but be sure to empty the glass and give the mixture fresh and fresh.

The syrup of saffron is also a mild diaphoretic, that is, it has a tendency to act skinwards. It seems to me one of the best remedies we have in simple colds. Always be careful when giving a pet bird medicine of any kind, or whenever he seems not quite so cheerful as usual, to put the cage in a somewhat warmer corner in a well-ventilated apartment. Let him have sunshine now and then, but always a shelter or awning to go under if feeling oppressed. Birds are wonderfully wise, and will not hesitate to take advantage of anything which is likely to act for their good. Goldfinches may easily be taught the value of exercise, and made to draw their own water and seeds. I do not think I would be very far wrong if I were to remark that the goldfinch holds the same rank among our pet birds that the poodle does among dogs, and that both are unrivalled for their aptitude to learn.



A few days before leaving for town we were taken for an excursion along the pier, at the end of which we lay for some hours. We were greatly delighted when we espied a tiny shop from where we were lying, for it was long since we had seen so interesting a sight. But although our friends seemed to enjoy our enjoyment in this, yet they were not at all excited. You see, a shop was a very common sight to them. When our ardour had cooled down, we were carried back to our separate lodgings in triumph.

But as all good things come to an end, so did our holiday. But we returned to town, each with a well-filled mental sketch-book, to which we constantly refer in these cold and bleak winter days.

Though Gowan and I live in the same town, yet we are "seprit" in the meantime. We are still invalids, though hopeful ones, and if health should again be granted us, what a happy day it will be for us when, lifting two sufferers into our "baskets," we carry them off to enjoy what we enjoyed!

But we cannot tell what lies in store for us in the future—whether it be more pain, or whether it be relief—but we can trust, and be happily satisfied in knowing that "He Knows."

"Oh, blessed happy ignorance!

'Tis better not to know.

It keeps me so still in the tender arms

That will not let me go;

It hushes my soul to rest

On the bosom that loves me so."

HOPE (aged 21).

"WHAT JESUS DID FOR US."

O THINK of Jesus years ago
Who on this earth did dwell,
Who acted all those miracles—
Should we not love Him well?

He came on earth to die for us
That we might be forgiven—
That He would take us far away
To sing with Him in heaven.

He always will forgive our sins
Till seven times seventy-seven;
And if we do not love Him then
We cannot go to heaven.

He healed the sick, He raised the dead,
He took the palsy from their bed,
He cleansed the leper, cured the blind,
And yet we do not care or mind.

O Jesus, let us bear in mind
The things that passed in olden time,
When you and your Apostles there
Sought to do good everywhere.

O Jesus, let us strive to walk
According to Thy words and works,
And when we reach Thy home above
We'll praise Thee for Thy wondrous love.

ETHEL ANNIE COGHLAN (aged 11).



GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Sixth: A Bird-haunted Kirkyard—
A Few Words about Husk and about Moulting.

"Adieu, sweet bird! thou erst hast been
Companion of each summer scene,
Loved inmate of our meadows green,
And rural home;
The music of thy cheerful song
We loved to hear; and all day long
Saw thee on pinion fleet and strong
About us roam."



It is usual in the far north of Scotland, where the writer was reared, to have, as in England, the graveyard surrounding the parish church. The custom is a very ancient and a very beautiful one; life's

fitful fever past and gone, to rest under the soft green sward, and under the very shadow of the church where one gleaned spiritual guidance. There is something in the very idea of this which tends to dispel much of the gloom of death, and cast a halo round the tomb itself.

But at the very door of the old church of N— a tragedy had, years before I had opened my eyes in life, been enacted, and since that day service had never again been conducted within its walls. The new church was built on an open site quite a mile from the old, which latter stands all by itself—crumbling ivy-clad ruins, in the midst of the greenery of an acre of ancient graves. There is a high wall around it, and giant ash and plane trees in summer almost hide it from view. It is a solitary spot, and on moonlit nights in winter, although the highway skirts it, few there be who care to pass that way. The parish school or academy is situated some quarter of a mile from the auld kirkyard, and in the days of my boyhood even bird-nesting boys seldom, if ever, visited the place. It was not considered "canny." For me, however, the spot had a peculiar charm. It was so quiet, so retired, and haunted, not with ghosts, but with birds, and many a long sunny forenoon did I spend wandering about in it or reclining on the grass with my Virgil or Horace in hand—poets, by the way, who can only be thoroughly enjoyed out of doors in the country.

A pair of owls built in this auld kirkyard for years. I used to think they were always the same old pair, who, year after year, stuck to the same old spot, sending their young ones away to the neighbouring woods to begin life on their own account as soon as they were able to fly. They were lazy birds; for two whole years they never built a nest of

their own, but took possession of a magpie's old one. But at last the lady owl said to her lord:

"My lord, this nest is getting quite disreputable—we must have a new one this spring."

"Very well," said his lordship, looking terribly learned, "but you'll have to build it, my lady, for I've got to think, and think, you know."

"To be sure, my lord," said she. "The world would never go on unless you thought, and thought."

She chose an old window embrasure, and, half hid in ivy, there she built the new nest with weeds and sticks and stubble, while he did nothing but sit and talk Greek and natural philosophy at her.

There were tree sparrows built in the ivy of those crumbling walls, each nest about as big as the bottom of an arm-chair, and containing as many feathers as would stuff a small pillow-case, to say nothing of threads of all colours, hair, and pieces of printed paper. Seven, eight, and ten eggs would be in some of those, white as to ground, and beautifully speckled with brown and grey.

I have heard the tree sparrow called a nasty, common, dowdy thing. It really is not at all dowdy, and although it may be called the country cousin of the busy, chattering little morsel of feathers and fluff that hops nimbly but noisily about our roof tops, and is constantly quarrelling with its neighbours, the tree sparrow is far more pretty. Nor is it quite plebeian. It is the *Passer montanus* of some naturalists, the *bec-fin friquet* of the French; it belongs to the Greek family, the *Fringillidae*, and does not the linnet belong to that family, too? yes, and the beautiful bullfinch and the gaudy goldfinch as well, to say nothing of the siskin and canary, so it cannot be plebeian. The tree sparrow makes a nice wee pet, very loving and gentle, and not at all particular as to food. It likes canary seed, but insects and worms as well, and it is not shy at picking a morsel of sugar, nor a tiny bit of bread and butter.

There were more birds of the same family that haunted this auld kirkyard. The greenfinch or green-grosbeak used to flit hither and thither among the ivy like a tiny streak of lightning, and the pretty wee redpole was also there. These birds are fed and treated in the same way that goldfinches are. So, too, is the hawfinch, a charmingly pretty bird, and one to be found at times in the shops of dealers, although I do not think it breeds very often in this country.

There was one bird in particular that used to build in the trees that grew inside the graveyard wall. I refer to my old friend and favourite the chaffinch, called in Scotland the boldie. He is most brilliant in plumage, being richly clad in russet red and brown, picked out with blue, yellow, and white. The chaffinch is lovely whether sitting or flying, whether trilling his song with head erect and throat puffed out, or keeking down from the branch of a tree with one saucy eye, to see if anyone is going near his nest. His song in the wild state is more celebrated for brilliancy and boldness than for sweetness or variation, but in confinement it may be improved.

Considering that the chaffinch is so lovely, so neat, and so shapely, and that its song is so bright and bell-like, and sung with such a will, I wonder it is not more common as a cage bird than it is. It becomes most affectionate and tame, and may be fed on the same kind of food as the goldfinch. It is cleanly in habits, and knows the value of pure water, both for the purposes of drinking and for bathing. And this should not be forgotten by those who keep them in confinement. I daresay the reason why the chaffinch is not thought enough of is this: it is common. "Oh! it is only a chaffie," I have heard one

bird-nesting boy say to another, "Who would think of going after a chaffin's nest?"

But this same nest is something to look at and admire for minutes at a time. I used to think my chaffinch—the chaffinch that built in my churchyard—was particularly proud of his nest.

"Pink, pink, pink," he used to say to me; "I see you looking up at my nest. You may go up, if you like, and have a look in. She is from home just now, and there are four eggs in it at present. There will be five by-and-by. Now, did ever you see such beautiful eggs?"

"Never," I would reply; "they are most lovely."

"Well, then," he would continue, "pink, pink, pink! look at the nest itself. What do you think of that for architecture? It is built, you see, some twelve feet from the ground, against the stem, but held in its place by a little branch. It is out of the reach of cats; if it were higher up the wind would shake it, or the hawks would see it. It is not much bigger than your two hands; and just look at the artistic way in which the lichens are mingled with the moss on the outside, to blend with the colour of the tree!"

"Yes, but," I would remark, "there are bits of paper there as well as lichens."

"Yes, yes, yes," the bird would reply; "bits of paper do almost as well as lichens. Pink, pink, pink! There is the whole of Lord Palmerston's speech there; Palmerston is a clever man, but he couldn't build a nest like that."

I mentioned the redpole. It is, as far as beauty goes, one of the best cage-birds we have; a modest, wee, affectionate, unassuming pet, but deficient in song. It should be fed in the same way as the chaffinch, and looks nice in a beautiful parlour-cage.

"Cheet, cheet, cheet, cheet, cheet, cheet, chee-ee!" What sweet little voice is that repeating the same soft song over and over again, and dwelling on the last syllable with long-drawn cadence? The music—for music it is, although a song without variations—is coming from yonder bonnie bush of golden-blossomed broom that grows in the angle between the two walls in a remote corner of the auld kirkyard. I throw Horace down, and get up from the grass and walk towards it.

"Chick, chick, chick, chick, chee-ee!"

"Oh, yes! I daresay you haven't a nest anywhere near; but I know better." This is my reply.

I walk across the unhallowed ground, as this patch is called, for—whisper it!—suicides lie here, and the graves have not been raised nor do stones mark the spots where they lie.

Here is the nest, in under a bit of weedy bank, and yonder is the bird himself—the yellowhammer, skite, or yellow-bunting—looking as gay as a hornet, for well he knows that I will not disturb his treasures. The eggs are shapely, white in ground, and beautifully streaked, and speckled, and splashed with reddish brown. But here are no eggs; only four morsels of yellow fluff, apparently, surmounted by four gaping orange-red mouths. But they are cosy. I catch a tiny slug, and break it up between them, and the cock-bird goes on singing among the broom, while the hen perches a little way off, twittering nervously and peevishly.

"Chick, chick, chee-ee!" says the bird. "I don't pretend to build such a pretty nest as the chaffinch; besides, such a flimsy thing as his would not do on the ground; mine has a solid foundation of hay, don't you see. That keeps out the damp, and that lining of hair is warmer than anything else in the world."

A poor, persecuted little bird is this same yellow bunting; and schoolboys often, when they find the nest, scatter it and its precious contents to the four winds of heaven.

All the more reason why we should be kind

to the pet if we happen to have it in confinement. It is true the wild song is not very interesting; but when a young one is got it will improve itself if it can listen to the song of another bird, for nearly all our feathered songsters possess the gift of imitation. Food of the yellow bunting: seeds and paste. It is not particular as to what it eats, but is really a hard-billed or seed bird.

There are several other species of buntings to be found in this country, and all of them make good cage-birds and pets. They are fed and treated in the same way as the yellow bunting just described.

There are two bird complaints about which I may possibly do well to say a word in this chapter; one is called the husk. It is a species of dry, wheezy cough that many birds take. It is caused most commonly from cold. But this cold may be taken in a variety of ways: the cage may have been hung in a draught, or left too late out of doors, or the bird may have been exposed to damp air or steam, or to the irritating effects of an atmosphere impregnated with gas or the fumes of burning petroleum, or even the smoke of wood. But in whatever way it is caused, the complaint wants seeing to at once.

Treatment.—Give from one to three drops of warm castor oil to begin with, in their daily fresh water put as much saffron as will tinge it a pale yellow, a small teaspoonful of glycerine, about twenty drops of paregoric and a morsel of gum arabic as big as a small bean. Give extra nourishing food and keep the cage in a warm corner in a well-ventilated room, covering it up at night with a cloth. After five days or a week it will be time to administer a little tonic, and this is best done by placing a rusty nail in the bird's water.

The other complaint to which I refer is natural to all birds about the autumn of each year—I mean moulting. Now some people when they see a bird beginning to lose its feathers, cover the cage up entirely, leaving it in dark and warmth, while others take no heed about the matter at all, and leave everything to nature. Neither plan is, in my opinion, to be recommended. The moulting season is a critical time with all birds, and they then need additional care and comfort. If they do not have this they are apt to catch cold, which may end in inflammation, or quite undermine the constitution of the bird. When, therefore, you observe that your bird is beginning to drop his feathers, put him in a warmer part of the room and feed on a slightly more nourishing diet, giving the best seeds, probably a little maw seed or crushed hemp, and for those birds that can take it, yolk of hard-boiled egg.

Toast and water is recommended by some, and a little saffron in the water by others. The latter, I think, does more good than the former, as it has an action on the skin.

The cage may be covered on three sides and top, leaving simply the front open.

Do not let the bird want for anything, especially gravel, sand, a morsel of chalk, and fresh water. The bath should not be given so frequently, but it does good now and then. Be very careful that the cage does not get wet; if it does, have it dried again as soon as possible.

The usual iron tonic is generally given, but the nail should not be put in the water for a week or two at first.

When the bird is just recovering, the nail does far more good. Take care not to remove the cage coverings too soon, and let it be done gradually.



VARIETIES.

A TALE OF A TRACT.—A shoemaker having received a tract, instead of reading it, used it in filling up the space between the inner and the outer sole of a shoe. The labour of the tract distributor was apparently lost. Not so. Some time afterwards another man of the same occupation sat down on a Sunday morning to put a new sole to that shoe. When he had cut away the old leather, he saw the tract, and his attention was instantly arrested by the title, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." It was an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty. The work was immediately laid aside, and the man hastened to the House of God. His soul was troubled, nor could it find rest until he found it at the Cross of Christ.

BIRD-LIKE.

Let us be like the bird, for a moment perched On a frail branch, while he sings;
Though he feels it hard, he continues his song,
For he knows that he has wings.

Victor Hugo.

AN ENCOURAGING THOUGHT.—"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Let not the word *yoke* frighten you; we must bear the weight, but God helps us to bear it; it is a burden that two must carry, and God shares it with us.—*Fénelon*.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.—There is nothing so powerful as *example*. We put others straight by walking straight ourselves.—*Madame Swetchine*.

THE USE OF POLITENESS.—Politeness is a sort of guard which covers the rough edges of our character and prevents their wounding others. We should never throw it off even in our conflicts with coarse people.

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.—Place before children nothing but what is simple lest you spoil their taste, and nothing that is not innocent lest you spoil their heart.

ACROSTIC.

1. A celebrated poet and Latin secretary to Cromwell.
2. An English painter.
3. A great orator of antiquity.
4. A violent opponent of the Reformation, born in Swabia.
5. A philanthropist and founder of Sunday-schools.
6. A Greek lyric poet.
7. A pleasing authoress who wrote for the young.
8. A Grecian empress famed for her beauty, but who died in poverty at Lesbos.
9. A sister of the Emperor Augustus, famed for her beauty and goodness.
10. A Marshal of France, who, from political motives, was condemned to be shot.
11. Daughter of Agamemnon.
12. An astronomer, born in Lincolnshire.
13. An English general, who fought against the French in Flanders and Holland.
14. A celebrated reformer, born at Eisleben.
15. A philosopher, born in Somersetshire, 1632.
16. Founder of the Ionian School.
17. Most celebrated Greek poet.
18. A Grecian orator, who is said to have starved himself to death.
19. A great theologian, born at Göttingen.
20. The author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."
21. A poetess, who was called the tenth Muse.

The initials give a maxim of Cleobulus, one of the seven sages of Greece.

A. COX.

Do You Know? Words by Fay Axtents. Music by Humphrey J. Stark.—A very pretty, melodious, and uncommon song, telling of the beauties and glories of May, with its birds and flowers; the last lines, with change of key and time, are:—

"Love, like lilies, fades away;
We can only love for aye,
When we know what angels say."

Daughters of Erin. Duet for soprano and contralto. Words and music by Walter Maynard.—A lively and joyous composition, easily acquired. It will become a favourite, we think, with many of our young friends, as it is pleasing and euphonious.

Gavotte in B flat for the pianoforte. By F. A. Dunster.—A spirited gavotte, presenting no difficulty to any of our readers who admire this style of composition.

GODDARD AND CO.

Sweet and Low. Written by Alfred Tennyson. Composed by C. A. Rodbard.—These lovely lines by the laureate have been most gracefully and charmingly set to music by the composer. The characteristic accompaniment displays the talent of the artist. We recommend it to our young friends, as it cannot fail to give pleasure when sung with taste and feeling.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS.

Faithful unto Death. Written by Rev. F. L. Downham. Music by Jas. Butler Fortay.—These words have been well and dramatically set by the composer. The tale is a sad one; it tells of a loving and faithful wife going over the battlefield, scanning the faces of the killed and wounded, seeking her beloved husband, and as

"The morning breaks,
Its flight each shadow takes

* * * * *

But yet a fairer sight—
A wreath of golden light

It forms around her head, whose arms are
lying

Cross'd o'er her husband's heart,
That nothing her may part

From him she loved in life and joins in dying."

ROBERT COCKS AND CO.

A series of popular trios for ladies' voices, with accompaniments by well known composers.—No. 10, *Charity*, by Rossini, is a general favourite, and a very charming composition. It requires a good soprano voice to lead. No. 14, *The Bird's Farewell*; and No. 15, *Hunting Chorus*, from *Martha*, are also excellent, and not quite so difficult.

Whither. Song. Written by H. W. Longfellow. The music composed by G. H. Smart.—This simple melody, with flowing accompaniment suggestive of a brooklet, is extremely tender and musical. It presents no difficulties, which will be a recommendation to some of our girls.

J. BROWN.

Good-night. Song. Written by Helen K. Wilson. Composed by Harry F. Swain.—A pretty song with graceful accompaniment, the words "Good-night" spoken of in connection with various phases of life. Good-night "lightly" when friends depart, "delayed" when lovers part, "with tender anguish" o'er a sick bed leaning.

HUTCHINGS AND ROMER.

Sunbeams. (A picture.) Words by Ella. Music by Frederic Egerton Hine.—A very pretty and descriptive song. The time changes in the second part to a *tempo di valse* style, which is bright and pleasing.

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Seventh: The Nightingale's Song—
A Pet Bat—The Domestic Swallow—The
Blackcap—Garden Warbler—White-
throats—Wheatear, Chiff Chaff, &c.

"A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor
stain
Breaks the serene of heaven:
In full orb'd glory, yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark-blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert-circle spreads:
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!"

Southey.



T must have been on just such another night as this that the poet penned the above lines. Summer will have begun to wane ere these words of mine meet the eyes of my fair readers—summer will have begun to wane, and the green of the leaves will have assumed a more sombre tint; but as I sit here by the open casement, everything tells me it is the sweetest, the most bewitching season of all

the year; it is springtime. I have but to step down on to the lawn to be convinced of this; nodding lilacs and starry syringas mingle their perfume with the evening air, and from yonder Portuguese laurel rings out the low, clear, charming song of the nightingale. And there he will sit and sing all the live-long night. To-morrow morning will find him just a trifle farther afield, for some instinct tells him that my dark-haired Persian pussy is an epicure in her way, and would prefer philomel to fish for her matutinal meal. I am more convinced than ever that for the first two or three nights after their arrival in this country the nightingales do not go to sleep at all, but sing on all day as well as all night, the marvel being that they do not get hoarse. But after a week, the night song is not nearly so brilliant nor so prolonged, nor does it attain its pristine wild joyfulness until spring once more gilds the fields with buttercups. By day the song is not so noticeable, though ever and anon it sounds high over the babel of other birds' voices. But, of course, the thrush must sing, the blackbird must pipe, and vulgar sparrows bicker and shriek, and talk Billingsgate to each other, for sparrows having but little music in their own nature, have just as little appreciation for the gift in others.

The bats are abroad every night now in full force. What a wonderful power of flight is theirs, how quickly they can turn and wheel, and how nimbly gyrate! They are hardly to be recommended as girls' pets, however, although I have no doubt to a certain extent they might become so. I never had a pet bat myself. I caught one once and meant to tame it, but as the creature bit me, I concluded it would be cruel to retain it in captivity. I hope to tame and keep one ere long, and may then have an opportunity of relating my experience. It might be thought that, as they live in the wild state chiefly on moths and flies, it would be difficult to obtain food for them in confinement. They will eat raw beef, and if a piece be hung up in the cage the flies are attracted thereto, and this affords the little

inmate an opportunity of enjoying sport and eating his dinner at one and the same time. A bat is not a pretty creature, I must confess, but it is a very old-fashioned one, and wise with a wisdom peculiarly its own. A bat will keep itself clean in its cage—that is an advantage, and if you managed to keep one alive all summer, it would go to sleep in winter. No more about bats.

One of my most welcome summer visitors is the swallow—the *Hirundo vulgaris*, let me call it.

"He twitters on the apple trees,
He hails me at the dawn of day,
Each morn the recollected proof
Of time, that swiftly fleets away.

Fond of sunshine, fond of shade,
Fond of skies serene and clear,
E'en transient storms his joys invade,
In fairest seasons of the year."

I must be allowed to say that I object to the word "twitter" so usually applied to the song of the swallow. It is more than a meaningless twitter. Although neither loud nor clear, it is—when heard close at hand—inexpressibly sweet and soft and tender, more so than even that of the linnet, and there are many joyous and happy notes in it, which it is quite delightful to listen to. Indeed, hardly anyone could attentively observe the song of our domestic swallow for any length of time without feeling convinced that the dusky little minstrel was happy—inexpressibly happy. Few, perhaps, of my readers are old enough to know that there is a striking similarity between the expressions by sound or voice of the emotions of all animals in the world, whether birds or beasts, and whether those emotions be those of grief or pain, or joy itself. This is well worth observing, and if you live in the country you will have a thousand chances of doing so. Why does the swallow sing in so low a voice? At a little distance you can hardly hear it at all. I have travelled a good deal in forests and jungles and bush lands in Africa, and the islands about it, and, of course, I always went alone—that is, I never had any visible companion—because only when alone can one enjoy Nature, and study the ways and manners of birds and beasts, and I have been struck by the silence of the birds, or, at all events, their absence of song. Why was it so, I have wondered? Probably because the woods where the birds dwell are so full of danger, that song would betray their presence, and the result be death. And the same reason may cause the swallows to lower their voices when they give vent to their little notes of tuneful joy.

No girl who has never held a swallow in her hand can have any idea of the extreme beauty of the bird, both in shape and in shade of plumage. The bright glossy sheen of their purple black, the purity of the white beneath, and the charming tinge of red beneath the chin. Out and in, out and in they fly, all the long summer, for a loft of mine is a favourite building place with these pets, and I can catch one at any time, and I really begin to think they are used to it, and are not a bit frightened when I handle them. They keep on building from about the first of May until far into September; two years ago, the last fledglings of the season left the loft on the 13th of October. They do not leave until they are fully fledged and permitted to fly by their parents, and on the flight day other swallows come to assist them, so that it is quite a great occasion. For a whole week, and perhaps longer, after they leave the loft, they are fed by the old swallows, not only the parents but half-a-dozen others taking part in this cramming process.

But I must resist the temptation to tell you even a tithe of all I know about these beauti-

ful birds, and all their wondrous ways; besides, I have already written an article in some other magazine on the same subject, and an author should not repeat himself. But here is a curious thing which I must tell you. I have two black cats, and during the swallow season they scarcely dare to show out on the walks; when they do they are attacked by the birds, and at last forced to beat a retreat. The sound of the blows they deal them with their wings is quite audible. The cats may attempt to defend themselves with their paws if they choose, but they can no more catch a swallow than they could a sunbeam. I may tell you, too, that there are evenings late in autumn when the swallows muster in the air in strong force, for the pleasure of exercising their wings and nothing else, for they flock and fly and mix and dart high above the regions where insects are to be found, and I have no doubt they enjoy these reunions as much as any girl ever enjoyed waltzing or skating. Is it possible to tame swallows? It has been done, and they have been kept as pets for years, singing as sweetly in the cage as they sing when perched on an apple tree or a telegraph wire. Their food is said to be the same as that given to the nightingale; they must have an occasional bath and be well protected from the winter's cold, even their perches have to be covered with flannel to prevent their feet and legs from being paralysed by the cold.

One of our spring visitors is the cuckoo. Do not let anyone persuade you to make a pet of such a bird. The cuckoo ill repays one for care and kindness; he is by nature selfish, and won't even sing for his supper, so he is best in the fields.

What an ineffably sweet, wild song is that of the little bird called the blackcap! It is worth listening to for an hour at a time. It is sometimes even called the mock nightingale, but from the latter bird it is very easily distinguished, albeit it resembles it somewhat in shape, and to some extent in colour. Although in the wild state it is far more shy than the nightingale, and keeps as a rule farther away from the haunts of man, still it makes a very nice cage-bird. It must be treated in every way like its cousin the nightingale, both in the matter of food and cage comforts. It should be remembered that it is very fond of soft ripe garden fruits in season, and in winter a supply of nice currants should be kept for it. Insects it also considers a great treat, and now and then a bit of ripe fig may be given to the bird. This tends to keep it healthy. It is withal a somewhat delicate bird; care should be taken, therefore, that the cage which contains it be never hung in a draught. Change of diet now and then does it good, and a meal or two of ants' eggs or one or two spiders may stimulate it, when it appears to mope and be sick.

We do not expect the blackcap to sing so madly and merrily in captivity as it does in its native copse, but for all that its song, when in a cage, is very beautiful and tender.

The garden warbler is another songster of the grove, which sings and thrives very well as a cage pet. It is humbly and prettily clad in a coat of brown, darker on wings and tail, grey underneath, and with just a tint of red on the breast.

The song of the garden warbler is rich and melodious, and it makes quite a delightful pet. It should be treated in every way the same as the blackcap or nightingale, and it is just as fond of change of diet and just as fond of fruit. Spiders, ant eggs, and occasionally caterpillars should be given to the bird as a treat, and fruit always, but this latter must be soft and juicy, and if the dried kinds are used, they may be steeped, but not given too wet, else they may harm the bird.

There are two cage-birds which I had nearly forgotten to mention; I mean the larger and lesser whitethroats. They are best fed and

treated like the blackcap, and both make very good pets. The larger of the two is sometimes called the nettle creeper, because it feeds its young on those nasty black caterpillars which are found in such quantities on the leaves and stems of the nettle. Much as the bird might enjoy them, it would hardly be nice to collect such food for it, so it must be content with paste and fruit and occasional insects. When any of these birds moult, greater care than usual is required to be taken of them; perhaps a spider dipped in salad oil given once or twice a week might do good; at all events, the drinking water may be lightly tinged with saffron for the first week or two, and afterwards a rusty nail placed in it.

Other birds which would require similar treatment, but whose respective merits I have not space to dilate upon, are the wheatear, the chaff-chaff, the willow warbler, the grasshopper warbler, the wood wren, and I daresay I might add the somewhat rare Dartford warbler.

In my last paper I gave some account of the symptoms and treatment of the ailment usually called the husk. I will conclude this by mentioning another ailment to which birds are liable. It is usually called by bird-fanciers the surfeit. There is in reality some degree of skin disease about the bird mostly noticeable about the head, the itching of which causes the bird to denude it of all its feathers. There is a degree of scurfiness, too, over all the body, and other symptoms which indicate plainly enough that the little creature's constitution is completely out of order. Before we think about the cure, we must mention the causes of the illness. It is generally brought on them from neglect: the water has not been regularly changed, the food has not been so fresh nor cleanly as it ought to have been, gravel has not been given regularly, nor a due allowance of blood-purifying green food, or it has been fed on too many dainties; or, lastly, the cage has not been kept clean enough.

Well, the treatment resolves itself into first removing the cause, and, secondly, doing something to restore the pet to health.

Change the diet, attend most specially to all its comforts; do not coddle the bird, let it have plenty of fresh air and sunshine by day, but see that it is kept from cold at night. Change the food. Let it approach for a time as closely as possible to that to which such birds are accustomed in their wild state. Give green food daily, fresh and fresh, and at first a drop or two or three of warm castor oil about once a week, and after a week about fifteen drops of tincture of iron in its water daily changed. Wash the bare places about three times a week with a weak solution of alum water, about three grains to an ounce, and afterwards rub gently in a little benzoated oxide of zinc ointment. Common lard some use, but it is apt to do more harm than good. As soon as all appearance of roughness has left the skin, you may stop the application. The feathers will come in good time.

If your pet has had one attack of surfeit, you will doubtless be cautious to feed and tend it properly in time to come. It is not, of course, *always* through neglect, but it is sad to see a poor bird suffer, and to know that care might have prevented it.



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

LITTLE EFFIE.—We should judge from your writing that you are admirably qualified to teach the art, as your letters are well formed and graceful. We should ourselves prefer tails to the "y's." Beware of flourishes, as they are unusual in ladylike writing, and vulgar also. We do not know what caused the stains, but you will find "tripoli" (to be got at the chemist's) an excellent application.

PROBLEM.—From what we hear we imagine the demand for Kindergarten teachers in private families is not large at present. If you write to Miss Frost, Berners-street, Oxford-street, London, W., you will be able to obtain information.

C. D.—"Minster" means the church of a monastery, or one to which a monastery has been attached at some former period. A cathedral means the chief church in a diocese, because in it the bishop has his official chair or throne.

LITTLE MOVETTS.—The list of governors having presentations for the year is published annually in March, price 1s. The general list also, price 2s. 6d. Write to the clerk at the hospital, Newgate-street, E.C.

ANNIE E. W.—There would be nothing extraordinary in your taking up medicine as a profession. Many women who feel a vocation for it do so every day.

HELEN OF TROY.—We should advise you to write to Miss Roberts, Florence Villa, Torquay, for the advice and information you need. Be sure to enclose a stamped and directed envelope. "White Heath's" writing is not pretty, and she should pay more attention to her capital letters.

AN ANXIOUS ONE, IMPROVEMENT, F. L., EDITH, HELEN, MARIE, CECIL, CLARE, E. C. L.—Write to the Christian Women's Education Union (students branch), 3, Otway-terrace, South Lambeth-road, London, S.W. The subscription is one shilling a year for the general fund, and the same for each class joined.

JULIET.—The London School of Medicine for Women is at 30, Henrietta-street, Brunswick-square, London, W.C. Four years' course of study. Fees for lectures, £80; fees for hospital instruction, £45; these are for the course of four years. The dean is Mr. A. T. Norton, F.R.C.S.

DEVONIENSIS.—Address the Secretary, School of Cookery, Exhibition-road, South Kensington, London, S.W.

CLARA COOMBE.—Write to both the school and the college, for particulars; address the clerk for Dulwich, and the treasurer for the school. We cannot help you further, as you do not tell us sufficient particulars to know if you are entitled to claim the benefits of the schools.

LEARNER.—1. The "Sargasso sea" is not named in ordinary maps. It is a sea within a sea, with a distinct individuality and character of its own. It lies between 15 and 50 north latitude, and 15 and 45 west longitude, in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean. It is north-west of the Cape Verde Islands, and south-west of Madeira and the Canaries. The surface is covered with gulf-weeds (*Fucus natans*), which are so thickly matted that the passage of vessels through it is considerably retarded. If you read the history of Columbus you would see a reference to the discovery of this immense field of seaweed. The "Sargasso sea" is said to be the centre of a great whirl of waters, and all light substances, such as these floating weeds, are naturally collected within its circle; and it moves and undulates up and down, with a more or less circular motion. Patches of the same weed float along the outer edge of the Gulf Stream. 2. The name "Morgan" signifies a "mariner," and "Owen," "well descended"; and both are British. "Richard" is Saxon, and means "powerful."

MURIEL.—You should get the Eton Greek Grammar, if you wish to learn that language without a master. We think that, having advanced as far as you say already, unassisted, you might prosecute your studies still further alone, if you were to procure this book. You write a good, legible hand.

HOUSEKEEPING.

AN INEXPERIENCED HOUSEKEEPER.—Gilt frames may be cleaned with a sponge and a very little turpentine not too wet, but just enough to take off the dirt and fly marks; do not rub and leave them to dry without washing off. A little whiting will clean white paint, and some ammonia in water is also good.

ONE OF OUR OLDEST GIRLS might try the gold paint, but we fear the frame really needs re-gilding.

MARTHA.—A correspondent tells us she has extracted mildew from collars and cuffs by soaking them for several days in buttermilk, and then washing them in clean, soft water, and putting them to bleach on the grass for a day. The few spots that remained she took out with chloride of lime. You might, perhaps, find this a better recipe for your purpose than the other.

M. D'E.—Many thanks for your kind note. We are always glad to have the benefit of our readers' experience.

A WELSH GIRL.—A dark red sateen would make a

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Eighth: A Country Lawn in June—
Turtle Doves—Zebra, or Peaceful Doves—
The Cushat, or Ring Dove—Pigeons.

"Go, beautiful and gentle dove!

But whither wilt thou go?

For though the clouds ride high above,
How sad and waste is all below.

The dove flies on. In lonely flight

She flies from dawn to dark;

And now, amidst the gloom of night,
Comes weary to the ark.

'Oh! let me in,' she seems to say,

'For long and lone has been my way;

Oh! once more, gentle mistress, let me rest
And dry my dripping plumage on thy
breast."

Rev. W. Bowles.



HERE is a kind of semi-wildness about my back lawn that a great many people profess to admire. It stretches downwards from my indoor study, from where the French windows open on to the trellised verandah, which in this sweet month of

June, as I write, is all a smother of roses. The walk winds downwards well to one side, and not far from a massive hedge, but this hedge is hidden from view for the most part by a ragged row of trees. The Portuguese laurel, tasselled with charming white bloom at present, but otherwise an immense globe of green (you might swing a hammock inside it and no one know you were there) comes first; then tall, dark-needled Austrian pines, their branches trailing on the grass, with hazels, lilacs, and elders, the latter now in bloom. The lawn proper has it pretty much to itself, with the exception of the flower-beds, the rose-standards, and a sprinkling of youthful pines, and it is bounded on the other side by a tall privet hedge—that, too, is all bedecked in bloom. On the other side of this hedge the view is shut in to some extent by tapering cypress trees, elms, and oaks, but here and there you catch glimpses of the hills and the lovely country beyond. Along this hedge, at present, wall-flowers, and scarlet and white and pink-bellied foxgloves are blooming.

If you go along the winding pathway, past the bonnie nook—where is the grave of my dear old favourite Newfoundland*—and if you obstinately refuse to be coaxed by a forward wee side-path into a cool, green grotto, canopied with ivy and lilacs, you will land—nowhere you would imagine at first, but on pushing boughs aside you find a gate, which, supposing you had the key, would lead you out into the open country, with the valley of the Thames, stretching from west to east, about a mile distant, and the grand old wooded hills, blue with the softening mist of distance, beyond that. But the lower part of the lawn near that hidden gate is bounded by a bank of glorious foliage—rhododendrons, syringas, trailing roses, and hero-laurel in front, with ash, laburnum, and tall holly trees behind. It may not be right to allow brambles to creep through this bank; nor raspberries, with their drooping cane-work; nor blue-eyed, creeping belladonna; but I like

it. I dearly love to see things where you least expect them; to find roses peeping through hedgerows, strawberries building their nests at the foot of gooseberry clumps, and clusters of yellow or red luscious raspberries peeping out from the midst of rhododendron banks, as if fairy fingers were holding them up to view.

I'm not sure that the grass on this pet lawn of mine is always kept so cleanly shaven as some folks might wish, but for my own part I like it snowed over with daisies and white clover; and, what is more to the point, the birds and the bees like it. Indeed, the lawn is little more than a vast outdoor aviary—it is a bird-haunted lawn. There is a rough, shallow bath under a tree at the end of it, and here the blackbirds, thrushes, and starlings come to splash early in the morning, and stare up at my window as I dress, as coolly as if they had not been all up in the orchard trees breakfasting off the red-heart cherries. I have come now, after a lapse of four years, to believe that those cherries belong to the birds and not to me, just as a considerable number of pounds of the greengages belong to the wasps.

The nightingales hop around the lawn all day, but they do not bathe, and they do not sing now; they devour terribly long earthworms instead. In the sweet springtime, in the days of their wooing, they did nothing but sing, and they never slept. Now all is changed, and they do little else save sleep and eat.

There are wild pigeons build here, though it is close to two roads, and I see turtle-doves on the lawn every day.

Now, though I much prefer to see these same turtle-doves running wild and free on the lawn, or cooing graceful nothings to each other in the branches of the cypress tree, still, if any girl wishes to have one or a pair of birds of this sort as pets in a cage, she easily may. They are very pretty and very affectionate. They may be found in the shops of most naturalists, but it is as well to deal with some one of standing, for in the columns of papers devoted to live stock of various kinds, almost any species of dove is called the turtle-dove.

There are many kinds of fancy doves, very beautiful in plumage and appearance, that do not do well in cages. Before buying a dove, therefore, one ought to be sure that it is perfectly tame and contented, and that it feeds well. Be sure to ask the naturalist what sort of food it thrives best upon.

Doves, as a rule, may be fed on seeds of various kinds, including canary and millet and hempseed—the latter, however, must be given sparingly—small peas, barley, rice, bread and biscuit crumbs, or indeed anything that their taste may lead them to fancy. Change of food is necessary to retain them in good health, and they ought not to be constantly confined in the cage. If you have a dove, and if you love the bird, you will soon know how to manage it, so that it shall be both healthy and happy. The common wicker cage does very well, but it ought to be large and roomy, and plenty of clean water should not be forgotten, nor gravel, which birds of all kinds require to keep them alive and well.

There is an Australian dove found in the shops which is called the zebra dove, or the peaceful dove. The back parts are brown and barred, as the name would indicate; face, front of the neck, and throat greyish, and also barred, while the breast is pink. It is therefore very beautiful, and would make such a nice birthday present for a gentle girl. But she would require to be told that the bird needs the kindest treatment, and any amount of liberty.

There are white doves, but these are generally the albino offspring of grey ones.

I read these words, or some words to the

same purpose, the other day in a volume of natural history:—"Numerous attempts have been made to domesticate the cushat, or ring dove, but entirely without success." If domesticating means breeding in confinement, I am of opinion that these words are true; but, nevertheless, if the cushat, or wild pigeon, be taken from the nest when the feathers are still stubbly, and carefully fed on good peas softened in water, they will thrive and become exceedingly affectionate and tame, and may even be let out to fly about.

I do not know, by the way, why these birds are called ring-doves, for they have no ring right round the neck, only a splash of white on each side of it.

In Scotland these lovely birds usually build their nests on tall, thick-branched spruce firs, high up in the tree and a goodly way off from the residence of mankind. They are called in that country "doo's," which, I believe, is a contraction for doves—"cushey doos," that is their name complete.

The nest is simply a flat bunch of twigs or heather "coves," through which you may almost see daylight. There is a nest not a stone's throw from where I now write, in a pear-tree, which I can easily reach from the ground.

In their natural state the cushat is doubtless both wild and wary, and although you may see them in thousands feeding on "blueberries," a sportsman can rarely get within reach; but, if he is mean enough to do so, he can wait in the pine copses till they come home to roost—

"At the canny hour o' e'en
When the gloaming star is seen,"

and shoot them as they alight.

However, the ring-dove is not so much afraid of man as some naturalists would have us believe, else they would not build in our orchards down here in Berkshire.

Pigeons of any kind make pretty pets for girls. It is surprising to find how tame the birds will become.

I had one as a pet once when serving on the African coast, and this bird and I became exceedingly fond of one another. It was also a general favourite in the mess, though it lived as a rule in my cabin, its own particular domicile being a leather hat-box, which it shared amicably with the cockroaches.

It was pure white, and almost as spotless and clean as my old friend the snowbird of the regions round the Pole. I did not buy the bird as a pet. The fact is, I commissioned a little Caffre boy to purchase and send me off a dead white pigeon, as I wanted its feathers for making artificial flowers. The boy sent the bird off alive, so it had to flourish in the Penguin as a pet, instead of yielding up its life and beautiful plumage as sacrifices to my craze for manufacturing feather flowers.

But we had no peas nor beans to give this bird, so he lived on rice and barley and bread, and picked at a bit of hard salt junk occasionally, and went out to gather gravel when the men were scrubbing the decks. But he was very happy nevertheless. I merely refer to this bird to show that a pigeon can be kept as a pet under almost any conditions, so long as you love and are kind to it.

In my humble opinion, a young girl never looks nor appears to better advantage than when she is engaged at some pleasant outdoor employment—culling roses, for instance, or budding roses; or, what is more to the point, feeding her pigeons.

I do not think I shall be wrong, therefore, if I conclude this paper with a few general hints about the treatment of pigeons.

One or two pairs of young birds will be enough to commence with. The dove-cot, unless it is meant to keep them in a loft, should be prepared beforehand. It may be quite an

* The well-known champion, Theodore Nero.

ornamental little box, erected on a pole in garden or orchard, or it may be a box-cot on the gable of some outbuilding; but wherever or whatever it is, some provision should be made to protect it from those vagrant cats, who have a difficulty on dark nights in distinguishing between *meum* and *tuum*.

Each pair require two compartments, about fourteen inches square by a foot high, and with a foot-board in front. The roof should be slanting, to let the rain run well clear, and to give shelter to the birds on the foot-board.

Having procured your pigeons, it will be as well not to grant them their liberty for several days, feeding them well in the meantime, and getting them tame enough to know you and

like their new abode. After this they may be allowed out for a fly. They are almost certain to return and feed. Some grain should be thrown down to them on the ground near their cot. Pigeons that live in dove-cots on a wall or on the top of a pole, should have their water-dishes placed on the ground near their cot. They need a plentiful supply of good, clean water, not only for drinking, but for bathing purposes. For this latter a shallow dish should be used, and the contents should not be allowed to become dirty.

Pigeons about farmyards and country places usually feed with the fowls; they also find themselves in a deal of food which they like, about the grass and garden, &c.

The ordinary food for pigeons is what are

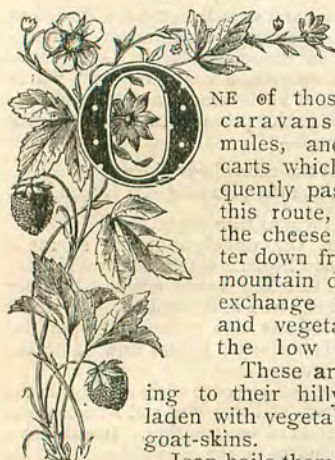
called *ick-beans* and small grey peas. This may be supplemented, for the sake of change, with tares, buckwheat, maize, barley, rice, and wheat. They require salt in some form, and the best plan is to have this in a box of some kind mixed up with old mortar and a little clay. They must also have plenty of gravel if kept in lofts, and not allowed out; if, however, they have plenty of liberty, they will manage to supply themselves with gravel.

Whether kept in cots or in lofts, cleanliness is essential to prevent them from taking disease. The ordinary dove-cot pigeon makes a very nice pet; the fantail, however, is very much prettier, and the tumbler-pigeon more interesting still.

A DAUGHTER NAMED DAMARIS.

By MAGGIE SYMINGTON.

CHAPTER XLII.



ONE of those little caravans of men, mules, and mule-carts which so frequently pass along this route, carrying the cheese and butter down from their mountain dairies to exchange for fruit and vegetables in the low country.

These are returning to their hilly homes laden with vegetables and goat-skins.

Jean hails them at once, and thankfully receives their ready help in extricating Saturne and the carriage. They join company, and Jean is glad, for safety, to let Saturne walk carefully in the wake of the caravan, in the pale glimmer of the lanterns.

Monsieur St. Just again relapses into silence. So they wind slowly onwards along the same road which Damaris had pursued in the moonlight a month ago; but now the very roar of the torrent is muffled, and the hills, and ravines, and glimmering heights are all submerged in one vast plain of grey vapour.

They do not reach La Joyeuse until midnight. Justine is anxiously awaiting their arrival. She needs no explanation of their delay; the mist accounts for everything. Her room is warm and snug, there is a pot of soup simmering on the fire, and wine and coffee in readiness for their refreshment. She soon has Monsieur St. Just divested of his travelling cloak, and seated in the big chair into which she had put Damaris on her arrival.

"*Hélas!*" she cries, covertly surveying him as she hurries hither and thither to serve the needed supper, "but he is ill, *ce beau monsieur*, he is so grave, so pale. The fatigue of his long journey, the trouble about his little son are too much for him."

But when Jean comes in from stabling the mule, Monsieur St. Just begins to question him if there are any other means in La Joyeuse of conveyance to Espalie than taking out his brave little animal again in such a night as this?

"*Ciel!*" cries Justine; "you can have no thought of going on before morning, monsieur!"

Jean protests also, says monsieur must be content to stay where he is for a few hours at least, that he knows of no one who would be willing to risk the almost certain destruction they would meet with on the road from La Joyeuse to Espalie. He purposely exaggerates the danger, because he can see that Monsieur Barholet is not fit to go a step farther.

Justine supports her husband, and moreover assures Monsieur Barholet that she has been at Espalie all day, that his little son is better, she left him sleeping. He is in good hands, she says, the greatest possible care is being lavished upon him. And then, one helping out the other, Jean and Justine begin to sing the praises of Josephine, telling him of the liking she and the child have conceived for each other; how careful, how skilled, how capable she is of guiding, controlling, and teaching him, and how amenable he is to her influence. Both have a latent motive in wishing to impress him favourably on Josephine's behalf, and have cause to congratulate each other upon the apparent success of their negotiations. Monsieur Barholet seems to be impressed thereby; he asks who Mademoiselle Josephine is, whereat Justine repeats her concocted story, and he expresses much gratitude for her care of his child.

"It is because she is away nursing him that we have a room to offer you, monsieur. Her little chamber has been prepared for you."

Assured on Charlot's behalf, he yields to their entreaties, and allows himself to be conducted by Justine up the spiral stair into the little white room where the stove is burning. She sets down the lamp, promises to call him as soon as Jean is ready to start in the morn-

ing, wishes him good-night, and returns to her weary husband with radiant face.

"It will be all right, you will see, Jean. We shall keep Mademoiselle with us and *le petit* Charlot also, if it pleases the good God to raise him up. Monsieur Barholet will reward her well, and we shall all be happy together."

Jean is half lost in sleep already, and hardly retains sufficient consciousness to take in the purport of her words. But as they are only an echo of his own opinion, it does not much matter.

In the little white room above, Monsieur St. Just raises the lamp in his hand and looks round curiously. He is willing to justify this Mademoiselle Josephine in such encomiums as her humble friends have so lavishly bestowed upon her, and strives to do so by such indications of character as her room affords. It is purely white, severely simple, austere neat in all its appointments. She has a devout rather than an intellectual mind, he concludes, from the character of the few ancient volumes that lie upon the little table. And she has friends, for side by side with the books are the means of correspondence—some common paper, some steel pens, and a little ordinary inkstand filled with ink.

He is weary, but not sleepy, and seating himself at the little table, draws the blotting-book to him, takes paper, and begins to write. First of all, he writes a note to his mother, telling her of his safe arrival, and the latest report of his little son. This done, he leans his brow forwards on the open palms of his hands in deep consideration. There is an intense stillness within and without the little room. The thick fog steals all sounds from the night. There is nothing to interrupt the flow of his thoughts, save the problematic knots into which they fall of themselves.

Just before quitting St. Aubin a communication had reached him from Lilian Barnes, telling him of her sister's irrevocable determination not to reveal her present abode, and promising to forward

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Section Ninth: The Siskin and Canary.

"Who could mere transient beauty prize
Above melodious art?
Bright plumage still may charm the eyes,
But song affects the heart.
Thy charming strains do doubly please
And more my bosom move,
Since innocence attunes those lays,
Inspired by joy and love."



SUMMER has fled. Far too soon, many of us no doubt think. The brightness has faded from the flowers, the green is already dying on the trees, leaves begin to fall, and from the woods, from the copse, and the forest there rings no longer forth the joyous

melody of birds. But the mellow mavis comes closer now to human habitations, and it will have gone hard indeed with him, if we miss sight of his speckled breast as he hops on the lawn, or his sweet song as he perches on the leafless rose trees, from now till springtime comes again.

Listen. What happy, gleesome lilt is that? Ah! how well we know the voice! It is the robin's. He has been playing at peep-bo with us among the laurels for the last half-hour, but now he comes boldly forth on to the garden walk. He beckons and bobs to us in quite a friendly way.

"Here I am once more," he seems to say. "Come back for the winter months. But oh! what a pleasant time I have had of it in the woods. And now, if you please, you may throw out the crumbs every day as you used to; it will be quite like old times again, and I'll sit and sing to you, aye, even when the powdery snow is on the lawn, and every other bird is obliged to curl up to keep his toes from freezing."

You will thank the bonnie wee bird, and promise faithfully to supply him with crumbs; for what lawn would be complete without a robin, and how dreary would the winter be without his song!

Indoors, though, you doubtless have a pet of some kind—if not one of the many beautiful birds I have been writing about for some months past, perhaps it is a siskin or a canary.

The siskin is sometimes called the Aberdeevine, and sometimes the Scotch canary, because it prefers building its nest among the pine trees of the North, to breeding down here in merry England. Its bright plumage of yellow, siskin-green and black is very taking. It is a bright, happy little bird, too, always singing and twittering, except when asleep or paying attention to its seed box. The siskin, indeed, is on excellent terms with itself, but is nevertheless very affectionate, and becomes quite attached to its owner. The bird is usually to be found in most of the bird shops, being, as a rule, imported into this country from Germany. It has been known to breed in confinement.

It eats the usual seeds, the staple being canary, with lint and a little hempseed. It is a bird I can highly recommend to girls as a pet.

From siskin to canary the transition is easy.

I have as yet written about no foreign birds, but I do not look upon the canary as an alien by any means, and so I treat of it here. Canaries are so common now in this country,

and so altogether charming and nice, that everyone ought to know how they should be caged and fed, in order to keep them in health and song.

There are so many different kinds of canaries that it is difficult to advise which to have. But if you take a walk through a bird shop you will be able to pick and choose for yourself, or, what is better still, take, if possible, someone with you who knows a likely bird. At all events, you must get a bird that is young, and one that will sing, else only disappointment will follow.

You must, however, prepare your pet's home and all his comforts ere ever you purchase him. About these I shall now say a few words, purposely leaving the subject of the breeding of canaries alone, as entirely beside the mark, at present, at all events.

What kind of a cage should your canary have? At the shops you will find a dozen different sorts to choose from, and you can suit you fancy; only do not, I pray you, let elegance and beauty of workmanship be considered before size and utility. A bird must have room, and the old-fashioned oblong cage, made of wood and wire, is often to be preferred to the gaudily painted domicile made of wire and tin.

The former generally has a long drawer for the seed, and this does very well, so long as it is kept perfectly clean. If there is no drawer, then a seed hopper will be required. The ordinary wooden, sloping, glass-topped hopper, hung on outside the cage, does very well. The glass top is a great convenience, because you can see when it needs replenishing or cleansing, and the bird has not so much chance of scattering the seed about, to the detriment of the carpet beneath or the furniture on either side.

Water is supplied to the bird either in tins hooked on outside the cage or in glass fountains. The best kind is the conical glass fountain, the little trough of which goes inside the cage.

These are all the utensils necessary for the bird, but you must see that the perches in the cage are thick enough, and that they are securely fastened. They ought to be so thick that the canary can get a good grasp of them, and so be able to rest in comfort.

Water.—This must be given to your pet every morning fresh and pure. Make it a habit to supply the wants of your bird previous to sitting down to your own breakfast, so will

"— good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both."

Filtered rainwater is better for a canary than that procured from well or spring.

Canaries not only need water to drink, but for bathing purposes as well. The bath may be given once a day in the forenoon in summer, and twice or thrice a week in winter. For many reasons it is as well not to place the saucer in the cage, but on the floor, when you may put down the cage and then open the door for your favourite to hop out and splash away at its own sweet will.

Food.—How to feed a canary so successfully that it will be always bright and cheerful, is a question that has been, and continues to be, much argued. For my own part I have always found those birds thrive the best that were plainly fed, and had dainties given to them with a sparing hand. As a staple of diet, therefore, I advise canary and rape seed. Both should be of the best, and procured at a food shop. They usually go by the names of black and white birdseed. They should both be clean and free from grit and dust, the canary seed being thick and wholesome-looking, with a good gloss on it. Buy them separately, and keep them so in two dry, clean, well-corked pickle bottles, and supply them to the bird in the proportion of two or

three of canary to one of rape seed. There is no doubt that a change of diet is good for all animals, so you may now and then—say once or twice a week—give your bird a little hard-boiled yolk of egg, mixed with a morsel of grated milk biscuit, and just a suspicion of cayenne pepper by way of a whet to the appetite.

Green food should be given sparingly whenever procurable, especially in summer. The kinds they prefer are groundsel, watercress, chickweed, lettuce leaf, or young dandelion leaves.

A tiny scrap of stale bread, with the butter spread very thinly over it, may be given occasionally by way of a treat if the bird will look upon it in that light, and a morsel of sugar may be placed between the bars of the cage, but beyond this give no luxuries. If you feed your pet in this way, it will live to be a comfort to you for many, many years.

I have in a previous paper spoken about birds in moult. It is during that critical time that they require the egg and bread or biscuit crumb most, and great care should be taken to keep them warm and comfortable, and free from draughts.

Not only should you see that your canary has plenty of food and fresh water every morning, but that the cage is properly cleaned. It does not require washing very often, perhaps, but whenever it is so treated, it should be rendered perfectly dry before the bird is restored to it. The seed hopper should be frequently washed, and the water fountain rinsed out every morning. After the cage is cleared out and freed from dust, the remains of yesterday's green food, and filth of every kind, some nice dry sea sand should be placed on the floor of it. The bird will not retain health else.

Fresh Air and Sunshine.—The more cleanly the room in which the cage is hung the better will the bird thrive. A canary never does well in a close, badly ventilated apartment. There is nothing like fresh air for bird or beast. So open doors and windows wide for some portion of every day. But do not hang the cage right in the draught. A sunshine bath is very good for a canary. It should be given with discretion, however, and the whole of the cage should not be exposed at one time to the rays of the sun, but part of it covered with a cloth, so that the little songster may have the chance to retire into the shade when so minded.

A canary comes in time to be very fond of its cage, but that is no reason that it should be constantly confined therein. On the contrary, the more freedom it gets the better; it will thus be able to obtain exercise and be healthier on that account. Birds that get plenty of exercise beyond the doors of their cages become very tame and most affectionate, and may easily be taught many pretty tricks.

Never hang the bird's cage too high up in a room where either paraffin or gas is burning; it is most prejudicial to the health. The steam of water is also injurious to canary life, and I have known of birds being killed by being hung near a washtub.

If the cage is kept perfectly clean, insects or vermin will never congregate in it, but it is as well now and then to damp the woodwork with tincture of quassia. A little morsel of camphor, rolled in tissue paper, may also be hung in the cage, or flowers of sulphur dusted into the seams.



that she was worse than useless in a sick room, and the restraint was most distasteful to her. She did not really believe her mother was so dangerously ill, because she was able to sit up in her chair every day, and when summoned hurriedly one night to her bedside and found her dying, she was terribly shocked. Blanche's grief was as unreasoning and as unreasonable as the rest of her conduct. She stormed and raved and made herself seriously ill for want of food and sleep, and her uncle was at length forced to call in a physician, who gave her some very distasteful medicine and still more disagreeable advice. But after a few weeks her grief wore itself out. None of Blanche's emotions were very real or lasting, and then she began to think of her position as mistress of the Dingle. "I suppose Uncle Derwent will be my guardian till I'm of age, but that won't prevent me from doing pretty much as I like." So she ordered the servants about, and gave herself a great many airs, at which her uncle first smiled and then looked very grave over. Always ungracious, and often positively unkind to Miss Lyster, Blanche became unbearable, refusing to study with her, and telling her in plain terms that she did not require her services any longer.

"I know, if I were a governess, I should not keep on staying year after year where I wasn't wanted," she said, one day, and then Miss Lyster went to Captain Haughton and told him she really could not get on with Blanche any longer.

"Sorry as I am to leave her, I feel that I must," she said, sadly. "I have made no progress at all, either with her heart or her head, and she makes it very unpleasant for me."

"You have been supremely patient, Miss Lyster," the captain said, kindly, "and done all that was possible for my niece, but she was spoiled before you came. Poor girl! I fear she will have a painful awakening one day to the realities of life. No human being can expect to go through the world as Blanche does, demanding all and giving nothing, not even politeness, in return."

And then followed a long and earnest conversation between Captain Haughton and Helen Lyster, which concerned themselves chiefly, and at dinner that evening Blanche learned that the lady she had so persistently deemed her enemy, and who had endeavoured to be her true friend, was about to depart.

"You will miss her, Blanche," her uncle said, coldly, "and learn her value when she is gone, if, indeed, you are capable of appreciating her at all."

Blanche was silent for the time, but she determined just as soon as Miss Lyster was well out of the house to set herself to please her uncle—exhibit all her accomplishments and native genius, and make herself so pleasant and attractive, that he would be forced to admit that the departure of the governess was indeed a great relief.

"I'll dress for dinner every evening, and play and sing for uncle, and let him see what I really do know. He hasn't an idea of how clever I am, or of how many things I can talk about. Of course, when she's gone he'll have to come into the drawing-room after dinner, instead of going straight off to his study. He can't leave me alone all the evening."

But Blanche discovered that the absence of Miss Lyster caused her to see less of her uncle than ever; and the little she did see was not very satisfactory. He rarely spoke to her, and when she addressed some flippant remark to him, he looked puzzled for a moment, and then smiled somewhat sadly. Occasionally he asked how her studies were getting on, and she replied, "Splendidly!" but in spite of having her own way, she felt very sad, lonely, and desolate; the afternoon and evening seemed interminable, and Uncle Derwent was

not to be coaxed or wheedled from the solitude of his study.

Then there began to be certain alterations made in the house which caused her sore perplexity. Painters and paperhangers were at work; great vans of furniture arrived; the drawing-room was turned simply inside out; the room that had been her mother's refitted in very beautiful style—and all without so much as consulting her or asking her opinion. It was very little use for her to turn up her nose at the paper and declare the carpets were hideous; no one took much heed of her. There was a pleasant bustle and subdued air of knowing expectation amongst the servants. Uncle Derwent was graver and busier than ever, and she seemed to be a mere cypher in the house, whom everyone tolerated, but no one seemed to care much about.

At length, just in the beginning of the summer, and six months after her mother's death, her uncle sent for her one evening to his study. She had been poring over a book, and feeling very dull and listless, so she jumped up, fancying her Uncle Derwent felt in the same unsatisfactory mental condition, and obeyed his summons with alacrity.

Captain Haughton, however, was neither dull nor listless. He seemed to be much occupied, and he was grave; but Blanche could perceive in a moment that it was for business, not pleasure, he wanted to see her.

"I have sent for you, Blanche," he said, after a moment's silence, "to tell you that there is a great change about to take place in my life, which will necessitate also a certain amount of alteration in yours. I am going to be married!"

"Married, Uncle Derwent!" Blanche gasped.

"Yes; I thought, perhaps, from certain preparations in the house you might have guessed as much."

"I never dreamed of such a thing. But surely, Uncle Derwent, your wife is not coming to live here?"

"That she most certainly is, Blanche; why should she not?"

"Because it's my house, and I won't have it," was the indignant reply; "I mean to be the only mistress here!"

"You're labouring under a strange delusion with regard to the Dingle, Blanche. It's my house!"

"How can that be, Uncle Derwent? It was my grandfather's, then it was my mother's, and it ought to be mine, and I'm sure it is mine," she cried, passionately.

"That's not reason, Blanche. It was my father's, and now it's mine, legally bequeathed me. My dear sister, your mother, was quite welcome to the use of it during her lifetime; but if you think for a moment, you must see you can have no possible right whatever to it. The Dingle and everything it contains is absolutely mine. At the same time, it is your home as long as you are amenable to reason, and do not cause unpleasantness to my wife. I must be absolute master, and my wife must be absolute mistress of my home; at the same time, there is nothing to prevent you from being perfectly happy with us!"

"Have I nothing—no home at all of my own, Uncle Derwent?"

"I regret to say you have not, Blanche; your dear father was a country doctor, and he died young; the slight provision he was able to make for his wife died with her. But, I repeat, this is your home in the fullest and truest sense of the word till you leave it to go to a suitable home for yourself; only I shall exact, at least, respect and consideration for my wife. I fear it is hopeless to expect love or even affection from you. I leave here to-morrow, and shall return at the end of a fortnight with Mrs. Haughton. I am sorry, Blanche, for your disappointment with regard

to the Dingle, but it seems to me the misconception must have arisen with yourself. Nobody, surely, could have held you out such false and unreasonable hopes. According to your own logic, it's much more natural that my father's house should be mine than that your grandfather's house should be yours. Now, good night, my dear, and good-bye, for I shall be away before you are awake in the morning, and I hope, Blanche, to receive a cordial welcome on my return at the end of a fortnight."

(To be continued.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

(SECOND SERIES.)

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

Part I.—Foreign birds, their beauty and colours.—Bird life in an aviary.—Parlour pets.

"Beautiful birds of lightsome wing,
Bright creatures that come with the voice
of spring;

We see you arrayed in the hues of the morn,
Yet ye dream not of pride, and ye wist not
of scorn.

Though rainbow splendour around you flows,
Ye vaunt not the beauty that nature bestows.
Oh! what a lesson for glory are ye,—
How ye preach the grace of humility."

FOREIGN birds. These are now the theme of my lay. Foreign birds: birds that are by nature dwellers in far off countries, and who prefer to be so. Birds that would never, like the swallow and the nightingale, dream of visiting us in our island home. Birds that are brought but never come to our shores, but, having arrived, become none the less surely happy inmates of cages and aviaries, grateful for the love that we lavish on them, and brightening our rooms with their splendid plumage, though too seldom rewarding us with a song.

But such delightful pets do these foreign birds make as a rule, and so pleasant is it to study their ways and note all their strange tricks and habits, that even when they do not sing we scarcely miss the melody.

The plumage of many of them is gaudy and even fantastic in the extreme, bedecked as they are in all the hues of the rainbow, arrayed in all colours and tints "that e'er the sun shone on." They seem to have borrowed bright blues and crimsons from the petals of the wild flowers, pinks and carmines from the sun-kissed cheeks of mango or guava, yellows from the ripening lime, bronzes from the pomegranate, and sad greys and greens from the branches or leaves of the forest trees among which they flit. Some seem to have dyed their bills in the juices of the ripe fruits on which they have fed, and in very wantonness wiped them on their wings and left the colours there.

And here is something well worthy of notice. Gaudy though the hues of these birds generally are, they are so placed, so matched as you might say, as not to offend the eye; you need hardly be afraid to copy them in the colours of your dress.

There is, methinks, some food for thought furnished by the appearance of these bright-winged birds. Why are they so arrayed? Why has the hand of nature painted them so? Is it but to please the eye of man? Nay, nay, that would indeed be a selfish, narrow-minded way of looking at the matter. For I do not for a single moment doubt that a kind foreseeing Providence has adorned every creature that moves or breathes in the colours best suited for its happiness, its comfort, and the protection necessary to its existence, from the

enemies with which it may be surrounded. The humble titlark in brown and grey is hardly seen among the heaths and bushes it is so fond of frequenting, even by the keen eye of yonder poisoning hawk. But place a beautiful weaver bird from the wilds of Africa in the same position, it would be a veritable "ken-speckle;" it would be seen at once, and be at once hunted to death.

But these very colours that make the weaver bird so gay an object help to protect it while flitting among the bright foliage and flowers of its native land. And mark this: there is a time even in sunny Africa when leaves fall and flowers fade, and forests become less gorgeous in colour, and then our lovely little friends doff their glorious plumage, and assume a far more humble, sober garb. I am talking now, of course, of the male birds. The females are all the year round content, so to speak, with the less showy portions of the family wardrobe, and why not? They are not the bread-winners, they are not exposed to so much danger as their partners, and do not require to get themselves up to represent flowers in order to escape the talons of some bird of prey. The law that seems to declare that birds of the moorland or forest shall for their protection be clad in colours assimilated to those of their surroundings, applies to some extent even to the fishes of the sea. In shallow parts of the Indian Ocean, and on coral banks or reefs around the many islands that stud the sea in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar, I have often caught strange, nameless fishes, bedaubed in a perfect patchwork of colours, far more bright and gaudy than those of any bird of the jungle; but down beneath the pellucid waters that lave the coral banks, where these fishes dwell, are gardens of medusæ of hues so radiantly lovely, that were I to attempt to describe them to you I might well be accused of drawing upon my imagination, and endeavouring to depict some submarine fairyland.

Swallows are not unlike the ground they flit across or the places where they perch; but over and above this their speed of flight makes them independent of protective colour.

Meadow larks are similar in colour to the ground on which they build, or the clouds against which they soar, and the height at which they sing is a protection in itself against hungry hawks. If, too, you notice a skylark while singing—which you can only do with the aid of a good lorgnette—you will observe that he is constantly casting glances beneath him. He can sing where he is pretty safely; besides, hawks do not look above them for their prey. I know of no bird that does. The eagle "glances upwards," so the poets tell you, and tries hard to stare the sun out of countenance. Call me an iconoclast if you will, but believe me the eagle is never guilty of any such rudeness. He rises high enough to look down upon his prey—mountain hares, perhaps—and look down upon the pigmy keepers who would fain have a shot at him; but he is not more fond of staring at the sun than you or I am. If you doubt this, turn the sun in a caged eagle's eye some day by means of a morsel of looking-glass, and see how he likes it.

Birds of prey are never brilliant in colours, while, on the other hand, some birds that fly

"O'er the deep, o'er the deep,

Where the whale and the shark and the sword-fish sleep,"

or that float

"Up and down, up and down,

From the base of the wave to the billow's crown,

Amidst the flashing and feathery foam,"

are themselves often in colour like the water on which they find a home—

"A home, if such a place may be,

For her who lives on the wide, wide sea."

It would be easy, if space permitted, to carry this theory of the utility of colours much farther, and bring plants and flowers, and even shells, to help to prove its truth. This would be, however, an unjustifiable digression from the subject of these papers. Suffice it, then, to add that no one who studies the pages of nature spread everywhere out before us can doubt the goodness of the great Creator, for not only we ourselves but everything that lives is "fearfully and wonderfully made."

The number of species of foreign birds known and domesticated in aviaries in England is quite bewildering; probably four or five hundred different kinds are known to great amateur bird-fanciers in this country, and in Germany many, many more. They are, happily, divisible into classes, the requirements of each of which, in the matter of food and housing, is similar.

Sailors in days of old, no doubt, were the only bird-importers, not with the view of making profit so much as of giving pleasure to friends at home by presents of rare and beautiful birds. But now bird importation is a regular branch of trade; they arrive in ships at Liverpool, London, and other great ports in tens of thousands, and one cannot help sighing to think of the cruelties which the bonnie wee strangers have undergone on the voyage from overcrowding, from want of water, proper food, and fresh air.

I have already asked myself the question, am I or am I not encouraging cruelty by writing about and thus doing something towards engendering a fancy for keeping foreign birds among the thousands of readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER? Whether rightly or wrongly, I have answered this question in the negative. The trade will go on, whether I or whether you like it or not; and if we have the kindness of heart to rescue a few of these beautiful little slaves from a bird merchant's collection, it is surely right we should learn how to make them comfortable and happy.

You may keep, then, one foreign cage-bird, a single pair, several pairs of several species, or many pairs, in parlour cages, indoor aviaries or outdoor aviaries, according to the number of these pets you have a mind to have about you. But, be that number large or be it small, there are many things to be remembered and attended to if you would have them healthy and happy.

I should not advise any girl to attempt to keep many birds unless she has, first and foremost, the time to attend to them, and, secondly, unless she is pretty much of a stay-at-home all the year round, summer holiday, perhaps, excepted. The time required to keep them nice is not much, but it must be distributed with great regularity; it will not do to look after them well one morning and neglect them next, or to go from home without leaving them in the charge of someone who not only is well acquainted with all their needs and requirements, but who is certain to be mindful of these.

Is the keeping of foreign birds a trouble, then? Certainly not more so than the keeping of a pet of any kind is. In buying a pet, or acquiring one in any way, you accept a responsibility, you impose upon yourself a duty, the performance of which it would be painful to think you ever neglected.

There is no more pretty nor more pleasant pastime, in my opinion, for a girl than that of looking after the welfare of the inmates of a large garden aviary. If it contains but a dozen pairs of different but suitable kinds, she will find very much to amuse her and very much to wonder at while watching their ways, and she will find among her pets many queer traits of character that she could never have believed or fancied existed in bird life. She will find nearly every one of them affectionate, though many shy in showing their love—some modest

and retiring, others bold and pert and saucy. She will often see little exhibitions of temper, and exhibitions of both joy and jealousy, and she will not be long in learning that birds caged together in a large aviary are just as fond of playing tricks and perpetrating funny little practical jokes as ever monkeys are. Tyranny too often finds a place in the aviary, but it should never be allowed to be exercised, and one bird that persists in ill-using or cowering another is not fit to inhabit the same cage with him. Small birds sometimes form strange attachments to large ones, and even seek shelter near them from cold; but for all this, in stocking an aviary it is as well to have the birds pretty much all the same size, else war and its dire results may follow. Nor in these cases of in-avian conflict are the bigger birds always to blame; the impudence and audacity of the smaller ones often bring grief on their own heads.

Just a word about indoor cages before going on to speak of the necessities of life in the more ambitious garden aviary. The comfort of the former, then, is too often sacrificed to mere appearance. It may be pretty to see a foreign finch or a pair of budgerigars in an open-all-round gilded wire cage with any amount of ornamentation about it. But do the birds themselves like it, and is it good for their health? If they were asked the question, and had the power of speech, they would assuredly answer in words to the following effect—

"Certainly we do not; no more than you would like to live day and night in a room with windows round and round and round. We like a little quiet retirement and a little privacy; our face to the light and our backs to safety and shade is our rule when sleeping in our own wild woods, and we would like to do the same in what you choose to call civilised life, which is only slavery after all."

Bear this in mind, then, dear reader, and while ordering a cage for some lovely foreign favourite, have back and sides of wood, the top and front of wire, and even over the top at night you ought to throw a cloth.

And as to ornamentation, it looks very nice, I grant you, but it is apt to harbour both dirt and insects, and cleanliness is indispensable if you would have your birds in health.

I have one other objection to the usual dandified parlour cage: it is nearly always too small. It is a shame and positive disgrace to our humanity to confine a poor little innocent bird all day long in a cage where it has hardly room to hop about and hardly room to stretch its half-cramped legs or wings without touching something.

But your bird, your own particular favourite, is very likely so tame that it is allowed out of its cage many times and oft during the day to catch the coveted fly, and to take the exercise so necessary for its health. I am glad if it is so, and heartily wish every caged bird were allowed the same freedom.

The parlour cage ought, I need hardly add, to be kept scrupulously clean and dry, and covered on the floor with good sand, and no food-waste or litter of any kind should be permitted to remain about it a moment longer than can be helped.

Too much particularity either cannot be exercised in the choice of seeds for parlour cage birds, nor in the preparation of soft food; but further remarks on this subject I must defer until another month.



his usual spirits. He was dull and pale, could not enjoy his dinner with his wonted zest; and when he rose from the table, he said he would go to bed and try to get the weariness out of his bones.

But even this remedy proved ineffectual. He had taken a severe chill—congestion of the lungs had come on, and for a long time it was a matter of doubt whether he would ever be up and about his place again.

One doctor was called in, then another, a still more celebrated physician was brought down from London, and long and anxious consultations took place, but it was weeks and months ere a languid, thin, exhausted invalid was led about the grounds, step by step, to where there was least draught and most sunshine. By slow degrees he grew better, then he was pronounced quite recovered, and the doctors left him and said he required good nourishing food instead of physic.

But Squire Gregory was never quite the same man again; his illness had been a breakdown of a splendid constitution, and he was warned he must be more careful in future.

Where was Blanche during this time of trial?

Just where a true wife ought to be—by his side, watching him, tending on him, and listening with throbbing heart and pallid cheeks for any little ray of hope the doctors could give her.

How it had come about that the stately Blanche could turn into a skilful, devoted nurse was a metamorphosis she could never explain, even to herself. But there must, after all, have been a spark of true love for her "auld man" buried deep down in her heart, and the mist that hid it had rolled aside, and it had shone forth distinctly in the gloom of the sick chamber.

She no longer refused to accompany her husband in his walks and drives. He had given up riding and hunting since his illness, and the pretty low carriage, with its pair of occupants, and its well-groomed bays, became an almost daily object to the country people. Blanche, in time, even began to confess that though the neighbourhood round about Rockley Hall was rather lonely, there certainly were some bold, striking points of view.

To return to Laura Leigh. At the time we take up her history again she was living in the house of a rich manufacturer—an almost palatial mansion, for its owner, Mr. Herbert, had ambition as well as riches.

But although Laura had every comfort and many of the luxuries of life, the manufacturer's wife never for a moment allowed her to forget that she was only "governess" in the family.

Mrs. Herbert was quite as lofty in her way as Blanche Gregory was in hers, and she had very decided notions about keeping people in their proper positions. She often gave large dinner parties, massive, as regards the plate, heavy, as regards the conversation of the guests.

Laura Leigh—the governess—was never invited to sit at the table on any of these grand occasions, but she was

always expected to come into the drawing-room for an hour or so when dinner was over. Her presence was supposed to be a kind of wholesome restraint on her pupils—Gerty and Ethel—two bright spirited little girls, who were apt to be much petted and teased by the visitors, and whose spirits consequently sometimes rose to turbulent commotion.

Again, Laura was required to play duets with the little ones, to exhibit their musical progress, and occasionally to join with them in singing their simple infantile songs.

On the first evening Laura had been summoned into the grand, much-decorated drawing-room, she had been greatly startled by a water-colour painting, that, in a gilt and enamelled frame, occupied a conspicuous place just above the piano.

What was it in this picture that so bewildered her? that made her almost forget the notes of the cantata she was playing with Gerty, her youngest pupil? and that made her seek a position where she could still see it when the music was ended?

It was only a scene in the woodlands, where the trees were decked in all their summer beauty; only a dancing river that ran in its deep bed, with many an "eddy and ripple;" only a quaint bridge, grey and ivy-wreathed, through which the waters seemed to sweep with a slow waveless motion.

"Surely I have seen that view before," was her first thought.

"Surely every branch of those trees, every effect of light and shade is familiar to me? I know those drooping ferns, those rugged banks, those sprays of trailing briars."

And then her memory had fled far away from the stylish company that thronged Mrs. Herbert's rooms, thoughts swept over her brain that made her feel mystified and bewildered. At last she turned to Gerty, who happened still to be near her.

"Who painted that picture, do you know?" she asked.

"I don't know who painted it, Miss Leigh, but Cousin Con gave it to mamma on her birthday."

Laura made no reply, but pondered to herself—

"Whoever Cousin Con may be, is beyond my knowledge, but I am quite certain that painting was copied and enlarged from the sketch I once made in Chorley Woods. We called it 'On the Brink,' Vincent Ashton and I. Could I ever forget one incident of a picture that so nearly cost me my life?"

Gerty ran across the room to her mamma, and in childish impetuosity exclaimed—

"Mamma, mamma, who painted that picture; Miss Leigh wants to know? I told her Cousin Con gave it to you, but I couldn't tell her who did it."

"Cousin Con himself, of course. He knew I should value it all the more on that account."

"Which picture are you talking of?" asked Mrs. Lester, a young bride, who, in glistening attire, and with bright gems flashing on her arms and neck, was standing beside Mrs. Herbert.

"That one over the piano, my birthday gift. I am very proud of it, for it is exquisitely done."

"Of course, it must be if Cousin Con painted it. He is a paragon of perfection; is he not, Gerty?" asked Mrs. Lester, with a laugh.

The two ladies had gone towards the picture, and they stood looking at it, while Laura, rather wonderingly, watched them from a distant part of the room. Mrs. Herbert was saying—

"I call it a gem; the lights and shades are so well managed, and one could almost fancy he heard the gurgling of the river. There is some story connected with that painting, Con says; but I never could get him to tell me what it is."

Laura was not permitted to remain long in the retired corner she had chosen for herself beside a large stand of exotic plants, where she was half shaded by the broad leaves. Mrs. Herbert sent Ethel to her to summon her to take part in a duet.

"Mamma says you are to play that one I learnt last from *Martha* with me. It has a tune in it like the 'Last Rose of Summer,' you know."

Miss Leigh had not been introduced to any of Mrs. Herbert's guests.

"Whoever thinks of introducing the governess?" said that lady, as her friend, Mrs. Lester, made some remark about the tall, graceful girl who was crossing over to the piano.

Laura thought more of the picture than she did about the music just then. The impression on her mind was deepened by further examination, and as she was ingeniously managing the strains of Flotow, so as best to hide Ethel's false notes, her thoughts were still repeating—

"I am sure that is copied from my sketch. Who, I wonder, is Cousin Con?"

(To be continued.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

SECOND SERIES.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

FOREIGN BIRDS—(continued).

Pet Crows—Foreign Starlings—Weaver Birds—Waxbills.



HERE are pets and pets. And surely, among all the multitudes of foreign birds that are brought to this country every year and exposed for sale in shops, or advertised in the exchange columns of popular prints, any girl, be her tastes what they may, will find some pet to suit her fancy. The bright-plumaged birds are the most captivating to look at. It does not follow, however, that they make the best pets.

Indeed, for my own part, I recommend as useful pets those birds that are most comical and amusing in their ways. Even if they are tricky, I do not object to it. I have had several pets of the *Corvidæ*, or crow family, both in this country and abroad. Each and all of them were affectionate in their own way, but as mischievous as monkeys; thieves, too, they were, as far as food, and spoons, and jewellery were concerned, but amusingly clever at stealing. It would have made a sick person laugh to have seen my old Bird o'-freedom Sawin—for that was the name he rejoiced in—perched on the back of an adjoining chair while I sat at breakfast, sitting all of a heap with his head thrown back between his shoulders, as if he did not mean to move for a month, and with the eye next to me half shut; the other eye open enough, no doubt.

Rat-tat. It is the postman; and I go out to get the letter. When I return, where is my egg, and where is the butter? All gone, and Sawin too.

I had an Indian crow with a club foot, of which I think he felt rather ashamed, for he never even looked at it.

I had a raven who had a wooden leg. He lost the original in a trap. He was proud of it rather than otherwise—used to feel at it with his bill and then feel the other one, then laugh apparently, then set out for a ramble, a kind of hop-step-and-jump, which was irresistibly funny.

In India once I was in the habit of feeding, two or three times a day, a flock of from fifty to one hundred crows, at my window. They became a nuisance at last in this way. When I went out for a walk they came also for a certain distance; they came hopping off the water buffaloes, up out of the ditches and down from the banyan trees, flying around, mobbing me as it were, and making more din than a dozen charity schools all let loose in a play-ground.

Some wild birds that I have captured abroad are extremely solemn, and some vicious. These are no good as pets, only my advice is, if ever you are offered a foreign bird, no matter how uncouth or uncivil he may appear, do not refuse him, you never can tell what is in a bird till you tame it; feed it well, give it as much liberty as possible, and it may turn out a mine of good humour and drollery. And remember what the proverb says—"Laugh and grow fat." There is some truth in this, for innocent fun in my humble opinion is better than all the physic in the world.

Yes, some foreign birds are solemn. One which I caught on a string at sea—I did not even know the name of it, a kind of large gull it was—seemed to have a silent sorrow somewhere. He spent most of his time, when he was not eating, standing on one leg, thinking I suppose. What he was thinking about nobody could tell, but my brother officers used to declare he made them sad when they gazed on him—that he made them think of home and all kinds of things that made them sigh; so I fed the bird extra well one morning, then threw him up into the sky, and after an awkward turn or two he soared away eastward, and I saw him no more. I wasn't sorry. But I have had queer foreign bird pets, whose eyes and faces seemed all puckered with fun and merriment on the very day they were caught. A bird of this kind would seem to address me as follows: "Of course, I would rather be free; but as you seem bent on keeping me, and you don't look half a bad fellow, I'll try to make the best of it. What's for dinner?"

If a new bird pet of any kind eats and does not mope, you may be sure he will thrive, and you will make something out of him.

Nearly allied to the crow family are the *Sturnidæ*, or starlings, and they are also very like them in all their ways.

The common starling of our own country may be taken as a type of the class, but foreign starlings are as a rule far more gorgeous in plumage. Some of the African starlings are very beautiful; they are changing coloured, green and purple, and blue, with a bright metallic lustre. They are to be found, I believe, at Mr. Abraham's bird emporium, St. George's-street East; and I have no doubt either Mr. Jamrach or Mr. Cross, of Liverpool, would send a good bird to any reader of this paper that she chose to mention, or having read about, to fancy.

The charming mynah bird of the East Indies—an old friend and favourite of mine—is one of the starling family. It is a most lively and amusing pet, a good musician, and a fair talker. Foreign starlings of all kinds are fed precisely as the ordinary English species are. They are far from dainty. My experience of them is, that they think more about the quantity than the quality of the food placed within their reach.

The rose-coloured pastor and the Malabar mynah belong also to the starling family. The latter in particular, although not so gaily clad as most of its brethren, makes a very nice and very gentle little pet.

One of the most interesting inmates of the aviary is the Wyhdah, or widow bird. It is a finch, but belongs to the sub-family of weaver birds. There are several kinds of them, and as far as regards colour the plumage might be called a little sad. They are, with one or two exceptions, not much bigger than an ordinary canary, but when the males are in full plumage, "when summer days are fine," they present a very remarkable appearance indeed, the drooping tail feathers being nearly three times as long as the bird itself. They are natives—the Paradise Wyhdahs at all events—of Africa, south the line; their seasons are, therefore, the reverse of ours, and they moult in winter. This is equivalent to telling you that they require extra care and warmth then, and good nourishing food. So far as my experience and knowledge go, they may be fed and treated in the same way as canaries. They must be kept in large cages; indeed, a small cage will break and destroy the tail plumage of even our own domestic starlings.

Some of our most gaudily-plumaged aviary pets belong to the weaver family. They are so called from the peculiar nest they build. While walking some distance inland on a shooting expedition in the south-east of Africa one day, I came upon a Dutchman's clearing. Many wide-spreading trees, that had been left to border the fields not far from the house, were positively laden with birds' nests, shaped like lemonade bottles turned upside down. These were the homes of weaver birds, and they themselves perched or flew around in hundreds, from which I learned that these lovely creatures are not always denizens of the deep forest. They seem to be fond of mankind and to court his proximity. I fain would have possessed myself of a nest or two, but climbing to get them would have resulted in a fall, as they were hung on the outside thinnest branches, and to shoot one down would have been cruel.

For one pound of English money I was once offered, in a town called Mozambique, a most charming parlour aviary of African birds. They were all about a size, and numbered about thirty, in excellent plumage and as healthy apparently as the day was long. I could not purchase them, because I was bound for the East Indies, and might not get home for years. But I dreamed of that aviary long, long after; and I have not forgotten it yet, although I could not at this date call the birds to name. They were doubtless mostly natives of the adjoining shores of Africa, and probably some hailed from Madagascar.

Some birds are put down in books as

natives of West Africa, some of Eastern Africa. I have, however, often seen them *vice versa*, and have found so-called Madagascar birds in the woods of Zanzibar and islands further north. Perhaps they emigrate; perhaps they are too independent to remain in the countries which naturalists and bird-dealers are pleased to appoint as their homes.

Weaver birds are moderately hardy, and will live well on the ordinary bird seeds; only, when they begin to moult—the tail being generally the first part to look shabby—egg food and German paste should be allowed, with the usual insect food and mealworms, &c.

They are not only affectionate birds, but it is interesting to watch their curious movements and manoeuvres. The foreign finches proper are a very numerous family, and new kinds are still being found and imported. I shall now mention a few of the kinds that are most common in our aviaries.

The *amadavat*, or *avadavat*, comes first to memory. This tender wee finchlet is *par excellence* a young girl's pet. In its very tininess it seems to advance a plea to be loved and gently cared for. It is also a very pretty little bird, especially when in full plumage, with its beak so brilliantly red, its crimson body, dark brown wings and tail, to say nothing of the pearl spots that dot it over. *Amadavats* are among the cheapest birds of foreign breed one can buy, and, by the way, a pair or two of them—for they are not at all pugnacious—would make a very nice birthday present, especially if in a pretty and ornamented cage. To add to their charms, they possess a sweet voice, which is often raised in song.

There are so many kinds of waxbills that I hardly know which to select for description or recommendation. All are pretty, all interesting. They may be so selected that when in full plumage in an aviary the colours of one kind shall show those of another up.

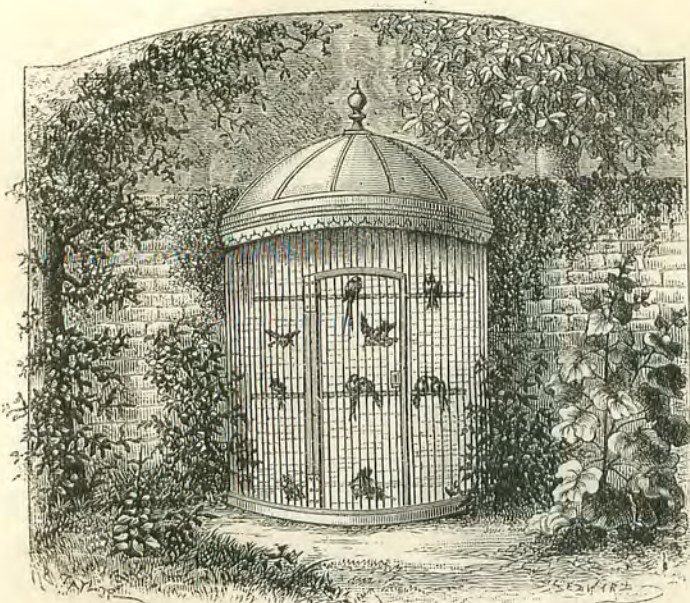
The ordinary or common waxbill of Africa or St. Helena is a charmingly beautiful little bird, the head and back and wings a pretty barred brown, the tail darker, the breast and under part a rose hue, and the bill a crimson colour; but this crimson colour extends backwards, all round the eye, and gives the little creature a peculiarly pretty appearance. The orange-cheeked waxbill is a sprightly little bird, and very lovely; it not only has orange cheeks but a coral red bill, and in other colours it stands by a brown or greyish-brown, orange and red.

Another very common waxbill, which will do well in the same aviary as the others, is the *cordou bleu*. In colour it is charming; from the top of the head over the back and wings is a brownish colour, the rest of the body a light, bright blue, with a beak of red and a patch of red on the cheeks. This last gains for the bird the name of crimson-eared waxbill. I have never kept these; they are said to be exceedingly delicate in constitution.

If buying any of these, or any other kind of foreign birds for the matter of that, at a shop, do not take those that seem unhealthy, and sit in a lump or with drooping wings; they are nearly sure to die. They are seed birds, being usually fed on canary and millet.

The birds I have just mentioned above I have known in their own country. Their very names bring back to my memory as I write many a lonely, pleasant ramble in the woods and groves of sunny Africa, and many a strange adventure, too, which would be more suited to the pages of your brother's paper—*The Boy's Own*—than for gentle girls to read.

In my next paper I will tell you of some of the birds of other lands—then devote a column or two to parrots, cockatoos, parakeets, &c. And this will finish the series, so far as birds are concerned.



GIRLS' OWN PETS.

SECOND SERIES.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

FOREIGN BIRDS—(continued).

PART III.—Soft food and seeds for the Aviary—Some pretty Aviary Pets—A few words about Budgerigars.

In my first paper on Foreign Birds I promised to give further hints about bird seeds, and soft food for the indoor or the garden aviary; and this is a most important part of my subject, because, although you may succeed in becoming the possessor of any number of beautiful birds, if you do not know how to feed and treat them properly, they will die and bring you to grief.

It is a good plan to ask, when buying birds of any kind, *what it is usual to feed them on*. At the same time it should be mentioned that professed dealers do not always feed their stock on what is best for them. Their object is to keep them as cheaply as possible, and they are not likely to take more trouble than is necessary to barely support life.

We have one rule to guide us in our treatment of the bird pets under our charge, and that is to feed, nearly in the same way, when we know it, that they have been accustomed to in the wild state. I was going to say as nearly as possible in the same way, but with regard to birds that when wild eat a great deal of insect or animal food, this would hardly have been correct, because, when free, they get a vast deal more exercise than it is possible for them to have in even the largest aviary in existence, therefore the diet in confinement should be more mixed. Take for example our own English starling; if this bird were caged up and fed entirely on insects, snails, worms, and animal food, he would soon take inflammation and die.

Well now, I will suppose you have a nice aviary of foreign birds, containing perhaps an assortment of probably a dozen different kinds; and, as you love the birds of your own land, you have put in along with these some larks and linnets, a goldfinch or bullfinch, or even a robin. Some of these will be seed birds, others soft food birds, and some may want a little of both, such as our beautiful friend the budgerigar. The best plan there-

fore is to supply the aviary well with both seeds and soft food.

I append here an illustration of a very handsome garden aviary, manufactured by Mr. E. Crook, of 5, Carnaby-street, Regent-street, London. It is not only highly ornamental, but useful; for here the birds have their retiring shelter or building room, their flight perches and all complete. A place like this can be improved upon, too, by planting creepers to trail around it, whether roses or that lovely quick grower, the wild convolvulus. But whatever you do as regards the

outside of your aviary, you will not forget to keep everything perfectly clean in its interior, including even the perches, nor to supply plenty of gravel, and clean water to drink (soft filtered water is best), and water for the bath as well.

Soft Food.—Milk sop is much relished by many birds; the bread should be softened first by steeping it in cold water, the latter is then squeezed out and the milk added, not too much of it. The milk should be new and good, and the sop changed every morning. If left for a day it gets sour, and dire results may be the consequence if the birds eat it.

A little fresh, nicely minced meat is another dainty dish with many birds. Then there are grubs and small garden worms, ants, and their larvæ called ants' eggs, and all kinds of insects. If you do not think it untidy, a bit of raw meat may be hung on a wire in the aviary to entice flies to settle on it. The insect-loving birds will go hawkling on their own account and enjoy themselves very much, though I presume the flies won't. Such birds as the *cordons bleus* live in the wild state almost entirely on insects. If you have a creeping rose-tree growing up the side of your garden aviary, these bonnie birds will often find food thereon which will be very much to their taste.

Egg food, a mixture of hard-boiled yolks of eggs and biscuit crumb, is a capital change, and, as it is nutritious and even stimulating, it does excellently well in cold weather. There is a prepared yolk of egg which I believe many birds enjoy; it is to be bought at the bird shops, but I have never tried it. When I mentioned ants' eggs of course I meant the dried kind.

I have already mentioned German paste, and given receipts for its manufacture which I need not repeat.

Among soft food for birds may be mentioned fruit of many kinds, such as raisins, currants, figs, &c. Likewise many boiled roots, like carrot, turnip, parsnip, beet, &c.

Green food you must take to mean, groundsel, lettuce, chickweed, watercress, &c., and barley or corn in the ear, with any kind of seed-bearing weeds you happen to fall in with when out walking.

It is not a nice occupation that of preparing meal-worms, but foreign birds are so fond of them that it is worth while breeding the creatures. They are the larvæ of a common small beetle, and may be got as follows.

Take a large jar holding about three or four pints, with a big mouth, nearly fill it with bran or oatmeal, and a piece of damp sugar-paper; into this empty half a pint of meal worms, which you can get at your baker's, and put an empty cloth over the top, which moisten a bit, not wet too much, occasionally with beer. After three months there will be a good supply to go on with. Well then, if you object to breed these useful insects, and have not a brother to do so for you, I advise you to buy them. Instead of giving them alive, it is perhaps as well to scald them by simply dropping them into boiling water.

I counsel simplicity of food and simplicity of feeding. Some keepers of birds mix up all kinds of soft food together in one mass. I do not recommend this plan, because change of food from day to day is, if I can reason aright, much better.

Never give more than the birds can get through easily, and never leave any about to spoil and breed disease.

Seeds.—These should always be fresh and good, and kept in air-tight tin canisters or pickle bottles, and placed for the birds in proper seed vessels, not thrown broad cast into the aviary. The seeds most used are canary, rape, millet, and poppy seed, to which may be added wild grass seeds, inga seed, and, sparingly, crushed hemp. The sun-bird or Pekin nightingale, a soft food bird, is, when in good plumage, a charming addition to the aviary, quite a pet and well-behaved, although with that strong beak of his he might do mischief if so inclined.

The blue robin or blue nightingale is a great favourite; it is a native of America, being very common in the States. They stand by blue in colour, but their breast is a brownish red. They require a good deal of care. They need also lots of soft food, and insects, meal worms, &c., and some fruit.

Another bird I have met with in the States is the well-known mocking-bird. He is not unlike in all his ways our own thrushes and blackbirds, even the song is similar to that of the mavis. This bird is apt to quarrel with others in an aviary, so had better be kept out of it.

The male indigo bird may be kept in the aviary. It is very beautiful, and sings well, though generally mute in the company of other birds. The female is brown, so is not an acquisition of much value. The indigo bird is also a native of America, and feeds on seeds and insects, or a little animal food, minced meat, &c.

Cardinals are gorgeously plumaged birds, but I must warn you to keep them by themselves. Do not be prevailed upon to introduce them into the aviary, or mischief will eventually be the result.

The Java sparrow or rice-bird does very well in our aviaries; it is a very pretty, clear-looking little bird, with a lovely wax-like bill. It is a very hardy bird too, but at times apt to fight or chase the other small inmates. Some are pure white.

The red-faced green love-bird is a beautiful little fellow, several of which may be put in the aviary; their pretty colours have a nice effect. They are seed-eating birds.

I wish to conclude this paper by saying a few words about the deservedly popular budgerigar. The name is derived from the native Australian word *badgeri*, signifying pretty or good. And well the name describes them. It is known by many names, such as the shell parraquet, the zebra-grass parraquet, or canary parraquet, but is most commonly called budgerigar.

The importation into this country of these engaging little pets is very extensive indeed, and as they do just as well in a cage as in a large aviary, and are by no means very expen-

sive to buy, they are naturally favourites. And for this reason, as well as owing to the fact that they are not sufficiently well understood, I am devoting more space to them than I have done to the others.

Need I describe this bird's appearance? Hardly, I should think, it is now so well known. It stands by green in colour, a bright pea-green striped or variegated with orange, the wings are darker and have an orange-coloured edging, the tail is blue, so are the cheeks and spots under the beak, while the forehead is yellow.

The males are blue in the cere of beak, the females brownish.

These pretty pets deserve the name of love bird as much as any other, for they are exceedingly gentle and kind in disposition, and the male bird makes a most exemplary husband and father.

It is well to know that the nostril of the male birds is sometimes stained brown by the unprincipled dealer, if he wishes to sell a pair; but as this is usually done by means of nitrate of silver, a sharp eye can generally detect it. The reason why the dealers do this sometimes, is because the female birds are more difficult to keep alive on the voyage home from Australia, and are therefore much scarcer.

Budgerigars are very hardy indeed, when once acclimatised, and will stand the severest cold so long as they are well and carefully fed.

They may be kept singly in cages, or in pairs, or a large number together in an aviary, either indoor or out. They are extremely fond of each other; if one of a pair dies, the other often follows. Whether or not this is from grief I must leave my readers to determine for themselves.

Many writers on natural history give descriptions of this bird in the wild state, but as a rule they are not talking from personal observation, and but little weight is to be attached to the words of an author who does not do so. Mr. Gould is describing what he has seen when he writes as follows about budgerigars: "I found them," he says, "breeding in the hollows of the eucalyptus trees bordering the Mokai. The nature of their food and the excessive heat of these plains

cause them to frequently seek the water, hence any camp near the river fords was constantly surrounded by large numbers."

"The song," he continues, "belongs to the male bird only; and he thinks his voice must be agreeable to his mate, for in light, warm weather he will warble all day long. He often pushes his beak almost into the ear of his mate so as to give her the full benefit of his song. The lady, however, does not seem to appreciate his condescension so much as he would wish, and often pecks him sharply in return."

So much for gratitude, reader; but perhaps she does not mean it.

The budgerigars will nest in confinement; an old log of wood is usually put in one corner of the aviary for their convenience. They have four whitish eggs which they take a long time to hatch; but they are very fond of their young ones when they do come, and these latter are funny, wee, innocent pets. So on the whole I recommend budgerigars as inmates of the aviary.

Although, however, they are very hardy so far as cold is concerned, they are, especially when kept in numbers, liable to several ailments. One of these is a kind of fit. The bird should be taken to the open air and blown on, afterwards give about two drops of castor oil, and supply a little more green food than usual. Some writers say that budgerigars should be supplied with a turf like a lark, and also with some cuttle-fish placed where they can peck at it. Well, this is easily supplied, and cannot possibly do harm. Give them plenty of sand and fine gravel also in the bottom of the cage or aviary.

Now a word about water. I maintain that all birds and pets of all kinds should be able to help themselves to fresh pure water whenever they like. Some will tell you that budgerigars do not require it. I admit they can live for months without any, because I do not think they receive any coming from Australia. But this is, in my judgment, be correct, both cruel and unnatural.

The staple of their diet is canary seed, with a little millet now and then, if they seem to enjoy it, also a sop of bread and milk. Do not forget to give them green food in the shape of groundsel, chickweed and watercress, especially in warm weather. Keep the cage or aviary exceptionally clean, and if you do this and do not neglect them you will be rewarded by finding them healthy all the year round. If you buy newly imported birds, do not be too liberal at first in supplying them with either water or juicy green food; for, be it remembered, they have not tasted either for months, and would very likely injure themselves. But bring them gradually round to both, and in about a week let them have as much as they choose.

The last thing I have to mention regarding budgerigars is this, they dearly love their freedom. If you have a large outdoor aviary they will have to be content with what exercise they get in that, but if you keep them indoors, do pray let them out for a fly around the room every day. They enjoy it so much, and they will not be ungrateful; they will love you the more for the indulgence.

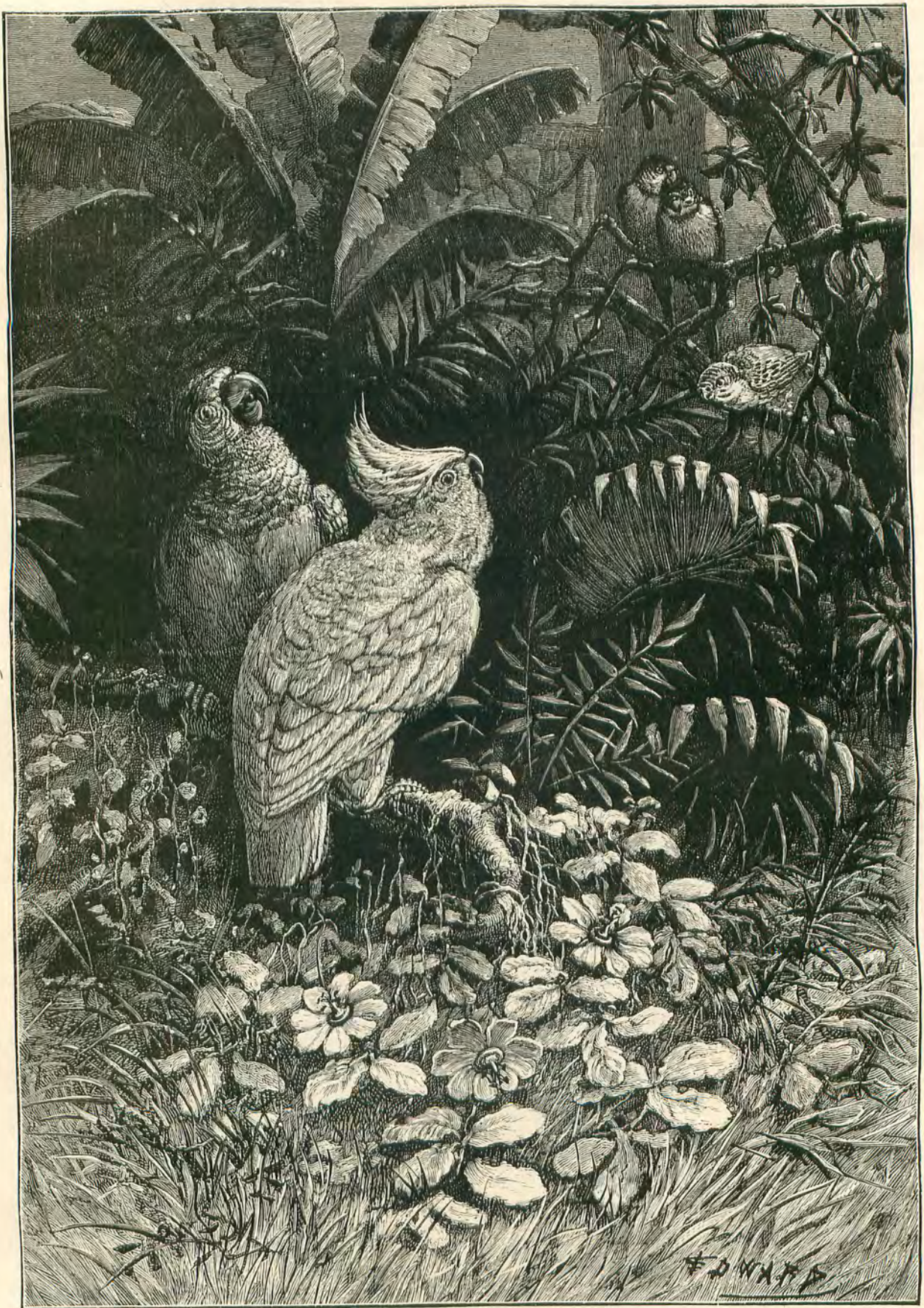
SMALL ARTICLES MADE WITH PLUSH, SATIN SHEETING, SATIN MERVEILLEUX, AND PIECE LINEN.

So many everyday objects, useful and ornamental, are now brought within the range of the embroiderer, that there can be no excuse for a room that displays no articles refined into beauty by a little skill, or, where faded articles cannot be renewed, a bright and tasteful cover made to them. Drawing-room books and blotting-book covers often become very faded and shabby by merely lying about; these can be made quite presentable by taking their shape and size in unbleached linen, and working upon that material a conventional design, with old gold filloselle or washing silk, and in satin and crewel stitches. Embroidering the owner's initials in a shield in the centre, and surrounding this with a wreath of leaves, sweet peas, and old-fashioned flowers in Queen Anne style, is more elaborate than working in one colour, but more effective. Handsomer book-covers are made with Roman sheeting as the foundations, the design applied to that and surrounded with couched lines of thick cord or gold thread. Bits of softly-coloured plush or velvet and merveilleux satins are the best to use for *appliqué* purposes; the pieces, if thin, should be backed with a thin holland lining, pasted to them before they are arranged upon the Roman sheeting, and the work, to be well done, should be stretched in a frame.

Post-card and letter racks are favourite objects to ornament. It is best to buy a perfectly plain wooden rack as the background, as these are so cheap that it is not worth while to make a background of millboard. Take some dark peacock-blue ribbed silk or satin merveilleux, stiffen it with a backing of Victoria lawn, and carefully cut it so that its various pieces, when stitched neatly together, make a covering to the wooden rack. It is best to cut out the shapes required upon paper before cutting up the silk. Work only the bottom rack cover; leave all the others plain; as they will be concealed with the letters and cords; a small bunch of tiny flowers coloured naturally and worked in silks is the best design. Great neatness is necessary in covering letter racks, but there is little trouble in ornamenting them.

Photo and Mirror Frames.—The present fashion of framing china, glass, and pictures in broad oval frames has opened out a new field to the embroiderer, who, with a little skill, can produce beautiful needlework of varied kinds, from the finest and most elaborately-coloured satin-stitch flowers worked upon pale satin grounds, to linen materials worked over with crewel silks. Conventional outline designs worked upon furniture plush, embossed velvet, outlined with Japanese gold thread, and patterns worked out with black silk upon pale blue or pink silk, so as to look like lace over a coloured ground, are all varieties of needlework employed in ornamenting the raised oval frames. The manner of making is as follows:—Take the size for the mirror frame, and employ an ordinary carpenter to cut and shape the oval, which should be made of wood, two inches in width, and an inch and a half in thickness. The wood should be flat at the back, and made as a raised curve in the front. Cut a piece on the cross of fine holland, rather larger than will cover the wood all round; lay some wadding evenly and flatly over the raised side of the frame, and keep it down by sewing the holland tightly round the wood, put on plenty of wadding so as to make a firm soft stuffing. Take the material to be embroidered; cut it to fit the frame without a join if possible, and, if it must be joined, neatly





Foreign Birds

See 'Girls' Own Pets,' p. 731.

agricultural pursuits in the colony were brought to work the land, and this town of Kapunda is the result, with all its employment to the mining immigrants. In like manner mine after mine was discovered rich in mineral, affording wealth and employment to so many who were seeking both the one and the other. These discoveries developed other industries, and quickly arose furnaces for smelting the copper and lead, and refineries for separating the silver from the ores. In the meantime agricultural and pastoral pursuits have not been neglected; the corn is of the very best quality, and the quantity of wool for exportation is yearly increasing: the quantity of fruit grown is enormous, and of the superabundance the colonists make jam to such an amount that last year they exported it to the value of £5,459. Think how many 9d. pots that means.

Religion and education generally go hand in hand, and therefore we are not surprised at the number of schools in the colony, which are well attended by 40,578 scholars. We have this morning paid a visit to the Training College, of which the Adelaideans are justly proud. 20,000 acres of land are set apart for its endowment and provision of scholarships; the most valuable prize being the South Australian, which is worth £200 a-year, tenable for four years; the owner must become a student at a European University, and we are pleased to hear that four such students are now in the English Universities. Many other institutions of like character there are in this beautiful city, but the last day of our stay has arrived, and we must not delay. On taking our leave of this pleasant and hospitable colony, we cannot help confessing one to the other how fragmentary is the knowledge we collect on our way; there is so much to see, to hear, to learn, that we leave much unseen that we would gladly carry away in our minds. One great advantage, however, is that the colonies and colonists will never be strangers to us, but always our friends. To South Australia specially are our thanks due for its large contribution to the prosperity and happiness of the girls who have sought her for home and protection. We have just seen part of a letter written to our Government at home, which expresses in so few words the state of the colony that we dot it down:—"Fifty thousand men, supporting thrice their number of women and children, occupy 200,000 square miles of pastoral country, and possess 6,000,000 of sheep; own 6,000,000 acres of land, and grow 12,000,000 bushels of wheat; conduct an external commerce of £9,000,000, and raise £1,000,000."

(To be concluded.)

GIRLS' OWN PETS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

PART IV.—FOREIGN BIRDS (concluded).



None can pay a visit to any of the larger bird emporiums of our commercial naturalists, in the metropolis or other great cities and towns, without being struck with surprise at the number and beauty of the various members therein displayed of the parrot family.

They are of all sizes, from the tiny parakeets, no larger than robins, to the gigantic macaws, almost rivalling in size the eagle itself.

If we would trace the history of the parrot as a cage bird or domestic pet, we should have

to go a long way back indeed. In India, for example, they have been known and treated with reverence, not unmixed with superstitious awe, from time immemorial.

From India parrots must have been imported into Egypt, and thence probably into Greece and Rome. They were held in great esteem in Rome in very early times; not so much as pets, however, but as articles of luxurious diet. We in this country would look rather askance at a curry or stew of parrot. Polly as a cold side dish would not find many admirers; but, nevertheless, in many parts of Australia and in the West Indies parrots are regarded as wholesome additions to the cuisine, quite as much so as pigeons are here at home.

My object, however, in writing this paper is not to recommend poor Polly for the pot, but Polly as a pet; and I feel quite sure that my readers will learn something from what I have to say, for neither the feeding nor the general treatment of parrots is sufficiently understood by many who keep them.

Macaws are very beautiful in plumage, but I cannot recommend them as pets. They are exceedingly destructive in their habits, breaking and chewing up everything within their reach, including the perches on which they rest, unless these are well guarded by means of a coating of zinc or tin. The noise they make and seem to delight in is most ear-splitting; so, taking them all and all, perhaps they are best left alone.

Talking of noise reminds me that I have been asked more than once if there be any good plan of breaking a parrot or cockatoo from the tiresome habit of screaming. I only know of one, and that is kindness and gentle treatment, with occasional reprimands. But they should not be fed for some time after giving vent to those unearthly yells, which they do at times to cause annoyance. Some parrots and cockatoos are as fond of mischief for mischief's sake as monkeys are.

The Indian parrot proper is the rose-ringed, or ring-necked parakeet. One of the self-same kind is also indigenous to Africa, the Indian being known by its red and the African by its black beak. It is a very affectionate and tame little pet, and when once fairly acclimatised it will live for quite a long time, and if well tended and treated, keep perfectly healthy and in good plumage. It can be taught to speak, and is rather celebrated for the distinctness of its intonation. It is not in a very great hurry to learn, however. With the exception of the ring around the neck, the beak and eye, and a feather or two of the wings, this bird is entirely green. It eats the ordinary seeds.

From India we get also the plum-headed parakeet. It is also a long-tailed, green bird, with a purple-red or plum coloured head. Though somewhat delicate at first, it in time gets used to the country. It is fed on canary-seed, maize, millet, and, as a change, a little biscuit and milk sop. It makes a quiet and affectionate pet, but is not very famous as a linguist. Perhaps it can speak, but won't. Well, there is only one way of making it, and that is, keeping it well fed and loving it.

The Malabar parakeet is a bird of very great beauty of plumage, but it is years before it assumes its gay colours, when it stands by grey, green, and blue, and has a splendid tail of the two last-named colours. Its beauty is its principal recommendation; but it is docile and affectionate, and is said to be very jealous in its disposition. I have never had one. There is a charming wee parrot that rejoices in the name of white-eared conure. It is prettily shaped and splendidly coloured, without being over gaudy. They are said to be hardy, lively, and gentle, and without any propensity to make disagreeable noises. But, indeed, all the conures or wedge-tailed parakeets get the name of bold, fearless birds,

often fighting with each other, but more especially with other species of parakeets, but on the whole gentle and affectionate to their owners.

I have come to the conclusion myself that it is best not to believe all you hear or read about the character of any kind of bird or beast as a species, but to speak of an animal as you find it, for there are as great differences in individuals as in families.

The blue-capped mountain lory is one of the most beautiful of all parrots, and it is at the same time amusing, tricky, and affectionate. But this is not all I have to say in this pretty bird's favour; for the lory talks—although some doubt this—and that, too, very distinctly, and also mimics the voices of animals it happens to live within hearing of. There has been a good deal of dispute and argument about the proper food of the mountain lory. It is undoubtedly a seed bird, but *soft food* in the shape of figs, oranges, ripe apples, and grapes, as well as sop, should be given now and then; only care must be taken that it does not relax the system, else the bird may die off very soon in a fit. It must be confessed that the lories are given to screaming at times, but the greatest drawback to having these red mountain pets is the fact that they are very expensive. Green food, by the way, should be given but sparingly to lories; but a morsel of dandelion or lettuce will not hurt if they care for it, and a little honey and water or milk and honey is much relished by them.

From Southern Australia we get many very lovely parakeets and lorikeets, none more beautiful probably than the beautiful parakeet and the swift-lory.

There are many kinds of cockatoos; and although most of them are extremely affectionate and docile, and some pretty in crest and plumage, none of them, with one exception, make such nice pets as the red-tailed African grey parrot. The one exception is the South Australian white cockatoo. Not a very pretty bird by any means, but highly amusing, albeit somewhat mischievous; and I really know nothing which a bird is capable of that this species of cockatoo will not learn, whether dancing, singing, laughing, whistling, or playing all kinds of mischievous tricks. These latter if required, cockatoos will perform to order, and thus many a hearty laugh may be had at their expense; and if there be anything in this world better for one's health than laughable amusement, I have yet to learn what it is.

I may here remark that there is a great art in teaching animals to perform little amusing tricks, or in teaching them to speak. First, as to tricks. You must never expect any creature to do anything which is unnatural to it. The body of a poodle, for example, is far better formed for standing on the hind legs than that of the St. Bernard. You may expect the former, therefore, to beg or to walk, to balance itself on the edge of a chair, holding a pipe in its mouth, wearing hat or cap, etc.; but not the great St. Bernard. But the St. Bernard or Newfoundland are in the habit, when pleased, and when they want to ask a favour, of stretching out the four paws and lowering the body between them. I take advantage of this, and when any of my dogs put themselves in this attitude I say, "Good dog; he is making a bow," and probably I throw him a tit-bit.

In a very short time he comes to know what "making a bow" means, and does so whenever told. Taking advantage of the resemblance in sound to the word "yes" in a Newfoundland's voice when he barked low, I taught him after much trouble to articulate that word very distinctly, more so than a learned elephant could. Another dog I had, whose history I wrote for Webb's book on dogs, could articulate five or six words so distinctly as to be

easily intelligible to even those who had never heard him speak before. It was only sometimes he would bring them out, however; as for instance, when he wanted food, or wished to get loose, or to go out. In Misnia in Saxony there lived a dog that could articulate about thirty words. This has been well authenticated.

If space permitted, I could give scores of instances in which some natural movement or position of an animal or bird has been turned to account and educated as it were up to a trick. Take my old bird o' freedom, the Indian crow, for example. I do not know why he should lie still when placed on his back; but he did so, and when I called this "going dead," as soon as he knew he pleased me, he would go dead at any time I told him, even on the table at breakfast time. I never changed the tone of my voice when talking to him. It is not difficult to teach canaries or cats, or cats and canaries together, anything in reason on the same plan.

Just another example. If I were told to teach a big dog to roll over on the grass to the word of command, or to shake himself whenever told, I would do it in this way. When I found him tumbling on the lawn I would say, "Good dog for tumbling," or "Good dog for rolling," and after he was washed and shaking himself naturally, I would always say, "Good dog for shaking himself;" and it is surprising how soon an animal thus comes to associate the words with the action, and performs his trick when told. Teaching a dog or cat to open a door is no trouble; teaching a dog to shut the door is more difficult, because he does not do it naturally. You must teach the trick. Thus, teach him first to jump up with his paws on you when told, then to "jump" a door open, and next to "jump" it shut, the door being already partly closed.

There is a little Pomeranian called Peter, the same, by the way, who tells a story in this year's "Peter Parley's Annual." This dear old fellow is very fond of me, and often runs away from home and resides with me for days at a time. He shuts the door after he comes in, he "begs," of course, and does all the ordinary tricks, including "lying dead," and saying "yes." The other day he was lying dead at my feet when I asked him the question, "Are you dead, Peter?"

Now Peter must have thought it would entirely spoil the play if he replied, because no dead dog could be expected to speak. I put the question a second time very solemnly: "Are you dead, Peter?"

No answer; never a movement. Then the third time I put my question, "Peter, are you dead?" "Yes," cried Peter, without moving a muscle, but in such a snappish tone of voice that everybody laughed who heard it.

Cats are extremely tricky, and so are all the more lively kinds of birds, and the more mischievous they are naturally, the easier it is to teach them tricks; but one thing is essential, whatever your pupil may be, whether bird, or beast, or fish, it must not only love you, but it must feel perfectly certain that you love it as well.

In teaching animals tricks, do not forget the motto, *amor vincit omnia*.

As to talking birds, some ignorant people will tell you the tongue ought to be cut or split, and away up in the far North of Scotland they even go a little farther than this, and aver that the operation must be performed, not with knife or scissors, but with a crooked siperce. I need hardly tell you that any interference with a bird's tongue in the shape of cutting or snipping is both unjustifiable and cruel.

If you wish your parrot to become a good talker you must first and foremost study to keep him in good health and condition, for

believe me, unless he is perfectly happy and contented, he will not attempt to learn anything. The words you wish him to learn you must keep repeating over and over again at the correct time. Such words as "pretty Polly," "pretty darling," "how is Polly?" "is Polly quite well," &c., you can say at any time. But only say "good morning," or "good night," when the expressions ought to be made use of. So with the words "breakfast," "bit of biscuit," "nut," "seed," or "drop of water." There must be a truthful connection between words and acts. Remember that parrots, when really good talkers, know well the meaning of the words and sentences they utter; but just watch, for example, how one will call the dog, or mimic the cat, or order either of these animals out of the room.

I used to put my cockatoo out in the garden, and when a dog-cart, notably the butcher, baker, or veterinary surgeon's came along, it would whistle shrilly, and until they got used to Polly's tricks, they used to stop. "Come on, come on," Polly would cry, "come and put the kettle," "What are you doing? what are you doing?" and a whole string of nonsense besides, ending in a loud derisive laugh.

If a lady paused for a moment to look wonderingly at the cage, and its wild, weird-like inmate. "Well, duckie?" Polly would shriek. Now, if the bird had merely spoken in an ordinary tone of voice, it would not have been so bad; but those words, "well duckie," were yelled out with steam-whistle power, and could be heard at least a mile off. I used to be utterly ashamed of the bird, and in justice to myself I must add that I did not have the arrangement of Polly's vocabulary. She knew her p's and q's long before I ever saw her.

Now, to those girls who may be wishful to get a good parrot or cockatoo, I must say, do not, if possible, buy a newly imported one. I could tell you where to get a good one cheap, but it seems unfair to mention the name of any one firm in preference to another; only our paper is now so well known that I feel sure any respectable naturalist would be pleased to serve our readers well. If it be a young parrot, be extra careful of it for many months after you have it, until it becomes acclimatised, or its death may cause you grief. You ought to get a male bird in preference to a female, because the males are harder and are also more easily taught to talk. The eye of the male is darker than the female, and the former carries himself more boldly, and looks more saucy. It is difficult on the whole for a amateur to distinguish sex in parrots, but my last sentence may guide in some measure.

Polly's cage ought to be as large as possible, and placed in a warm but not hot corner of the room, and great care ought to be taken not to stand the cage in a draught. Cover it up at night, but not entirely; the bird must have plenty of fresh air, else it will not, cannot be healthy.

Give a bath once a day if the bird will take it, but not in the cage; if Polly objects to a bath a good syringing now and then will do good. Let your parrot or cockatoo have all the freedom possible. I think it is as cruel to keep a bird constantly in a cage as it is to keep a dog always on chain. Let the bird have plenty of exercise therefore; it will thrive all the better for it and talk sooner.

Keep the cage very clean and very dry. It ought to be seen to every morning. Even the perches and Polly's own feet want seeing to occasionally. If there be the slightest bad smell about the drawer in the cage, scour it well with carbolic acid soap, then dry it, and sprinkle a little Condy's fluid on it. Keep all the dishes very clean as well as the cage, and scour the cage periodically, whether it smells

or not. Do not let anyone persuade you that water is not good for parrots. All birds require it at times, and it should be always within their reach, and be invariably clean, and soft, and wholesome.

Food.—If you wish your bird to be well and live to a green old age, say a hundred years or thereabouts, you must be sparing in the amount of sop food you give it. Bread and milk, bread and milk, day after day, is the only notion some people have of parrot feeding, with occasionally a bone to pick, or a morsel of anything that happens to be going at table.

Do not give sop oftener than twice or at most thrice a week, but give an abundance of good canary seed and little hemp, dry biscuits, crusts of bread, ripe fruit now and then, and now and then a chillie. Nuts are greatly relished, but many of them are too fattening, and the same objection applies to hemp seed, of which some cockatoos are passionately fond.

Soak the bread you give in cold water first, then squeeze out all the water and add a little good new milk, but do not make it too sloppy. Throw away what is left in the evening before you cover Polly up for the night.

Boiled Indian corn is good as a change. It should be given cold, of course.

Give no meat or bones on any account.

When a parrot is well taken care of and properly fed, when it is used to plenty of exercise, is kept cleanly, has any amount of fresh air, and an occasional bath of water and sunshine, it is one of the hardiest, healthiest, happiest birds we have.

Scurfy skin comes from uncleanness and too stimulating food, sometimes the feathers come all out. Sponge the tender parts with a lotion of alum or zinc, four grains to the ounce of water, and anoint the sorest parts with benzoated oxide of zinc ointment.

A few drops of castor-oil sometimes does good if the system seems to want cooling.

Whenever you see your bird ailing put it into a very warm, comfortable corner, and feed extra well for a time. Heat has a wonderful effect in restoring the vital energy of any bird whose importation into this country has been a transition.

"From sunlight to a sunless land."

THE END.

USEFUL HINTS.

If you have a garden, do not throw away suds. Both ashes and suds are good manure for bushes and young plants.

CARPETS.—The oftener carpets are shaken the longer they wear; the dirt that collects under them grinds out the threads. Do not sweep carpets oftener than is necessary; a broom wears it very much. When a carpet is faded, strong salt and water will often restore the brightness of the colours.

To clean gold jewellery with stones in, wash in warm suds made of fine soap with ten or fifteen drops of sal-volatile in it. This makes jewels very brilliant.

EGYPTIAN PUDDING.—One pound of suet, one pound of raisins, three-quarters of a pound of fine bread, half an ounce of allspice, four figs chopped fine, four tablespoonfuls of sugar, two eggs, two glasses of brandy, the peel of half a lemon chopped fine; mix all well together and put into a mould, steam it for four hours.

An infusion of elder leaves poured over plants will preserve them from caterpillars.