

BIRD LIFE IN NOVEMBER.

By A NATURALIST.

ALTHOUGH vegetation appears to have died out in this so-called dreary month of November, bird life is in a state of considerable activity, as any girl interested in the beautiful little creatures may see for herself if she chooses to look for them. Go where you will, bold robin redbreast will look at you with his full, dark eye, and his head cocked on one side, for robin is a most inquisitive and self-confident creature. I have made such friends with him in lonely places, that he would come to me regularly for his meals, taking the food from my fingers. A kind of superstitious regard for the robin, which is in a degree shared by the wren and the swallow, protects him most rigidly. Few schoolboys care to exhibit the eggs of the robin in their collections. If the weather is clear in November he sings most gaily, but if rough weather is brewing he will mourn dolefully.

If you chance to pass by a hazel hedge you may hear a rustle among the falling leaves, and looking down see the nuthatch in quest of nuts. Directly these are ripe he visits the hazel bushes, and takes his share; then, when the leaves lie thickly below, he hunts in the hedge once more, for he knows as well as the children do that two crops of nuts may be gathered in a season in that way. A bright, active bird he is, with blue-grey back and orange and white breast. The peculiar call he gives to his mate at times—twit, twit—will attract your attention to him.

Upon the upland pasture lands you will be sure to hear the chattering chack, chack, chack of the field-fares, the bluefelt of the country folks; or if you wander on and about the sheep pastures, where the juniper bushes flourish, you may hear a note like the alarm note of the blackbird, only wilder. It proceeds from the ring-ouzel, that has made his stay for a week or two, on his usual migration from the southern counties. He is a fine bold bird to look at—when you have the chance—but he is very shy. He is very irregular in his flittings to and fro. Some seasons

Such is the bird life that may be seen during an afternoon's walk in the shepherds see great numbers of the ring-ouzel, other seasons not in November.



ROBIN REDBREAST.

single one. Probably the year's crop of juniper berries has something to do with this. Wild berry-bearing trees and shrubs are like cultivated fruit trees, in rarely having full crops for successive years.

If we leave the uplands for the lower ground and enter the water-meadows, the first bird we are likely to see will be the gentle redwing. When hard times come he will sit with his head on his shoulders and his breast feathers puffed out; but you will not hear him complain, for, like most gentle creatures that God has created, he suffers in silence.

Close to the redwing a bird springs up, crying "scapè"! and you see a flash of white and a streak of brown—just enough to let you know that you have disturbed a snipe. Strange it is that the wader and the song bird should feed at the same table, so to speak.

As the afternoon shortens, the starlings go through their manoeuvres before settling for the night, and all the members of the finch tribe leave the stubble and lea grounds for thick copse and hedge shelter. Close by, a chattering rattle sounds; it is the wren fussing about and talking to himself before going to rest. And now there is a regular row among the members of the finch tribe; they are clattering in and about the bare stems and twigs in all directions. On looking we see a grey flash glide over the fields—it is the dread sparrowhawk.

Daylight fades. A grey mist comes over all things. Flapping bird forms show here and there over the bare fields, low down, twisting and turning, and you hear "Pewit, pewit, pewit." The green plovers are on their feeding-ground. Very good friends to the farmer are the full-eyed crested plovers.

You have an impression that some bird has passed over your head whilst you were looking at the plovers—it was the barn owl; the gloom that is fast gathering is his best hunting time.

NOTICES OF NEW MUSIC.

PATERSON AND SONS (EDINBURGH).

A Sailor's Song. This is a capital bright four-part song by Otto Schweizer, with both English and German words.

Bonny Kilmeny. A cantata for soli, chorus, and orchestra. By Hamish MacCunn. —A most fascinating work, full of graceful melody and very musicianly treatment. It is to be regretted that the pianoforte arrangement of orchestral accompaniments, of such interest as, at least, the work before us, does not contain indications of the various instruments employed. This is a great help, even to a piano accompanist, in imparting character to each section of the work. The subject of

the opening chorus is often pleasantly referred to in the course of the cantata, and where all things are good, we would call special attention to No. 2, tenor solo; No. 7, a chorus, ending Part II.; No. 11, Kilmeny's solo, and the Epilogue, which is an excellent piece of part-writing. Although, to a musician, the accompaniments are most suggestive throughout, nevertheless we feel that great additional enjoyment might be given to the average reader were the orchestral combinations named here and there.

We have also received Nos. 3, 4, and 5 of a set of six songs by the same clever young composer, each one evincing his tasteful fancy

and considerable versatility. Let us sincerely hope that nothing may break the promise of great things contained in Mr. MacCunn's work thus far.

Andante and Allegretto, for two violins and piano, by Pierre Perrot, is a useful piece, containing in the allegretto in B minor a good brisk contrast to the 3-4 opening movement.

Two Short Movements, for either violin or violoncello, by the same composer, are inscribed "for pupils," and very good material for practice will they make. The movements are connected, and form one short work.

deen that afternoon, and travelled up to London that night, arriving at an unearthly hour next morning; and going straight to Russell Square, as she had been told, early though it was, Bessie was not surprised to see her, and welcomed her so warmly that she felt quite at home, and sat by the fire with a cup of hot coffee which Bessie had had made directly she arrived, listening with a sense of wonderful rest and comfort to all the details of her husband's case.

"I can't help thinking that when he sees me he will remember," she said; but her friend shook her head as she answered—

"Hardly yet, I fancy, dear Kitty; we must have a little patience still."

That day the two women went to the hospital and saw Jamie. He was sitting up as a convalescent patient, and looked well, except for being somewhat paler and thinner, but when he raised his eyes to Kitty there was no remembrance in them; indeed, he turned to the nurse, asking, "Who is that?" And the

poor wife, after one cry of "Jamie, don't you know me?" burst into tears, and Mrs. Forbes took her away. The same thing happened often, only that Kitty grew more able to bear it without giving way openly, and at length, after a fortnight, her husband looked up at her and said, "Wife," and laid his hand on his forehead as if puzzled about something. There are moments about which it is better to be silent, and this was one of them; for such intense joy as filled Kitty's heart then can hardly be told.

From that day Jamie rapidly improved, and was soon pronounced able to leave the hospital. Mrs. Forbes' kind uncle and aunt insisted upon his coming to their house for a few days before attempting the journey to Scotland, and the night before he was to leave St. George's and come to Russell Square, Bessie went up into Kitty's room, and found her standing near the window, such a smile on her face, and turning her wedding ring round and round on her finger.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as her friend entered the room, "how happy I was when he put this on, and how miserable I have been since; but now, please God, the misery is over, and he will be with me again to-morrow. Oh, dear Mrs. Forbes, I don't know how to thank you for all you did for me. I should never have found him, perhaps, but for you!"

"Yes you would, dear, when his memory returned; but you would have had a longer waiting. Well, it's over now, and what a blessing he is really none the worse. Kitty, dear, you will never again fancy things about his friends, will you? I'm sure you won't! And you will try to feel that however happy we may any of us be, yet we must not make too sure of its continuing without a break."

This little story has come to an end now. Jamie came to Russell Square the next day, and a week later travelled back to Scotland with Kitty, and returned to old Mrs. McGowan and the Deeside Cottage.

[THE END.]

BIRD LIFE IN DECEMBER.

By A NATURALIST.

THE birds have not yet suffered from hard times; blackbirds and thrushes frequent those old garden walls which are built with rough stones, for they know well that snails and other creatures have sheltered for the winter within the crevices and cracks in the lower parts of them. The blackbird hops up in his half-bold, half-distrustful way, his bright dark eyes, with their rings of orange, looking all ways at once. He is not quite sure that all is right; some slight noise has alarmed him, for he hops a few feet into the strawberry bed, with his tail raised and spread like a fan. Nimbly he hops back to the wall, secures a large snail, and makes away with it. He will keep coming and going all through the short day.

The song thrush is not so shy; he will get his snail and take it to a stone in the summer-house, crack the shell on that, and then eat the poor owner of it. If you look at the place after he has gone to roost, you will find quite a small heap of broken snail shells. All day long you may hear him tap: tap! tap! and see him, too. The song thrush is a very confident bird in places where experience or instinct tells him that people will not hurt him; but the blackbird is shy always and everywhere.

A mournful pipe comes from the privet hedge surrounding part of our garden, up to the old wall. On looking, we see bullfinches, four of them, clinging to the top twigs, on the lookout for any berries that may be in their neighbourhood. Their breasts look like roses, they are so bright in colour. The title of parrot-finch would suit a bullfinch better than his own name does; I always think of a small parrot when I see one. A most playful and affectionate



THE BLACKBIRD.

creature he is, when domesticated, and he has a nice quiet song peculiar to himself, which he will sing for the benefit of those who treat him kindly.

At the bottom of the hedge a couple of hedge-sparrows hop in and out with their own special wing shuffle. The country folks call him "shuffle-wing," in some localities. He is quiet in all his ways, his plumage is sober in tone, and when closely looked at is very beautiful, as is also that of the cock-sparrow.

If, in the course of the short, bright day you can visit the woodland roads, where the great beeches reach out their huge arms, lacing and interlacing, you will hear a chorus of "Twink! twink!" and nothing but "twink!" The sound proceeds from a host of chaffinches that are feeding on the beech nuts or mast, which they find in plenty under the fallen leaves. As you walk on, a cloud composed of birds rises up, showing their beautiful white upper tail coverts and bright tawny plumage, barred with white and black. They are "bramblings," or bramble finches, which have come from northern counties to our more genial one. When the winter is over they will go back to begin their nesting time. And there are cottage children—mites, some of them—carrying sprigs and branches of holly full of bright red berries; they know where the best are to be found. They will cut each piece in a slanting direction, make bundles of the lot, and put them in the ground to keep fresh for their Christmas decorations; and before it gets dark, if you continue your walk, you will meet some of their bigger brothers and sisters with branches of mistletoe, which they had noted months ago growing on the old crab trees in the wood.

there is all the difference in the world to the average child between the fairy tale and the ghost story. Anything that gives a weird and horrible turn to familiar life and familiar objects is frightful to a child, such as the "new mother with the glass eyes and wooden tail" in Mrs. Clifford's clever "*Anyhow Stories*," who, to the writer's thinking, is the most terrible invention of modern child-literature. But the fairy tale, on the other hand, lies frankly outside the regions of ordinary experience, and is accepted at once under these conditions. This, at least, is an attempt at explanation of a fact that will be acknowledged by all who have to do with story-telling to children.

It is as well to exclude, also, all stories that end horribly. Little Red Riding Hood, for this reason, is by no means to be told to very young children, unless the modern ending is adopted, by which the Green Huntsman kills the wolf, and even then the preliminary fate of the grandmother is not encouraging.

In the best popular fairy tales there is an

excellent moral, and surely they are as good for the purpose of education as the old-fashioned nursery stories, where the good boys got all the plum-cake, and the bad ones were gored by bulls. Both are remote from actual everyday life, and only good allegorically; therefore one may as well derive the moral from the beautiful as from the ugly and sordid. In a story where obedience, faithfulness, tenderness, bravery appear as qualities to be admired; where trickery, cruelty, and deceit are held up to detestation, there is always a good effect on the listener's mind, and the greater his interest, the more enduring is the lesson.

Illustrations and examples of the fairy tales to be preferred shall be left to another chapter; but one word must be added to express the writer's conviction that, as a rule, the old fairy tales are far better than the new. The critical spirit of our age has crept even into its juvenile literature, and whereas the object of old fairy romance was to delight and charm,

the object of the new seems to be to entertain grown-up people by sly side remarks to them, and rather to make the children laugh than to fascinate their imagination. The true fairy-tale lover, while he cannot but enjoy the clever modern story, delights in drinking deep draughts from the well of old romance, unpolluted by any nineteenth century elixir of doubt.

So, for the sake of the future of the children as well as their present pleasure, do what you can to develop this faculty of imagination. Tell them stories of boys and girls like themselves by all means; but do not omit the fairy tale, that carries them quite away from their childish world and opens the gates of an enchanted land. That land they may never wholly lose. In differing guise it may hover near them all their lives, and be to them even as Spenser called it centuries ago—"The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil."

(To be concluded.)

BIRD LIFE IN JANUARY.

By A NATURALIST.



If snow has fallen heavily, covering the ground and drifting against the hedges, in many places the weight on the tops of the twigs will bow the hedge right over, forming a roof on the lee side. In and about such spots the birds gather for food and shelter. Driven to extremity, companions in misfortune, they mix with one another without regard to species. Robin redbreast makes friends with anyone that will feed him. The sparrows look out for stray crumbs and other small trifles, hunger putting shyness on one side for a time. They suffer for it, however, by getting under cinder sieves, propped on sticks with strings tied to them, to the great delight of the young trappers, when they hear the cry, Chivie! chivie! chivie! "Philip sparrow" is held in high estimation by the youngsters, and by many grown up country folks too, as a table bird. They often, with shovel and broom, clear a space in the stable yard, on which some oats and broken bread are scattered. Then ensues a regular uproar of chivics!

outgoings and incomings. Most energetic destroyers of insect pests they are. Greenflies they will collect in their mouths until they can hold no more; then off the male birds fly to feed their families.

No matter how many sparrows are about, directly the corn is cut away they go to the fields for about three weeks or a month; then they will certainly plunder a little and irritate the farmer: though, after all, the grains that fall in the fields yield them plenty to eat. I generally have either hawks or owls about me as pets; and when a farmer friend sends me the birds shot in the wheat as food for these, strange to say not one in seven is a sparrow.

If the snow gathers the birds will show signs of distress; they flutter where they settle, or rather flop down, for they are weak through want of food. The woodpigeons in hosts fly from their resting-place in the old beech woods, miles distant, for food. Hundreds of them are shot as they come on their feeding grounds in the woods and fields. The farmers can sell

them; and, besides that, they have a deep-rooted dislike to all the pigeon family. "They does a mortal lot o' mischief, does them pigeins; they eats my turnmuts."

When hard pressed the pigeon will eat a portion of the tender green, but that is about all. If you examine the crop of any wood-pigeon, when the winter is moderately open, you will find in it acorns and beech nuts, as long as there be any to pick up; and when these fail, the crop will be found full of the seeds of two of the worst weeds the farmer has to contend with.

Yellow buntings, the yellow hammers of the children, with chaffinches, come round about the houses to see what they can find. Wag-tails also pay us some visits. By throwing out some mixed scraps from the dinner-table you can see at once what the natural food of a bird is. All truly insect-eating birds, such as wag-tails, go for the meat scraps in preference to the bread; little bits of fat suet are a delicacy to them. Each one in the flock of birds that, with drooping wings and tails, mournfully pray you to relieve their hunger, will pick his own morsel out from the mixed meal you may offer.

That digger of the ground, the rook—the farmer's best friend, suffers terribly if snow and frost continue. If it were possible to collect from the pouches of a dozen rooks all those insects which are noxious to the interests of the farmer, for only three months, it would stock an entomological museum; and yet he shoots them whenever he can, which is, however, not very often. Rooks leave their rookeries when winter draws near, and form vast colonies in the heavily timbered woods with a southern frontage if possible. Leaving their resting-place to gather what little food they can find, and returning early in the afternoon, they will get what they can from gardens and the public roads; but the frost bites keenly, and the stomach does not get very full, so that, with one thing and another, the birds are in poor trim. After a spell of very severe weather, you may find one at the foot of a tree dead, for the cold pinches him, hardly though he is. That numbing sleep comes over him which knows no awakening; his grasp on the branch relaxes, and with a thud he falls to the ground, frozen to death.

(To be continued.)

jocularly handled by his wretched Eustace Bright, the supposed narrator? Contrast the two in almost parallel passages.

Hawthorne thus introduces Quicksilver, as he is pleased to call Hermes.

"It was a brisk, intelligent, and remarkably shrewd-looking young man, with a cloak over his shoulders, an odd sort of cap on his head, a strangely twisted staff in his hand, and a short and very crooked sword hanging by his side. He was exceedingly light and active in his figure, like a person much accustomed to gymnastic exercises, and well able to leap or run. Above all, the stranger had such a cheerful, knowing, and helpful aspect (though it was certainly a little mischievous into the bargain), that Perseus could not keep feeling his spirits grow livelier as he gazed at him."

This, on the other hand, is Charles Kingsley's style of describing the appearance of Immortals to men:

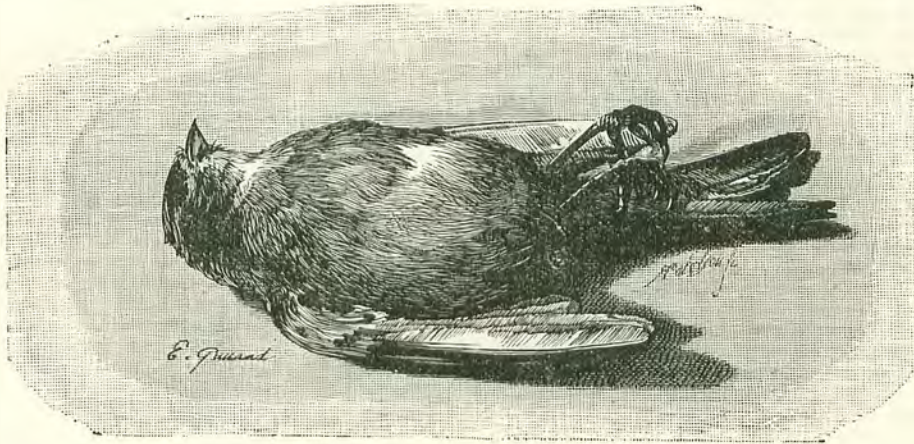
"Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky, and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched it broke and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athené, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a young man, more light-limbed than the

stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings. They looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes, and they came up the cliff towards him more swiftly than the sea-gull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir the robes about their limbs; only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man."

The stories of Norse mythology are also very fascinating. Thor the mighty, the crafty Loki, Baldur the beautiful, Freya the fair and indiscreet, thronging in their city of Asgard, people the dim past with great and lovely and wonderful forms. The storehouse for these stories is the "Heroes of Asgard," by A. and E. Keary, a fascinating book.

One last source from which the "Fairy-Tale Sister" may draw inspiration remains yet to be mentioned. That is her own imagination! If she has any power of constructing a story, let her begin with a fairy tale to her young audience. Many a one who has

in mature years become a successful authoress first proved her talent in this way. Power will grow with the using, and when the child-listener craves for "a story of your very own, not one out of a book," the improvisatrice will feel that she has obtained a reward for her pains. Perhaps in *later years* a public of larger growth will listen to her with approval. And at any rate, if she is always ready to uphold the beautiful and the good, to draw pictures of loveliness that shall not be forgotten, her efforts will by no means be in vain. For, as Mr. Ruskin says, "Imagination will, in the minor necessities of life, enable us, out of any present good, to gather the utmost measure of enjoyment by investing it with happy associations, and in any present evil to lighten it by summoning back the images of other hours; and also to give to all mental truths some visible type in allegory, simile, or personification which shall more deeply enforce them; and finally, when the mind is utterly outworn, to refresh it with such innocent play as shall be most in harmony with the suggestive voices of natural things, permitting it to possess living companionship instead of silent beauty, and create for itself fairies in the grass and naiads in the wave."



BIRD LIFE IN FEBRUARY.

By A NATURALIST.

"FEBRUARY fill dyke" is a common rustic saying, and there is much truth in it generally; but now and again February has all her dykes and open waters frozen hard up—black ice, the boys and countrymen call it, and whilst these slide and skate to their heart's content, the birds are suffering terribly.

The mallard or wild duck, one of the most wary of birds, will come to any warm spring that he can find in search of food. If you disturb him he will only take a circling flight for a mile or so, and then pitch down again. I know certain spots in sheltered hollows where the springs rise, and there is no freezing there in the hardest winters. Snipe come there for food and shelter.

Anyone looking at a wisp of snipe hanging in a poulterer's shop would have the impression—unless he were in some measure acquainted with birds—that this bird is easy to find; but it is far from being so; his beautiful head and back, mottled and streaked with rich brown, grey, and warm buff, blend so softly with the dry tussocks and brown peat of his feeding-ground, that you may almost place your foot on him before he rises with his zigzag flight; Master Bleater, the moorfolks call him. There is something about his appear-

ance that attracts the attention of the least observant. I look on him as one of the aristocrats of his species. When his mate is hatching her eggs on the tussocky moor, he goes through some extraordinary antics, for he springs aloft in the joy of his heart, and with a "chic! chic! chic!" to a very great height. Then descending again with great rapidity, he makes a most peculiar humming kind of noise, not easily described, which is no doubt caused by the wings being held in a certain position; a piece of wood with a hole in one end, to which a string is fastened, which little boys swing round and round their heads, and call a hummer, gives a very good notion of it.

The snipe is a bird eagerly sought for; in fact, he is a blessing to some of the poor moorland folks—they spring for him in the moist boglands very successfully. Three or four brace of snipe in the course of a week of hard weather help to keep the pot boiling, or they fetch a good price as a table dainty. With his long bill he bores for food in soft places. Its nerves are very sensitive, as they need be, for the food as a rule is mostly out of sight.

Moorhens wander about very much in hard weather, and become to a certain extent tame.

On and about the moorland farms they will feed with the poultry.

The little grebe or dabchick will leave his icebound quarters and fly or scuffle to some tree roots or the bottom of a hedge, and make the best of it. An inland county boy I knew was much mystified by finding one; he could not understand the little fellow's beautiful feet, with their leaf-like oar blades, for he found the bird in a coppice far from water. With some slight misgivings he placed it in his jacket pocket, and showed it to a friend of mine as "wuth at least two shillin'." The friend got a large basin of water, placed Mr. Dabchick in it, and to the rustic's astonishment the strange little bird began at once to paddle and dip, and then made his toilet in most deliberate fashion. In his native haunts he is very shy and difficult to approach.

The gulls keep company with rooks in the fields, and feed with them, miles inland, in hard and stormy weather; for when the ice breaks up and floats in all directions the gulls fare badly. Even the drift on the long shore freezes directly the tide ebbs. The common gull and the blackheaded gull suffer most; the larger kind, such as the great blackbacked gull and the lesser blackbacked gull, fare comparatively well, for they feed like marine

vultures, on the tide. A dead sheep—a common sight in winter on the large grazing flats of our marshlands close to the sea—is a banquet to them. All gulls will follow the plough in quest of worms, grubs, and all the numerous insect pests that do damage to the crops; the quantity they devour must be enormous. I once captured a common gull in order to show a sceptical friend how much

and what its crop contained; his astonishment was great. The gull was then let go, unharmed.

Starlings search in all directions for insects in some form or other; those lying hid for the winter, and the larvae that would come to life in the warm springtime. Birds wantonly killed, or through mistaken notions about them, are a great loss to the general com-

munity; and it has been proved that those which have been held in the greatest disrepute are really the most useful. Nature left to herself keeps her children evenly balanced.

Winter, as well as ignorant man, kills thousands of birds. But there are localities where, but for their existence, man would not be able to live at all during the dreary winter months.

MORLEY HALLS.

By ANNE BEALE.



Unlike the hear of magician's wands, and sometimes think we see them wave. If there were such mystic symbols we should almost believe they had been employed in the transformation of

the once luxurious Lotus Clubs into the habitable, homelike Morley Halls. The magician was the Christian philanthropist; the wand, prayer. Scarcely three years ago we wandered through the countless rooms of the Lotus Clubs, then empty, deserted, unfurnished, cheerless; now we find them a centre of activity, filled, furnished, cheerful, and with a new name. In the winter of 1886 they were converted into the head offices of the Young Women's Christian Association, and 316, Regent Street is at the present moment as active in schemes for the benefit of young women as is its opposite neighbour, the Polytechnic, for young men.

Let us once more roam through the innumerable rooms, and see for ourselves how the void has been replenished. Even in the entrance hall, where formerly Oriental lounges were the principal feature, a *depôt* for pure literature reigns triumphant, and books, texts, and illuminated cards are offered for sale at a discount of three pence in the shilling. When will buyers and sellers be content to purchase and vend at a fair and fixed price? It would be less troublesome for all parties.

The Lecture Hall, formerly, we believe, a ball-room, greets us first. This is capable of seating 300 people, and here religious meetings of various kinds are held, none, perhaps, more interesting than the Sunday afternoon Bible class, when some 250 young girls assemble for religious instruction. At one end of this lofty hall is a platform for teachers and speakers, at the other an entrance to the Welbeck restaurant. Here we pause to recall that a few years ago some of the young women who frequented this restaurant united in prayer to Almighty God for enlarged premises, and now the partition dividing them from the then Lotus Clubs has been thrown down and an extra dining-room secured. When we consider that from four to five hundred women engaged in business in the neighbourhood dine here daily, and that refreshments are obtainable at all hours and at very moderate prices, we readily understand what a boon the new dining-hall must be. During the season the average was from seven to eight hundred. We have ourselves seen it so crowded at about one o'clock, that we have had to "bide our time" to be served by the ready waitresses. When our time came and we had a good hot dinner for sixpence, we were well assured that more space was very desirable indeed!

This "space" we soon enter upon, and find another of the old halls converted into a dining-room, filled by the overflow from the

restaurant. Truly, women are superabundant. Still, they have no time to lose, and the small monosyllable "work" seems written on their brows, and the hurry of business mingled with their movements. Three times a week, when meals are over, this room is utilised of an evening as a gymnasium. A hundred girls joined the class during the first month, and it is said they develop strength and muscle under Ling's Swedish exercises. The apparatus that hangs against the wall is curious, and so are the ornamental Japanese doors which will remain as mementoes of the clubs. One shilling and threepence a quarter will give the "poor lassie" tired of sitting or standing all day, the chance of changes of posture and muscular strengthening.

The "chances" she has in this great building are as numerous as they are wonderful. From the restaurant and gymnasium we mount a flight of stone stairs to the Welbeck Home, for "young ladies in business." On the first floor is the sitting-room, where young women, either in or out of situations, are variously engaged: some in scientific dressmaking, others in different occupations. One is dressing a doll for a competition—and we hope she may get a prize; another is seated in the window, also at work. The latter is out of employment, and tells us "that this is her only home, for she has no parents." This sad tale is, alas! often repeated during our wanderings through these labyrinthine halls.

Evening educational classes are held here as well as at all the principal institutes, where not only dressmaking, scientific or Anglo-Parisian, but other useful arts, can be acquired at moderate charges. Indeed, what cannot be acquired here? Another flight of stairs, and we see sleeping accommodation; a third, ditto.

"Upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber," might be the motto of our halls. Nearly sixty cubicles belong to this portion of them, and they are always full, while applicants are waiting for vacancies. Very pathetic are the stories told in connection with these tiny bedrooms, and very touching is their ornamentation. Girls of all ranks fly to these hospitable walls, which might almost be called a city of refuge. It seems sacrilegious to pry into the secrets of the sanctuary, but a glance shows that each little tabernacle is a sort of home, where all the treasures are enshrined. Books, photographs, illuminated cards, ornaments, line the wooden walls, and the character of the occupants can be divined by the neatness and prettiness of the cell; for truly there are many small hives collected under this, our monster hive. The bees that frequent them are mostly regular workers, but there is a travellers' room, appropriated to those who seek lodging for a night or so. In the Central Institute, 16a, Old Cavendish Street, is located the actual "Travellers' Aid" Branch of the Association; but here, also, weary wanderers can find a night's lodging. From nine in the morning till ten at night the doors are open to all comers, and no virtuous girl, if unprotected,

will knock in vain. Policemen, railway porters, and various officials are now alive to the agencies for sheltering and aiding young women, and send them without scruple to the Y.W.C.A., when they find them alone or in danger. They come from station, street, or park, often in peril of starvation or worse; and among the dwellers in our halls may be found wanderers from far Australia, or from other of our colonies. And foreigners, speaking a strange language, are not "sent away empty."

This hurries us from the Welbeck Institute and its many cubicles, to the Continental division of the society, and the office of the International Union. More passages and endless stairs bring us to a small apartment whence large results proceed. Here earnest ladies are working for their foreign sisters, who recount pitiable tales of governesses and servants alone in a strange land. Not long since a German girl, who knew not where to turn for a night's lodging, was brought by a policeman. She proved both respectable and grateful, for when, after due inquiry, a situation was found for her, she sent the first pound of her earnings to the Home. But this is merely an isolated example, since on an average 150 foreigners come weekly for help or advice. A foreign registry is kept for governesses and other employées, open from 11 to 4, and on Saturdays from 11 to 12. This branch is formed for the good of women all over the world. It would benefit English girls abroad and foreigners at home, which seems an anomaly; but many English girls are craving for situations abroad, in order to perfect themselves in some foreign language, and to impart their own in return, and the secretary earnestly invites attention to this fact. If foreign ladies would apply, their situations could be filled for a moderate salary.

The International Union aims at linking together all societies formed to benefit women, and spreads from Europe to Asia and America. Its members are legion, and from this central office extends an almost universal system of protection for all who seek it, according to certain rules. An article of its constitution expressly states that the association is intended to aid every young woman, "whatever her nationality, creed, or occupation." Although its central office is at Neuchâtel, each country has its own office, that for England being, as we see, at 316, Regent Street. It works amicably with the Y.W.C.A., and at Morley Halls it is difficult to disentangle the threads that unite them. Doubtless the special fund, Bible classes, and library for French, German, Italian, Swedish, and Norwegian girls are utilised by both.

While we write, we hear a friend say, "Why, there ought not to be a naughty girl in the world since so much is done for the class." A sentiment we endorse, and we hope all our girls will show their gratitude to their heavenly and earthly friends by purity and holiness of life and conversation.

Another short and bewildering journey brings us to the Servants' Home. Fortunately

mission vessels, and then furnish a detailed report of your voyage, from which your fair friends could draw their own inferences. If you will consent to such an arrangement, I will pledge myself to make you as comfortable as circumstances will permit, and you will have the satisfaction, on your return, of having vicariously performed a pilgrimage to which you would indeed be sorry to consign any of your tenderly nurtured subscribers.

Will you allow me to mention, in case any of those who took part in the recent competition are disposed to offer further help, that sea-boot stockings, stout steering-gloves and guernseys are the articles specially wanted at this season?

May I ask that your readers will one and all remember these poor storm-tossed smacksmen at the throne of heavenly grace, and also pray for the mission which seeks to minister to their necessities—"as well for the body as the soul"?

And in conclusion let me relate one of the many instances in which we have been encouraged to trust implicitly to Divine Providence for the supply of the numerous and urgent needs of this work. Four years ago an invitation reached me to lecture upon the mission, and exhibit dissolving view illustrations to the aged inmates of a metropolitan workhouse. At first I hesitated, for clearly there could be no collection in aid of the funds, but remembering what Holy Scripture says about "the poor in this world, rich in faith," I obeyed the citation of the ladies who had arranged the entertainment. During the evening I mentioned the gift of the *Euston* by the Duchess of Grafton, playfully adding, "of course I don't anticipate a similar gift as a result of to-night's meeting," a remark which the old folks appeared to consider very unnecessary.

That evening spent with the paupers

had quite passed from my memory, when, a few weeks ago, came a cheque for £3,500 to cover the cost of building a cruising hospital mission-ship, coupled with a stipulation that the donor's name should not be divulged.

I was naturally curious to learn what had been the means of arousing the sympathy of this new contributor, and subsequent inquiry led to the interesting discovery that this, the largest donation ever made to the mission, was a direct outcome of the workhouse meeting—the one gathering of all others from which least was expected!

I trust, my dear Mr. Editor, that neither you nor your readers will be bored by my long "yarn," and that both they and you will believe me to be,

Very gratefully yours,

E. J. MATHER.

Bridge House,
181, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.



BIRD LIFE IN MARCH.

By A NATURALIST.



BLUSTERING winds of March sweep over our Surrey chalk hills, which are covered with short, velvety turf, affording fine pasture to the flocks of South Down sheep that range there, dotting the landscape in every direction. The South Downs are grand and beautiful; so are the green valleys and the hillsides, broken, and gleaming white in parts where the chalk has been dug and lime manufactured. That trade is still carried on to a great extent.

Jackdaws, hawks, and owls shelter in the cracks and the rents in the old abandoned workings, giving life to those quiet places, which are seldom visited except by the shepherd and his dog. Great fleecy clouds sail over these breezy uplands, throwing huge shadows on the hillsides as they come in a carry of wind from the sea. Light and shade shift and play continually when the clouds are moving overhead, frightening the wheatear that has come again to spend his summer on and about the South Downs. He is a beautiful bird, with his blue-grey back and rich buff breast contrasting with his dark wings and black and white tail, which he flirts out continually in some form or other with every movement. You will hear him "Chack! Chack!" as he flits from hillock to hillock or from stone to stone.

Although very numerous, they do not congregate together. You will see them in

pairs, and when their young are capable of flying, then small families flit hither and thither. The wheatear compels your observation, for his plumage shows out on the rich green turf. A timid creature and gentle, the shadow of a crow's wing thrown on the turf as he passes overhead is enough to make him crouch and run for shelter. The shepherd and his lads know his weakness; when he runs to hide from the cloud-shadows that alarm him, they cut a turf and form a little lean-to shelter, and set a horsehair noose. Into this the wheatear runs. Great quantities are caught so, and sold for the table.

That noble bird, the buzzard, which once roamed in flocks over the South Downs, has become extinct; he is no longer the well known bird he was. Agricultural changes and the increase of population have caused him and his relatives to leave us for good.

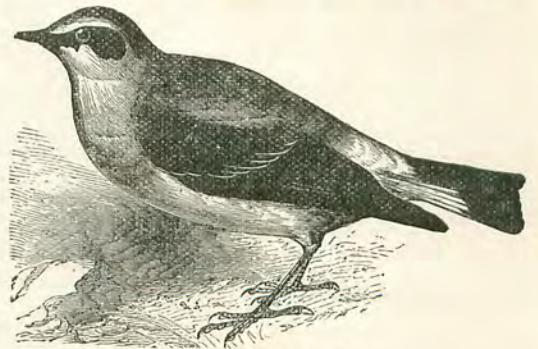
March is not a favourable month to bird life; many of our winter visitors are shifting quarters, or have already done so, and unless the season prove a very warm one, very few of our spring emigrants will have put in an appearance.

The crows, both hooded and common, are on the look out for any lamb that may be so unfortunate as to have anything the matter with it. Happily the watchful and sturdy mothers are on the alert. The great plover or thick knee may be found on the downs and in the cultivated stretches. Those spots at the foot of some great hill where the ground is covered with flints—rustics would tell you these places grew flints all the year round—suit him best, and his plumage falls in with the earth and speckled flints admirably. He is a game-looking bird when you can get a sight of him, and very swift of foot and wing. A wild call note generally betrays his presence long before you catch sight of him.

The lapwings, or pewits, are in full activity, looking out their nesting places. March is the month when Master Pewit sticks his crest up, flaps with his broad wings here and there, and

darts and tumbles about his mate, crying out "Pewit!" as loud as he can call. Now he and his partner alight and run nimbly here and there. Some huntsman's horse has left the print of his hoofs in the soft ground in places during the wet season. Into these slight hollows, now dry enough, fragments of dead fern, grass, and little twigs have blown; they are minutely examined by the full, bright eyes of our pair. Then they spring up to join hundreds of their family that are flapping and wheeling about in all directions on the upland fields and pastures. A pewit sometimes does good service in a garden. One I knew lived, a tame bird, in one for some years, and his master told me he kept the place quite free from insect pests; he was continually on the hunt.

As you travel on the downs or below them, you get many glimpses of birds that are the pioneers of incoming or outgoing migrants. It would be difficult to give any definite time



THE WHEATEAR.

as a rule for the arrival or departure of birds. They are governed by circumstances, such as the forwardness or lateness of the seasons. Some species occur plentifully, too, in some seasons and are few in others, to account for which it is difficult to offer any theory. They almost seem, like people we know who are habitual wanderers, to come and go when least expected.

BIRD LIFE IN APRIL.

By A NATURALIST

"See the birds together,
In this splendid weather,
Worship God—for He is God of birds as
well as men—
And each feathered neighbour
Enters on his labour,
Sparrow, robin, redpole, finch, the linnet
and the wren."

William Howitt.



THE birds appear to have come all at once, and their voices seem to tell that they are rejoicing that the warm showers and sunshine of April have succeeded to the cold winds of March. The green woodpecker

shouts out his "Yike, yike!" making the old woods echo with it. You hear his tap, tap, tap on the tree-trunk, and then his laugh rings out again. The sound made by the black and white woodpecker, as he rattles on the dead branch or limb of a tree, is very different. That can be heard full half a mile away, and it is more like the roll on a side drum played by a skilful drummer than anything else. The nuthatch, or nut-jobber—so named because he hacks or hews at the nuts which he eats—ripples out his full notes as he runs nimbly about the tree-trunks and branches; while the wryneck—the cuckoo's mate, he is called—shouts out his "Peet, pee, peet!" This little bird, which is singular in its movements and plumage, always precedes the cuckoo a few days most regularly. It lives on ants and

insects, which it finds hiding in the bark of trees, drawing them out by the sharp, hard tip of its long tongue. When the wryneck halts in his "Peet, pee, peet!" the cuckoo chimes in with his well-known note, "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuc!"

The blackbirds flute it merrily, assisted by thrushes—the song thrush, and his stronger-voiced relative the missel thrush. The chaffinch "twinks, twink!" sets up his topknot, and sings his very best to his mate that is sitting near him. Even the hedge sparrow and the wren sing well, although few would give them credit for it. Green finches or green linnets, as they are sometimes called, utter their long-drawn notes as they sit high up in the trees.

On the slender branch of a young beech just bursting into leaf a little bird is fluttering here and there, more like a butterfly than a bird. It is the chif-chaff, or least willow wren. Listen to his simple song of chif-chef-chef-chef! His larger and very near relative is on the same tree, but higher up a-top. The wood wren is a member of the same family, only he is of more retiring disposition. Strange that such delicate little birds should brave the long journey they must perform before our shores are gained.

Swallows and martins flash over meadows and streams, also that beautiful bird the kingfisher.

The moorhen glides in and out of the flags with cautious steps, jerking her tail about continually. No doubt her nest is near. Jackdaws, that live in the old trees close to the river, salute each other loudly. They are in a state of great activity in the early morning. A knowing, bright, handsome fellow is the jackdaw; what he does to get into bad odour with the keepers is best known to himself. I only know that after Master Jack has retired to rest, a man with a stick in one hand and a gun under his arm comes round, and with his stick raps the trunk of the old, dying tree where Jack is snugly asleep in one of the numerous holes. Poor Jack thinks

his castle is coming down; and, coming out to see what is the matter, gets shot for his pains.

Ringdoves or woodpigeons soar and float about over the tops of the trees with wings and tails expanded. They are showing off, as they always do about nesting-time. The crow of the pheasant and the call of the partridge greet your ear as you walk down the road that runs by the copse, covered on the outskirts with bluebells and primroses. Homes and sanctuaries for all bird-life are these coppices. The jay loves them dearly. Always a handsome fellow, he is particularly so just now. Stand quiet, hidden within the trunk of this old yew. "Squak, squak!" He is near somewhere, but apparently a little suspicious. Perhaps he saw something of us as we turned off the road. "Quek, quek! Chatter, chatter!" There he is by the side of his mate, rehearsing his love song, with his crest raised, his splendid blue-barred wing drooped a little, and his broad tail spread out. No doubt his mate thinks his vocal performance something wonderful, though to our ears it sounds like the low creak of a wheelbarrow and the quick smatter of a duck when feeding. When he wishes to creep near to something, on the forage, he is quiet enough; you never hear a sound from him when he visits a cottage garden. He has a bad name for plundering; but he is no worse than other birds at that, only being large and handsome he attracts more notice. The sparrow-hawk waits on him to his great terror, making him chatter and squall his loudest.

Close to the lower end of the copse is a willow holt, sheltered by thick hedges and banks heavily timbered. Here the sedge warbler and the blackheaded bunting chatter and warble, finding it pleasantly warm and moist. From the branch of an oak a bird springs, singing as he flies, ascending and descending, returning to the same spot he started from. It is the tree-pipit, or tree-lark, pouring out his thanks for the glad, bright spring-time.

VARIETIES.

TOO FAMILIAR.

We may be too familiar with our friends. This is strongly and wisely insisted on in the following lines at the end of an epigram in the twelfth book of Martial:—

"Friendship's fair commerce to enjoy,
And keep the bright ore from alloy,
E'en with your warmest friend preserve
A cautious and discreet reserve.
Each fond encroaching thought restrain,
Your pleasure less and less your pain."

THE TRAVELS OF A POST-CARD.

A gentleman in London, on the 8th June of last year, sent a post-card, *via* the Brindisi and Suez Canal route, to Hong Kong, with the request to a friend there that it might be sent back to him *via* San Francisco and New York.

The card was duly received by the original sender on the morning of the 17th of August, the time taken in its transit round the world being exactly seventy days, which is about forty days less than the time taken ten years ago. The card was franked for the modest sum of 3½d.

INDEPENDENCE.

Socrates having received some very rich presents from his pupil Alcibiades, a friend remarked to him, "How happy he must be who has received such desirable gifts."

"He is much happier," replied the sage, "who does not desire them," and he immediately ordered the presents to be returned.

AN ANTIQUARY IN ERROR.

A famous antiquary—an enthusiast in the search for Roman antiquities—was travelling through England, when he heard that on a certain hill there was a stile called "Cæsar's stile." "Just so," thought the antiquary to himself; "such a road, mentioned in Antoninus, passed near here, and the traditional name of this stile confirms me in the opinion that there was a Roman camp on this spot."

Whilst he was surveying the prospect a peasant came up whom the antiquary addressed.

"They call this Cæsar's stile, do they not?"
"Ees, zur," said the man, "they calls it so ar'ter poor old Bob Cæsar, the carpenter: I helped him to make it when I was a boy."

THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE.

She stood by the open window, and as her father came into the room she put her finger on her lips and bade him hush. Then, as the last notes of a lawn mower in the adjoining washing green died away, she turned with a look of rapture on her face.

"Oh, papa," she said, "isn't Wagner's music simply exquisite!"

OBSCURE HEROES AND HEROINES.—Not a day passes over the earth but men and women of no note do great deeds, speak great words, suffer noble sorrows. Of these obscure heroes, philosophers, and martyrs, the greater part will never be known till that hour when many that are great shall be small and the small great.

—Charles Reade.

LOVE, FAITH, HOPE, AND MEMORY.

No steep is hard for Love's white feet to climb,
And faith is but ambition purified,
And hope and memory would still be sweet,
Though every other joy were quite denied.

—Lowell.



BIRD LIFE IN MAY.

By A NATURALIST.

"BIRD, prune thy wing; nightingale, sing,
To give my love good-morrow!
Wake from thy nest, robin redbreast,
Sing, birds, in every furrow;
And from each hill let music shrill
Give my fair love good-morrow!
Blackbird and thrush, in every bush,
Stare, linnet and cock-sparrow;
You pretty elves among yourselves,
Sing my fair love good-morrow!"

Thomas Heywood.

THIS month is the best of all the months for observing the migrants, the insectivorous ones, in a state of activity, and for listening to their various notes and songs. The woods and the moors, the brook-sides and the fens, are all awake with tune. Good old Izaak Walton, writing in the spring-time, says: "Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth!"

They have come from far, these delicate-looking birds, through mountain passes and sandy tracks, keeping—who can tell how, or by what rule?—to the line of coast, more or less, which will ultimately bring them to the narrow silver streak that parts England from the Continent. Take, as a single instance from the many insectivorous ones, the very delicate wood-warbler or wood-wren, a butterfly of a bird—one that you can barely hold for a few seconds in your hand without his showing most pitiful signs of distress; and yet he has come the same long journey that his family have travelled, who can say how long? That little mite, the chiff-chaff, or least willow-wren, crosses and recrosses nearly the same tract of country; delicate creatures, soft-billed and soft-feathered, they come to enliven our woods, coppices, and hedgerows with their slim forms and cheerful voices.

As a songster, first on the list is the blackcap. He and his companions prefer the tops of the trees, or the top twigs of high bushes, to perch on whilst giving out that beautiful song of theirs, second only in our opinion to that of the nightingale. The willow-warbler adds to the concert, but the garden-warbler, with his

full rich notes, is the one that will most attract your ear. With one or two exceptions the insect-feeding migrants are shy, retiring birds; their haunts are as a rule quiet places, moist and warm. Insect life is best nourished in such spots, and food plentiful therefore. You may often see them on the topmost sprays of the trees surrounding these haunts, flitting hither and thither, hardly at rest for a moment, busy feeding on the insects that in warm weather quit their retreats and luxuriate in the sunshine. If you notice their forms, you will see a family likeness run through the whole group. No matter what the difference in plumage may be, there is something in their movements and habits that stamps them as near allies.

The white-throats—the large and the small species—are very busy, flitting and diving in and out the tangle of the hedgerows. The large white-throat is particularly noticeable for his scolding chatter, as, with crest erected, he chides away at a most furious rate; to think that anyone should have the impudence to pass by that spot, his notes seem to say—a spot he had selected for his home. No matter where you find him, he is a most talkative little fellow.

The grasshopper-warbler, that most shy and curious mouse-like bird—mouse-like in all his actions, which seem to be done by fits and starts—I must describe. Picture to yourself a strip of plashy ground on the borders of some common, covered with furze and hollies. I say plashy, to distinguish it from bogland. Here and there are runs bordered by miniature banks—in fact, little watercourses, where the sun shines brightly the greater portion of the day. Vegetation is at its best in such spots, and there is a tangled undergrowth that wraps itself about your ankles as you try to force your way through it: long trailing brambles that will be covered in September with fine fruit, the joy of the children of all classes. Jagged and stunted sloe bushes grip the soil, and furze bushes are inextricably entangled with wiry-stunted heath, laced and interlaced with coarse, wiry grass, which even the half-wild ponies that range the common will not

eat. Such is the home of the grasshopper-warbler, a small brown bird very like a wren, with a rather long and rounded tail. If you wish to see anything of him, come out of the tangle on to the higher ground, and sit very quiet. When he thinks you have gone away you will hear a few notes like the chirrup of the great green grasshopper. Presently you may see him scuttle up from the matted undergrowth with wonderful nimbleness, and after he has got to the top twigs of his favourite bushes you will hear his song, such as it is—after all, very much in keeping with his surroundings. Then, as though he fancied he had made himself a little too conspicuous, down he dips into the tangle again, which you will not persuade him to leave if he is in the least alarmed.

Some of the rustics are very incredulous about the grasshopper-warbler. "What are ye listening to, so deedy like?" I was once asked by a man in leather gaiters, who passed the spot where I had been hidden, to observe the bird's movements and to listen to his notes. "The grasshopper bird," I replied. "No, no! no such thing; somebody's bin making game on ye, knowing as ye're allus bird-hunting. That ain't no bird; I've heerd that 'ere noise hundreds o' times; doan't ye believe it. It's one o' them 'ere big locusses, what comes now an' agin. 'Tain't no bird." I did not contradict him; he only expressed the general opinion the rustics hold about the grasshopper-warbler.

Near the streams the nightingale best loves to make his nest, which is usually begun about the beginning of May. It is formed with coarse weeds and dry oak leaves outside, and horse and cow hair and little roots within—and it is usually built near the ground. The instinct of migration is very strong in the nightingale, and those kept in captivity—an Italian lady I know in Pisa, kept and reared a great many young nightingales—show great uneasiness and distress at the season when they ought to be on the wing.

Ford, in his "Lover's Melancholy," calls the nightingale "Nature's best skill'd musician."

summer, and autumn. These would include the early-shed bud-calyxes, which, from trees like the lime, for instance, float downwards in the early summer air like showers of chaff; the petals, etc., of the flowers themselves, later on the nuts and seeds, and last of all the leaves themselves.

Girls who can paint would do well to note also and try to represent, in oil or water colours, different varieties of spring leaves. The autumn tints themselves cannot vie in richness of colour and beauty with the leaves of the dwarf sycamore or plane trees that we find growing by the roadsides and in hedgerows, in the sweet sad season of the year.

But let us now take a peep at some of the more common flowers of spring.

Here is the primrose—the *Primula vulgaris*—one of the most charming of the order *Primulaceæ*. Its odour and its wondrous and indescribable colour are familiar to everyone, even to the little gutter-snipes of our London slums. The name signifies “first rose,” and it certainly is the first rose of spring, though not by any means the first flower. It is blossoming now in my orchard, although the frost is hard and the snow has not yet flown away. But April and May—April in England and May in the North of Scotland—are the favourite months of the primrose. We find it on banks of all sorts, in woods and copses, and on the “haughs” by the river’s side.

There is a variety of primrose, common in some parts, of a pinky hue; while far away in the Orkney Islands and in Sutherland is found the beautiful *Primula Scotica*. The cowslip, the *Primula veris* of the naturalist that clothes our meadows with pale saffron hues, is a favourite with everyone, though not so much as the primrose. Older writers ascribe a great many virtues to this plant, its leaf and root and flower. Nervous pains and mental fears of all sorts are said to fly before a judiciously concocted infusion thereof, while a distillation from its petals will restore its pristine bloom to the cheek of fading beauty. Under such an application, spots and freckles and even wrinkles disappear.

The oxlip or *Primula elatior* is rare in England, but is a bigger flower, as the name indicates. The polyanthus of the garden is a cultivated kind of oxlip. The *Viola odorata*, or sweet violet, is another of our woodland fairies. It is a very modest and most delicately scented wee flower, and though it now and then takes an upward half-shy glance at the sun, it loves to hide away in shady places, but it cannot help casting its sweetness abroad, or lending it to every passing breeze; it is therefore easily found out. There are many varieties of it, and I need hardly say that it is greatly cultivated for the sake of its sweet scented blossoms. It used to be much used as medicine, but the properties and virtues assigned to it are now considered somewhat mythical.

Does the reader know a little flower that blooms on every meadow, called the *Bellis perennis*? No; not the Llygad y Dydd of the Welsh, the gowan or bairnwort of the Scotch, the daisy or day’s-eye of the English. Now you have it. Says Burns—

“Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow’r,
Thou’s met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush among the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow’r,
Thou bonnie gem.”

Every poet mentions this gowan. Remember the bonnie lines in that sweet auld song, “Annie Laurie”—

“Like the dew on the gowans lyin’
Is the fa’ o’ her fairy feet,
And like winds in summer sighin’
Her voice is low and sweet.”

What associations does this gowan not summon back to our memories! It is for these, more perhaps than for its intrinsic beauty, that we so dearly love it. The ox-eye daisy is a flower of spring and early summer; I mention it here simply because it is called a daisy. It is the *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* of the botanist, and it is well known everywhere. By the way, it is called the “horse gowan” in Scotland. It is found growing all along railway embankments and in dry meadows, which it stars over with white. It may be called a white marguerite. Now you know it. It is this flower country girls pull and tear the petals from as they say “he loves me,” “he loves me not,” and so on to the last. And the last petal is Sir Oracle.

Well, it is a pretty flower, but the bright yellow ox-eye of the cornfield, called also the corn marigold, is still more beautiful, and either of these is a charming addition to a bouquet of wild flowers.

There are two little spring ranunculuses that may be mentioned here, namely, goldilocks, and the water buttercup. The former comes in March and April, growing in copses, a bright yellow five-petalled buttercup, with long lance-like leaves. The water buttercup is very abundant everywhere in ponds and burns, most species having their leaves submerged. Some prefer running water, others ponds; the flower is white, with green streaks. I think you will know it from that alone. The lesser celandine must not be confounded with goldilocks, though it blooms about the same time. It has six to ten yellow petals that have more the shape of a star than a cup, and these petals look particularly well varnished. The sepals beneath these are only three. The leaves of the plant are heart-shaped and wrinkled like that of the primrose. There are several species of this flower; but these you must study for yourself.

The *Agraphis nutans* (Liliaceæ), or wild hyacinth, is a special favourite of mine, owing

partly to its deep blue colour, and partly to its rich perfume, and because it makes so delightful a spring carpet to the woods near where I live. It is sometimes called the bluebell, but here and there among the others I have gathered pink and pale white wild hyacinths. It begins to bloom about the time the wry-neck emits its discordant shriek in our copses, by way of informing us that the nightingale is coming, and it blossoms on in shady places till well into June.

I should not forget to mention the ordinary buttercup of our childhood’s happy days, although it is more a flower of early summer than spring. Like goldilocks, it is one of the ranunculaceæ family. It is also called crowfoot, from the bird-claw-like formation of its foliage.

The marsh marigold is another of the ranunculaceæ which blooms as early as March. Its characteristic is this: it has no petals proper, its sepals composing the bright yellow cup-like flower.

I earnestly advise you to get specimens of all these yellow flowers which I have named, and study them together. This will be a most delightful exercise, and far more profitable, in my opinion, than dates. It is really a matter of very little moment to us nowadays when Queen Elizabeth was born or Raleigh beheaded; but we cannot take a single walk into the country without coming across these pretty flowers of spring.

Do you know the lady’s smock? It is a flower belonging to the cruciferae family, that you find by the wayside and in dampish meadow lands. It is rather tall and spreading, with pale lilac four-petalled flowers. It is found growing side by side with the marsh marigold, as often as not, and it comes with the cuckoo. Indeed, it is sometimes called the cuckoo flower, and morsels of froth are found on it, which, if opened, will be found to surround a little green jumping insect. This flower is also a child of April.

One of the most charming of our spring flowers is the early purple orchis. The land or ground on which it grows is seldom very rich; it likes high, half-bare localities, in the neighbourhood of furze bushes, and grows plentifully on the sward by the wayside in many of the midland counties. A novice might take it for a kind of hyacinth at first, for at a little distance it resembles that flower, except in colour, which is a purple-red or pink. The leaves are very peculiar, being tall, broad and lance-like, and spotted or splashed over with brown or purple spots.

There are several other species of orchis to be found in our meadows, such as the man-orchis, the bee and the fly orchis, all of which are very pretty and interesting.

I am at the end of my space, and have not mentioned a tithe of my flower pets. But I will return to them.

(To be continued.)

BIRDS IN JUNE.

By A NATURALIST.

THE swallow tribe are now in the very height of enjoyment as they dash and wheel about—now here, now there—in all directions in search of their insect prey. From early morn till dusky eve they busily ply their vocation, which is to rid the air and land and water of insects which would make our lives very uncomfortable, if not in some instances almost unbearable. The old buccaneers have left on record that the worst foes they had to contend with were insects.

The dark-coloured swift has a wonderful

command of wing power that no amount of exertion seems to tire. The more he flies the more he seems to enjoy himself as he goes through the air, screaming out his notes of exultation, sweeping round the grey tower of some old church with his companions. He is not so dull a bird in plumage as he seems to be when you only see him in flight. On a close view more pleasing shades, though still subdued, show themselves. He is the last to come of his tribe, and the first to leave us. Not so the chimney swallow; we have seen him

very early in warm springs, and have known him stay late in the autumn. Why he should be called chimney swallow I do not know; he certainly builds in a chimney sometimes, but quite as often on some beam or rafter. He sings quite prettily, and is a very confiding bird. The martins have a different flight to the swallows, which is very easily distinguished at a distance by those who are acquainted with both species. The sandmartins are most interesting little creatures as they flutter round about the entrances to their holes in quite a

state of excitement. To see them excavating these in the hard sandrock is a wonderful sight. Who, on looking at the bill of the sandmartin, unless he had seen him at work, would suppose him capable of drilling long holes—little tunnels, in fact; and very quickly he does his work too.

There is a bird very swallow-like in its flight that comes out in the evening after the swallow tribe have retired to rest. He is more heard than seen, though he might be called a giant night swallow, taking up the hunting after the others have left off. By day he rests, lying lengthways on some branch or limb asleep; but when the sun has gone down you will hear his curious jarring chur-chur, like the hum of a spinning-wheel; it is the note of the goat-sucker or fern owl. A most powerful wing he has, and he sweeps over woods, meadows, and streams, now high up, now down, wheeling and twisting in all directions. The plumage is very moth-like in its bars and markings, as you see when you inspect the bird closely, which you can as a rule only do after one has just been shot. The large eyes and wide mouth, with its bristles, fix one's attention first; he is fitted admirably for the purpose

for which he was created—that of capturing insects, and not sucking goats, which a silly superstition once supposed to be his delight. A most useful, gentle creature, and he deserves a better fate than to be shot, as he often is.

Those elegant insect-eaters, the wagtails, that run about so nimbly, moving their long tails continually, give life to the meadows and the streams that glide through them. Where cattle are pastured, there you will see the wagtails, for they attend them very closely. It is a pretty sight to see the common black and white wagtails running nimbly round the muzzles of the cows as they feed along, making dips and snaps at the insects the animals disturb by their feeding. They are not at all particular where they run—round the beasts' heads or about the feet they flit with perfect indifference. The yellow-breasted wagtails are very beautiful creatures, they do not affect the feeding pastures so much as do the common species. Where the stream runs over the pebbly shallows, and the pollard willows line the bank, in spots where the sand has been washed, forming little bays, there you will find the yellow wagtails.

In the same locality I have seen that inte-

resting little bird, the common sandpiper, or as we might now say, the uncommon sandpiper. He is a bird of neat appearance as he trips neatly along, dabbbling here and there as he runs in and out of the shallows, and crosses nimbly over the sand. A little pond has been formed where the brook runs through a wide shallow hollow, caused by the tearing up of the banks where a clump of trees has been blown down in a storm. The stream runs through it, flags grow round the sides, "spiked reed and golden iris bending over." Here a dabchick has located, or a little grebe; there is his mate; they are most expert divers, and they are very busily engaged just at present; somewhere in or about the flags is their well-concealed nest, which looks just like a lump of damp weed, and nothing more. It is damp, too, just as it looks, both inside and out; but that will not make any difference to the hatching process.

It is sweet to rest here awhile.

"In the faint,

Sweet breath of the wind comes tuneful insect hum,
Mix'd with the rustle of the swaying leaves,
Bass to the birds' clear treble."

NEW MUSIC.

SPRINGTIME not only ushers in the flowers, but it also thrusts upon us the early concert season with such an impetus, that even the fast-lengthening days do not prevent the impossibility of hearing all the good things and fresh things played and sung for our pleasure and instruction. With many excellent performances to choose from, let us first speak of those given by the Novello Choir.

The production in London of their conductor, Dr. Mackenzie's *Dream of Jubal*, was in every way a success. Apart from the enthusiastic singing of the choir, the interest centred in the revival of the "melodrame"—a recitation spoken above an expressive undercurrent of music. Mendelssohn uses it in *Athalie*, and in some of the male-voice cantatas, and Beethoven employs it in the prison scene in *Fidelio*; but our impression is that the melodrame, being on this occasion in the able hands of Mr. Charles Fry, has never been more sympathetically or beautifully used than in this example by Mr. Joseph Bennett. In fact, his libretto in all its details is singularly beautiful, and ranks high in the realms of poetry. The subject chosen is a most suggestive one, and Dr. Mackenzie shows all that versatility which the story demands. Jubal is represented deploring the weakness of the music produced by his tortoiseshell as compared with the myriad voices of nature around him—the murmur of the foliage as the breezes whisper soft, "the deep-voiced torrent, the buzzing insects and choirs of birds." He falls into a sleep and dreams that an angel reproves his presumption in despising God's good gifts, and then proceeds to show him what the future of music, as a divine art, will be.

To illustrate this, Dr. Mackenzie had to compose a chorus of praise in Divine worship, a song of comfort in bereavement, a patriotic march and chorus of victory, the song of a labourer in the harvest field, a funeral march and chorus in honour of a hero, and a duet of lovers. No trifling task, you will observe; but most ably carried out by the talented principal of the Royal Academy of Music.

At a later concert given by the same Society, an opportunity was afforded us of hearing Dudley Buck's *Light of Asia*, which although written some time ago, was then heard in London for the first time.

If we are to judge from this of the present condition of music in America, things look

extremely hopeful, and we trust that we may be permitted to listen to similar productions from other composers "over the water."

We all know and enjoy the Saturday and Monday "Pops," and many of us have, by their means, learnt to understand and estimate at their proper value the finest specimens of classical composition, written for the various combinations of stringed instruments.

The promoters of the Wind Instrument Chamber Music Society are giving the flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon the justice which has already been meted out fully to the strings. In the face of considerable difficulties, and in spite of but little encouragement, this excellent Society lives and is a strong child, and its performances, supported by the finest players of the day, have been, as far as the wind music was concerned, well-nigh faultless. If, in the end, entrepreneurs and audiences alike are persuaded that the alternation and combining of wind music with strings should form part of every chamber concert, that is now exclusively and selfishly devoted to the latter instrument, we suppose that one of the objects of the Society will have been gained; but the encouragement given by it to all players upon wind instruments, and to composers to write pieces for those instruments, is another feature, a prize of twenty guineas being offered for the best quintet written for the five instruments above named. Brothers of any of our girls, who play wind instruments, and would like to join the Society, could get all information, etc., from G. G. T. Treherne, Esq., 26, Brunswick Gardens, W.

A most enjoyable series of pianoforte recitals adds considerably to the reputation of Miss Dora Bright, both as a player and as a composer. Should another series be given, no one should miss the chance offered of hearing what our English lady-pianists can do.

A delightful and novel form of concert, one which we hope to find soon repeated, was the vocal recital given in Harley Street not long ago, and entirely supported by two ladies—Mrs. Florence Perugini and Miss Hutton. The programme consisted entirely of duets and solos. "How monotonous!" we hear you exclaim; but that is the most marvellous part of it. Had you been there, you would have left the concert room, as we left it, simply longing for more.

One could not wish for a more perfect piece of duet-singing; the interchange of light

and shade was such as could only be acquired by sympathetic and constant rehearsal, and only maintained by long and mutual regard.

We hope they will soon sing again.

Then, at the Albert Hall, an awkwardly large concert room, many of you doubtless listened a few weeks ago to the very powerful effects, and were struck with admiration at the grand chorus-singing in Benoit's *Lucifer*. Never has the Royal Choral Society shown more enthusiasm and sympathy with their work, although we certainly feel that the best of the composition is to be found in the first two numbers.

The Philharmonic Society has introduced us to another most accomplished pianist, Madame Backer-Gröndahl, whose playing of Grieg's pianoforte concerto will long be remembered; and, for a second time, to the representative Russian composer, Tschaikowsky.

These are only a very few of the many concerts of good music which London alone can boast of, and in many of the provincial towns of this "unmusical country" good performances of good music are given week after week.

From a large selection of new music we can recommend the following pieces:—

NOVELLO AND CO.

Original Compositions for the Organ, Nos. 110-112. The first of these numbers contains three Offertories by Hamilton Clarke; the next is a Pastoral by Luard Selby, and the last comprises six easy Voluntaries, composed by Kate Loder (Lady Thompson). A set of songs about the reeds (one is tempted to say "the German Reeds," for they are Lenan's Schilfflieder) is full of original thought and pleasant, simple melody. They are composed by Schlesinger, whose detached songs, published in America, we have already noticed with interest.

PATERSON AND SONS (EDINBURGH).

Wert thou mine and Maiden Fair. Two songs by Alfred Stella; the words of the first by Burns, and those of the second by Professor Blackie. They are both decidedly Scotch in colouring, and are quite simple and ballad-like in design. Like many other things apparently simple, they are perhaps not so easy to sing well, and many hidden beauties will only be brought to the surface by earnest good singers.

Loving Shepherd is the title of a sacred song by W. Harrison. A good, useful setting of the well-known words by Jane E. Leeson.

cedars, and by the margin of the lake. And not many hours elapsed before a young man, clad in grey, alpenstock in hand, and wearing an exceedingly joyous expression of countenance, was seen marching from the pass. Dottie flew into his arms.

"Oh, Algy! I am so awfully glad to see you again."

Evelyn followed sedately, and gave a kindly greeting to her cousin. He was four or five years older than his sister, slightly built, and below the average height; with fair hair and moustache, pleasant blue eyes, and a mouth and chin that to the critical observer would have betrayed a lack of firmness of character. But he was a prepossessing lad, and it said something in his favour that he had been partially, instead of completely, spoiled by the adoring fondness of his mother and sister, in whose eyes he could do no wrong. When he failed to take his degree at college, when he ran into debt, it was only "poor dear Algy's misfortune," and when these false steps were retrieved, wholly or in

part, he was a hero of heroes to these devoted women. Now he had been enjoying six months' freedom on the Continent before "settling down."

"What a charming place! How extremely fit you all look! Cousin Evelyn, the mountains agree with you." And Evelyn, in her plain braided summer serge, white blouse, and shady hat, was certainly a very attractive feature of the Engstlen Alp.

"I vote we stay here and don't go back to Engelberg," continued the young fellow, establishing himself between the two. "After all, that's down in a hole. What magnificent air! I say, I'm going up the Titlis; who'll come with me? I came up here on purpose, because I knew the Mater would be in a terrible fright if I did it from Engelberg. Cousin Evelyn, you speak German; let's come and collar a guide."

"But if you have been six months at Leipzig and all sorts of places, don't you speak German too?" laughed Evelyn.

"Not I; it's too much of a grind to learn such a language as that." And

the three were soon engaged in interviewing a tall, muscular Swiss, with a broad smile, who towered above Algy like a giant, and, as Dottie suggested, could carry him in case of need.

Evelyn and Dottie declined to attempt the Titlis, Dottie objecting firmly to start at two a.m. They spent the rest of the day in rambling and sitting about, chatting so merrily that Evelyn almost forgot Mrs. Allingham West. She offered to draw out a list of phrases in German that might prove useful to her cousin—"I do not wish to be left in this crevasse while you go back to Engelberg for assistance." "How many thousand feet shall I fall if I slip down here?" and so forth; but Algy assured her that the Titlis was a perfectly safe mountain. "A lady's mountain," he added, hoping, perhaps, to induce them to come. It was, however, without envy that the girls heard him creep away at two a.m., and watched from their window the lantern disappearing into the shadows of the pass.

(To be continued.)

BIRD LIFE IN JULY.

By A NATURALIST.

"When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees."



THE sun in all its power floods the wide commons with light and heat. The furze and its golden wealth of flowers, is the home of the furze-chat; a bright little fellow he is with his coal black head,

orange breast, and patches of black and white about him. "Chec, chec, chec!" he cries, as he daintily perches on the golden blossoms, diving down and up again with his continual "Chec, chec!"

On the branches of a scrub oak sit two birds that look very like small hawks. They are shrikes, beautiful creatures too, in their warm grey and bluish-white plumage, which is broken here and there with black. Their dark eyes are ever on the watch for prey, principally insects, which are plentiful and active in these sultry hot days of July, when other creatures are inactive and quiet. They do not object to larger prey, however—small birds and other things. Down they pounce, again and again, for they have their young to

provide for. These two we note are the heads of families; the mothers are with their little ones somewhere near; we can hear them "Chack!" Turning round some stunted cover, moving as quietly as we can, we come unexpectedly on the young perchers. What a hubbub ensues! With a scream and a dash both mothers dart round us in fine style, crying and chattering their loudest. Hearing the din, the father shrikes come bouncing over the bushes; altogether there is quite a commotion, quite unnecessary on their part, for no one has the least intention of interfering with them or any member of their family. The red-backed shrike is a bold as well as a handsome bird, and he does not fear to let you know it, if he considers you to be an intruder on his domain.

High up in the blue sky, some distance away, a bird hangs, to all appearance motionless. Now he dips down, rises again without any apparent effort, wheels round with his tail spread out, and then shoots nearer to us. As the light falls fair on him he shows himself. It is the kestrel, or as the rustic folks call him, "the windfanner"; a name well bestowed, for he does fan continually over the hillocks and anthills. During the hot weather, lizards run in all directions, or bask in the sun—pretty, harmless, brown lizards. The windfanner feeds on them when he gets the chance, as well as on mice. Like all other creatures, he varies his diet. Birds, mice, lizards, insects, and sometimes worms it consists of. His eye is dark and beautiful, his plumage red and grey; a true falcon as to race and habits, but as a pet one of the gentlest of his family.

As we wander on we come to one edge of the common; between this and the wooded hills are meadows well timbered, the hedgerows round show out fresh and green; there are the wild rose and the honeysuckle, the vetch and the briony, the bramble and the woodbine. Farms nestle here and there amongst the trees. As we look on the picture the song of the

woodlark is heard. This sweet little singer loves the meadows which border on woods; you will find him close to the timbered hedgerows and the little rill that holds trout, although if you looked at it you would think it could scarcely keep the small minnows alive. The skylark can be heard and seen anywhere, but the woodlark is a bird of the woodland coverts and meadows. His music, though beautiful, has a plaintiveness about it, to my ears. To hear it to perfection one should walk out at eventide, when the sun has gone down, leaving great streaks of crimson and purple in the west. All is wrapped in a soft purple haze and shadow, and the busy life that moved about in the sunlight is at rest. The occasional tinkle of a bell on the neck of some cow or sheep, as it lazily moves from its position, is the only sound you will hear. The perfume from the wild flowers is all around you, go where you will.

"The gentle breezes are upon the wing,
Bearing rich odours from the clover's live,
From woodbines, roses, and sweet-breathed hay,
And many a bloom of blossoming beans and peas."

But for the chur of the fern-owl silence is now over all. As you approach that large oak with twisted limbs at the edge of the cover, close to the meadowlands, a bird rises in the air from one of the twigs; straightly he mounts at first, then his flight becomes spiral for a time, then he will hover and float about, singing in rich plaintive notes. The night is warm, if you can call it night, for it is comparatively speaking light, a soft gentle twilight. Listen to him as he rises, ringing round and round, higher yet! And now he is poised you hear his voice though he is out of sight. Soon you know from the sounds that he has turned earthward again, and the evening hymn of the modest little woodlark will be hushed as he touches the ground.

love the man to whom you think you are bound, I consider you ought to give me a hearing, if you have had no news of him for so long."

It was some moments before she could command herself sufficiently to reply, but at last she said slowly—

"I had news of him the day before we left you at the camp."

"Does he claim you? Nay, you must tell me all now. I will hear."

His tone was so imperative that she felt forced to answer.

"His last three letters have been sent to some other place in the States with a similar name, through a slight error in the address; also a telegram. He thinks I will not reply to him because I want to be free; two of them have been kept back for months."

"And what have you done?"

"I have told him the truth."

"And are you going to let him claim you

now? Surely not. You have now a good opportunity of freeing yourself without giving the pain which a sudden announcement of your wish might have done. I would not marry a girl who could not give me her whole heart; you will be preparing misery for him and for yourself if you do so."

"Alas! it was getting very clear to poor Lily that the man beside her was one to whom she could give her heart, but she sat still, saying no word. As they got up to return, he lingered under the trees, and at last turned to her once more, and said firmly—

"If you could love me, Lily, you owe it to me to tell me so."

The bright colour in her cheeks as well as her silence seemed to him a favourable omen, and he led her back to their shady seat in so decided a manner that she felt it powerless to resist, and, keeping her hand in his, remarked—

"I will wait as long as you please for an answer, dear; but I will have one before we go home. Tell me exactly what you have written to India."

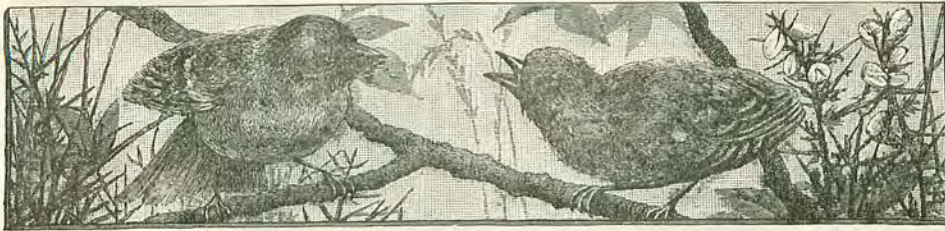
"I accepted his offer to set me free."

"Now you have to tell me whether I may take his place. Answer me, Lily."

After a little hesitation the answer was given, and by what followed it was evidently a satisfactory one; though Lily had a feeling that the whole affair had been managed in a hasty, American fashion, which ought not to be taken as a precedent. Half an hour after, they rose to go home, and he drew her arm within his, saying—

"Now we will go and tell Charley you are engaged to me; he will have to marry too, darling, as he will lose you very soon. In this country we never wait for things, you know—we like to have them at once."

[THE END]



BIRD LIFE IN AUGUST.

By A NATURALIST.

THE corn is now mostly ready for reaping; the heavy ears bend and rustle with the faintest breeze, when there is one. At times the air seems to quiver with heat. Bird life in August is disappointing to those who are not acquainted with the creatures' habits; the change from summer to winter plumage has commenced, or will shortly do so; they seek out retired situations. Besides which it must be remembered they have their families with them, and they are very like the human race in this particular, the cares of family life take the frolic out of them, as they do out of us. You will not hear much singing going on; ways and means of living have to be considered—how to get food, and where. All grain and seed-eating birds, when their nestlings are very young, feed them, more or less as the case may be, on insect food until their bills are strong enough to take grain and various seeds. Water is a vital necessity to all birds, but far more so to the grain-feeders than to those that live on insects. How to find a spot where they can be well sheltered from the fierce heat that is bringing the corn to perfection—a spot where they can drink and bathe unmolested, is to them a great consideration.

When they have found a place to their liking they will come to it from all quarters; from the fields, the hedgerows, the farms, and the dusty, baked roads. One very beautiful spot I know, lovely in all its surroundings, where I often go to observe the birds. It is situated in the heart of the great beech-woods; mighty trees are there, with great silvery-grey trunks, the roots and part of the lower portions of the trunks covered with the most velvety-looking green mosses. High up, overhead, for their grand trunks are like columns, their limbs and branches lace and interlace in a network of rich foliage, which throws fantastic lights and shadows on the rich red-brown of the decayed leaf-mould beneath.

The small copse growth is very scanty here,

excepting in one spot that partly closes in a small silent pool. This is situated in a little hollow, a mere dip or depression, such as you often see in the woodlands. There is enough cover for our purpose, and we can seat ourselves on this large branch, broken off by a gale long ago, and not yet removed.

Of course perfect silence and quiet are necessary when you go to the fields and woods to observe the animal life there. There must be no moving or fidgeting about; and let no companions you may have smoke. I can tell you the birds have keen faculties of scent, although some might ridicule the notion. When I used to go after the wild fowl in days gone by, in my old marshland home, I never smoked, nor did my shooting companions, much as we enjoyed our pipes.

To return to our woodland pool, the trunks and foliage of the great trees are reflected there, as in a mirror; a large limb has fallen into it, reaching nearly across it, for the pool is small. It is cool here, there is moisture in the beech-wood in the hottest weather. A sound like a stick being snapped in two reaches our ears; it is the clap of the powerful pinions of a beautiful wood-pigeon, as he dashes down from the tree tops to drink. His mate joins him. If one of you has a pencil a pretty sketch might be made as they stand there. Coo-coo-cooee! he repeats, bending down his beautiful head and neck to her. A lovely picture of bird life is here, the clear pool with its reflections of tree trunk, foliage, broken bough, and the wood-pigeons. They will not let us observe them long. Soon they are sufficiently refreshed, and off they shoot with the same clap they gave in arriving. Others come and go, singly or in pairs, for pigeons require plenty of water.

We catch a glimpse of bird forms shooting like meteors over the tree tops. Here they come, full dash, and settle overhead, nearly in front of our place of concealment. They are turtle doves, with their delicately toned

and varied plumage, that have dashed in from the corn-fields. There they sit; they spread out their beautiful tails, and softly coo-coo-coo! to each other. Three of them there are; they drop down to bathe and to drink. Then they are up in the trees again, trimming their plumage before flying off to the fields once more.

A very slight rustling attracts our attention next; we are not left long in suspense as to its origin; for, from some cover near at hand, out steps a pheasant into the bright green-tinted sunlight which flashes here and there on the edge of the pool. There he stands with one foot lifted up nearly to his breast, listening; very cautiously he places it down again and proceeds to the water. His head, neck, and red gold-barred breast flash and glitter in the sunlight. Cautiously he glides to the edge of the pool, drinks as much as he requires, and retires in the same wary manner as he arrived.

And now we hear the chirp and twitter of the finch family and their allies. Here they come; not much caution about them. They are fussy little beings, with their chirps and twitters—they drink, and wash, and dabble to their hearts' content. But suddenly there is a commotion in their midst; they scatter right and left. We can see nothing that ought to disturb them; what have their sharp little eyes or ears given them notice of? All at once the alarm note of the blackbird rings out clear and shrill through the woods, and he dashes across the pool into cover. Presently we hear a sound, and then hop, hop, hop, on the dead leaves; a thrush of this year's brood comes down to drink and wash. He has finished his toilet and sits on a dead twig of the branch in the pool, looking about him. Poor little fellow! the world is new to him, and he is out alone. Something flashes past, and the bird is gone, shrieking in the grasp of the sparrowhawk; for he also visits the quiet pool in the beech-woods.

over her heart as she observes the absence of Gabriel, and when Basil inquires of them whether they had encountered his son on their journey—

"Tears came into her eyes, and she said with a tremulous accent—

'Gone! is Gabriel gone?' and concealing her face on his shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she wept and lamented.

Then the good Basil said—and his voice grew blithe as he said it—

'Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-day he departed.'

Evangeline takes leave of Father Felician, and departs with Basil to search for Gabriel. Frequently they hear tidings of him, and buoyed up by hope they continue their journey from place to place.

"So came the autumn, and passed, and the winter: yet Gabriel came not.

Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of the robin and blackbird

Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood: yet Gabriel came not."

"Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in seasons and places,

Divers and distant, far was seen the wandering maiden;

Now in the noisy camps and the battlefields of the army;

Now in secluded hamlets, in towns, and populous cities.

Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremembered.

Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long journey;

Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended."

At length she abandons her fruitless search, and lived for many years as a sister of mercy, frequenting lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes of the city—

"Where distress and want concealed themselves from the sunlight,

Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished neglected."

By-and-by a pestilence falls on the city, and day and night Evangeline tends the sick and the dying. One Sabbath morn, wending her way through the deserted and silent streets, she entered the almshouse:—

"Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,

Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed, for her presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of a prison."

"Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,

Still she stood, with her colourless lips apart, while a shudder

Ran through her frame."

Then she utters a terrible cry of anguish. On the pallet before her was the dying form of an old man, long and thin, with grey hair. It is Gabriel, and he recognises her.

"Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents unuttered

Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue would have spoken.

Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,

Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom."

"All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow;

All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing;

All the dull, deep pain and constant anguish of patience;

And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom,

Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, 'Father, I thank thee.'"

Constancy is the quality that ennobles and purifies love and makes the marriage life happy; it is the preserver and supporter of attachment, which it carries through the shoals and quicksands of time and altered circumstances.

BIRD LIFE IN SEPTEMBER.

BY A NATURALIST.



How does not love to ramble through the woodlands and fields, in this usually so pleasant month, on a bright sunny morning, when there is a gentle whispering breeze just strong enough to dry the moisture on the leaves of the turnips and mangolds?

Such a morning, however, proves fatal to numbers of partridges. The old keeper, yonder, who is attended by his favourite Spanish pointer, gives expression to his feelings of satisfaction. "We shall get at 'em to-day, and no mistake about it, for it ain't too hot nor too chilly; they'll rise proper."

All residents in the country are familiar with the partridge. His call to his mate, early in the year, is one of the first signs that winter has gone. To the day-labourer, as he returns home from his work across the fields in the dusk of evening, his cheery call, as he runs swiftly up and down the furrows, has a pleasant sound. His legs are rather long and muscular, whereas his wings are short; for he lives chiefly on the ground—running more than flying. His hard bill, strong, and a little curved, and the short, thick, straight nails of his toes, indicate that he has his living to get mostly from the earth, where he scratches

in search of grain. Most careful and affectionate parents they are; when her chicks are in danger the mother shows the most determined courage in their defence. In walking along some sandy road, bordered by trees, I have often come suddenly on a mother and family basking and dusting themselves in the sun which shines bright and warm through the numerous openings in the foliage. What a commotion ensues then! If the cock is absent the hen will drop, after making a dash almost to your feet, as though her wing was broken, or she was wounded. She appears to try vainly to raise herself, for she falls on her side and cries in painful tones. With an apparently final effort she manages to creep through the hedge into the standing corn. At racing speed, up the road comes the cock bird, head and body nearly upright, sounding his alarm note. But just as you think he will pass by you, he also runs through the hedge, and all is still. The pretty chicks had made good their escape while the mother was pretending to be crippled; a clever performance on her part, one that she and the cock go through often.

It is an interesting sight to see a covey feed before they finally settle for the night in some open field. You will hear them call to each other from the slopes of the hilly fields, when the sun is low down in the west, just before it grows dusk. By the sound you can tell that in a few moments they will be on the wing. Here they come, with a "whirr" just overhead, to pitch in the field opposite us, where they at once begin to search for the scattered grain in the stubbles. With arched backs and drooping tails, they glide hither and thither like so many shadows. One or two of their number, however, are posted as sentinels on the look out for the least sight or sound of anything suspicious; you will see these with their forms raised well up from the stubbles, and hear their note of warning or cry of "all's well," as

the case may be. Resting on the ground, as they do at night, they need exercise caution, for their natural enemies are many. Dear to the heart of Englishmen who love sport is the plump partridge.

As the month draws to a close other sounds make themselves heard; the hooting of the wood-owl, the clamour of the stone curlew. Woodlarks, thrushes, and blackbirds begin their subdued autumn notes, as the days grow colder.

"Hedge-crickets sing; and, now with treble soft,

The redbreast whistles from a garden croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies."

For the common swallow begins to leave us about the end of September, as well as many other birds of soft bill to whom insect food is a necessity; whilst some other birds leave the mountainous districts and come to the southern and warmer localities, where the berries which they love grow and ripen in the woods and the hedges.

Other fruit ripens there now also—fruit our boys and girls come into the lanes and fields in search of. Miss Mitford, whose writings were prized by your mothers and grandmothers when writers on natural history were less plentiful than they now are, but which you would do well to read, speaking of nutting, says—"On we go, scrambling and gathering with all our might and all our glee. Oh, what an enjoyment! All my life long I have had a passion for that sort of seeking which implies finding—the secret, I believe, of the love of field sports which is in man's mind a natural impulse," but this hedgerow nutting beats some other sports to nothing, she continues.

On the 14th of September, Holy Rood Day, in olden time, the lads and lasses went together in the woods, a nutting.

home, she stopped to count her money—half a sovereign (it had been a present from cousin Alfred), six shillings, and some pence. She knew better than most girls in her position and of her age the value of money. Many a time, when her father lived, she had managed to keep house for a week on a smaller sum than this. Supposing that it lasted for a fortnight, what was she to do at the end of that time?

"I shall go from place to place till I find some work," she said to herself; "perhaps I could teach very little children, or do plain sewing." In the old days Bessie would have entertained much higher notions of her own capabilities, but her pride had been sorely humbled during the last few hours. She went on walking as fast as she could, heedless of fatigue; but by degrees her highly-strung nerves began to give way; she felt very tired and faint for want of food. She looked at her watch—this too had been a present from the

Ravensdales—it was not yet four o'clock, and it seemed to her as if she had been wandering about for a whole long day. About this time she generally went into the invalid's room and poured out the tea; they would miss her soon, and then they would find the letter, and all blame would be taken off Ellen, and they would know that the postman had spoken the truth.

She had now reached a point in the river which went by the name of Ash Ford. A man who lived in the cottage on the farther bank ferried passengers across for a penny a head. Bessie came close to the water's edge and looked across; there was the punt just pushing off; and who was that? Not Joseph, the ferryman—no, with a gasp of surprise she recognised Edmund Ravensdale.

He had told her once that occasionally he got out of the train at the junction, and walked home by way of Ash Ford, instead of waiting for the branch line train. Without stopping

to consider how great the distance was from Hazelton to London, she jumped at the conclusion that Mr. Ravensdale had telegraphed to his son, and that he knew already what was happening at home. "He will be very angry with me too," said Bessie, half aloud. "Ah!" as she watched him coming nearer, "I don't care how he reproaches me, I deserve it all; I wish he would come to me—Edmund, Edmund!"

It was a very weak cry for help, but no sooner had she uttered it than, scared at the sound of her own voice, she hid herself behind a group of willow trees. He had heard her though; she saw him turn round and look in her direction. The river was not very wide; in a few minutes he would land a few yards below the willows.

"I daren't meet him," said poor Bessie, and for the second time that day she turned and fled.

(To be concluded.)



BIRD LIFE IN OCTOBER.

By A NATURALIST.

"'Mid the blossoming trees, there

We builded our nest;

By the wing of the breeze, there

Were rocked into rest;

Now, now we must follow an unknown
behest."



THE swallow tribe are still on the wing; the common martin, and, later still, the least of swallows, the sand-martins, take flight, as the wind comes in fitful gusts over the hills and dales, causing the leaves

to fly in showers from the trees. Stares begin to congregate in hosts in the salt marshlands and fen countries, which the wild geese quit to go up to the ryelands, where they feed on the young corn.

On waste grounds covered with stones and thistles the goldfinches flit; now and again settling on the thistle-heads, busily climbing and feeding on the seeds, flitting and pecking restlessly; whilst the down flies in all directions from those giant thistles which only thrive in rough ground. Beautiful creatures they are in their livery of scarlet, black, brown, yellow, and white; but they are becoming scarce; bird catchers find a ready sale for them, as they, with other members of the finch family, are highly prized as pets. A greater love for wild creatures has sprung up of late, and many a man will make companions of even such little things as these. Whether it is selfish to deprive a wild creature of its liberty, and to change the natural conditions of its life and happiness for one's personal gratification, is a question for each one to settle with his or

her own conscience. I have learned what I know about birds, indoors as well as out, from personal acquaintance with them in friendly companionship.

As the month draws to a close, more migrants may be seen making their way through the thick morning mists to their winter quarters. That chattering chuck-chuck! proceeds from a flock of fieldfares passing overhead. Another sound follows, a feeble clicking chack! hardly to be noticed by any but a lover and close observer of bird life. It comes from the redwings, that have come once more to their southern winter homes.

As evening draws near, if your path leads you by the woodside bordering low-lying meadows, you may see the large-eyed, long-billed woodcock flit with owl-like flight, his bill pointing downwards to his feeding grounds. His flight is very different when he is put up by the sportsman. Then he darts, twists, and doubles like some hawk through the twigs and branches. There is one peculiarity about the woodcock: if he feeds, as a rule, in moist places and swamp ground, he has a dry place to shelter and rest in. They breed with us in a dry spot, and they carry their young, one at a time, from their dry nesting-place to the moist grounds where they feed them, and then carry them back again. One hen bird was shot by a keeper, who, thinking that it was a hawk with a bird in its talons, fired on it and killed mother and chick, to his great regret.*

Plovers move here and there, the green as well as the golden. You may hear them call in the night as they fly from one low-lying

district to another. Sure foretellers of changes in the weather are the plovers.

October brings in pheasant shooting. A splendid fellow—good to look at and also to eat—is the pheasant. The day is well on for afternoon, and the shooters draw near to the larchwood, where most of the old, full-plumaged cocks have taken sanctuary. The wood is intersected here and there by narrow green lanes, a few feet in width; these are called drives. Here at certain points the shooters are stationed. The spaniels are told to "go," and go it they do with a will. You can hear the tap, tap, tap of the beaters' sticks striking the trunks of the trees as they pass through the cover. A rattling cry sounds, and up gets the first bird with outspread tail and rushing wings, his breast and head flashing like jewels in the light. High up he springs, clear of the tree-tops; on he comes at top speed, well meriting his title of "Rocketeer," for like a rocket he comes swishing on. One shooter, a young one, fires and misses him, as he flies over the small opening in the trees, above that part of the drive where this man is stationed. Yon other grey-headed fellow, with eye as keen as a hawk's, and nerves like iron, is not so easily flustered; and he swings his gun up and fires, when the rocketeer comes swishing over his open space in the trees. Down crashes the bird, falling many yards behind him, on the green turf of the drive.

If the locality is at all favourable, hardly a day passes, when pheasant shooting is going on, without the ringing cry of "Mark, cock!" being heard. It is the warning that a woodcock has been put up. Grand in all his glorious plumage as the pheasant is, he may fly by the shooter unheeded if he thinks there is the least possible chance of pulling at the sober-plumaged, large-eyed, long-billed woodcock.

* I have a picture of this bird carrying her chick, painted by our naturalist. The alert watchful solicitude in the mother's eye, and the perfectly restful expression in the eye and the posture of the young bird, is given most faithfully.—J. A. OWEN.