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THE LATE LORD LILFORD AND HIS WORK.

BY JEAN A. OWEN.*

PART I.

LILFORD HALL is a beautiful old house, a genuine Elizabethan building, situated near Oundle, in Northamptonshire. Its exact date is uncertain. The walls are immensely thick; and the panelling of one large wainscoted room, at least, shows that it was finished before saws were in common use, since the woodwork is all hewn instead of having been sawn. Saws, I believe, first came into use towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In this room the axe only has been used. There are some very picturesque bits about the mansion, especially at the western corner. Sir Thomas Powys, who was a judge in the times of King James II., and also of William of Orange, bought the manor of Lilford in the year 1711. He was Solicitor-General in 1686, Attorney-General in 1687, and one of the Judges of Queen's Bench in 1713.

The Powys family claims descent from the Princes of Powysland, in the person of Meredith, Prince of Powys, representative of Mervyn, King of Powys, North

Archibald Thorburn

LORD LILFORD'S FAVOURITE HAWK ON FIST.

* The Hon. Mrs. Drewitt, a sister of the late Lord Lilford, who has written in our GIRL'S OWN PAPER, published recently a memoir of her brother. My own two articles in *Blackwood's* and the *Pall Mall* magazines were sent to Lord Lilford in proof just before he died.

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Wales. The late Lord Lilford's name was Thomas Lyttleton Powys, the name of Lyttleton having come into the family when Thomas Powys, Sergeant-at-Law and a bencher of Lincoln's Inn, married the daughter of Sir Adam Lyttleton, Bart., Chief Justice of North Wales. His son, Sir Lyttleton Powys, having been knighted by William III., and appointed to the Chief-Justiceship of North Wales in 1692, was made in 1695 one of the Barons of the Exchequer, and in 1702 a Judge of the King's Bench; in fact he served for thirty-one years as one of the Twelve Judges. This was the father of the first Thomas Powys who lived at Lilford, whose monument is to be seen in the church of Achurch, close to the park.

When the third Lord Lilford, the late President of the British Ornithologists' Union, was a child, he was asked by his grandfather, the third Lord Holland, what he would like best in the world. "To live in a den with a good-natured animal," was the ready reply, which was rewarded by the gift of a black Shetland pony. Many a day was spent by the boy nest-hunting in the ample demesne of Holland Park, then the centre of a rural district.

It was at Holland House that his grandmother, Lady Holland, first introduced the dahlia into England as a permanent species. Some roots had been previously imported by Lady Bute, but they had failed. The first seeds brought from Spain to Holland House failed also, but Lady Holland procured more from Holland, and these were a complete success. She reared them in her own flower-garden. This was in 1824. Her daughter, Lady Lilford, used to tell her son about a splendid blue bird which had been brought from Spain by her father, and lived for many years in a disused conservatory, but unfortunately it had the ill fate to be shot at last in the shrubbery by an Italian servant who, when blamed for it, declared that he thought it was a "blacka-cocka." The "blue-bird" had long been forgotten when, some time after Lord Holland's death, Lady Lilford recognised in the collection at Lilford one of the purple gallinules (*Porphyrio cœruleus*) as identical with the famous and mysterious "blue bird" of her childhood. As a girl she had spent much time at Ampthill, in Bedfordshire, the seat of her uncle, the last Lord Ossory, whose fine collection of stuffed birds was eventually left to her son, the late Lord Lilford.

From his grandfather—in that hospitable mansion, Holland House—the genial host who delighted in gathering round him so many of the choicest spirits of his day, men of such diverse gifts, of such various nationalities—Lord Lilford inherited an absorbing passion for the things of Spain and for its literature. In August, 1856, he made his first visit to that country. Sailing from Falmouth in the Royal Yacht Squadron's schooner *Claymore*, he touched at Corunna, and thence, avoiding Portugal on account of the cholera which was then raging in Lisbon, he sailed on to Cadiz and visited all the principal Spanish ports on the Mediterranean, including Palma and Port Mahon in the Balearic Isles. During this cruise there was not much opportunity for the observation of birds, but during 1864 and 1865 Lord Lilford spent a considerable time in Spain. He gave his experiences and the result of his observations in the pages of the *Ibis* in 1865 and 1866.

Ornithologists who may not have read them will be much interested if they look up these papers, as well as those notes on the birds of European Turkey and Greece, which were made between January, 1857, and the end of July, 1858.

Speaking of the kite, Lord Lilford wrote: "It is constantly to be seen circling alone, or in pairs, about the villages"—*i.e.* of Central and Southern Spain—"on the look-out for chickens, refuse, or materials for its nest, which is often built of very curious substances. A Spaniard, who accompanied me in my bird-collecting rambles in Central Spain in 1865, assured me that he had once taken a purse containing nine dollars from a kite's nest; and I first learned the news of President Abraham Lincoln's murder from a scrap of a Spanish newspaper found in a nest of this bird by my climber Agapo near Aranjüez." These ornithological rambles in the company of his guide and assistant, Manuel, and the agile climber Agapo, make very pleasant reading indeed.

They took a black or cinereous vulture's nestling, in the same year, from a nest near San Ildefonso, Old Castile. This bird is, I believe, still alive at Lilford, and in perfect health, with a number of others of its family, in the large eagle-house. It was thirty years old at the time of my visit to Lilford, and on the morning we first made its acquaintance it very obligingly laid an egg, as though for our personal gratification.

Under the beautiful sky of Spain delightful days were spent by the traveller, followed by pleasant evenings in the different *ventas*, listening to the bird-stories of the native *convives*, gathering all he could about their local haunts and habits. There were also, as he wrote, "delicious summer nights in Southern Spain, when all the louder sounds of human life were hushed, and nothing broke the silence but the monotonous notes of the scops owl, and the 'wet-my-lips' of innumerable quails." Of the little kestrels he says: "The cry of these pretty birds is as certain to strike the ear in the towns of Andalusia as the twang of the guitar and the click of the castanets." Then there were the more exciting delights of driving the great bustards in Andalusia, in the peculiar balmy but exhilarating air which, come from whatever quarter of the compass it may, has blown for miles over wastes of rosemary, gum, cistus, and thyme, or through pine-woods and orange-groves. It possesses an indescribable charm, and renders existence in itself more enjoyable here than in any other part of the world with which I am acquainted." In speaking of the remarkable cries that may be heard sounding in the air at times after nightfall, Lord Lilford says he has sometimes wondered how these strike others. The French author, Guy de Maupassant, alluding to the same subject, says poetically that "*ce cri fuyant, emporté par les plumes d'une bête*," seemed always to him like "*un soupir de l'âme du monde*"—a sigh from the very heart of the world.

His lordship's favourite bird was the falcon. The peregrine is, next to the kestrel and the sparrow-hawk, the commonest diurnal bird of prey in Northamptonshire. From the many high old elms and ash-trees in the valley of the Nen between Thrapston and Oundle, he had his look-out station, commanding fine stretches of meadow and arable land.

In the winter it was in Lord Lilford's sitting-room, which he pleasantly called his "hibernaculum," that the true life of the house centred. Here, unfortunately, owing to physical infirmity, he had to remain for about six months of the year. Lady Lilford spent much of her time with him in this delightful apartment, helping on his work in various ways; and I knew of no busier people. Half of the floor is raised—it had been constructed so for purposes of dramatic performances—and from it he could command a better view of the windings of the river Nen and of the finely-wooded grounds. Now and again, even in the winter-time, he would note, from his seat in the bow window, some interesting visitor or fact connected with natural history. In this large room, too, he kept some special pets—a coal-black bullfinch here, a blue rock-thrush there, a brilliant troupial from Brazil, and various other individuals. There is a finely-carved mantel in the same room, by the way—some of Grinling Gibbons's best work—and on the walls are water-colour drawings of the falcon family by Wolff and others by Thorburn; in many of the Lilford rooms, indeed, one finds the marvellously life-like work of these two incomparable masters in bird-life.

The county of Northampton has been less written about than almost any other, although it has a gentle pastoral beauty which is peculiar to it. A very old writer said that it was noted for "its squires, its mires and its spires." I would add also for its fine stone bridges, with their many arches, and for the picturesque, grey, lichen-covered mills beside the river. The valley of the Nen, in which Lilford is situated, has some specially fine bridges, one or two of which are said to date back to the period of the Roman occupation. The river used to be called the Nyne, some say because it has streams from nine springs running into it, but this is somewhat doubtful. Its source is on Naseby Field, it runs into the Wash; and it is worthy of note that whilst much runs from it, no water runs into this county.

Morton, writing in 1712, says of the Nyne, "It flows from at least a thousand springs, which are usually discharg'd in united Currents from the smaller Valleys." From above Naseby also run the Welland and the Ouse, both into the Wash. The Cherwell runs by Banbury into the Isis at Oxford, and the Avon and the Leam flow hence also through Stratford. It is a neighbourhood very favourable to ornithological observation, since great numbers of birds pass up the valleys of the Welland and the Nen on their migratory flight southwards, the Wash being a great receptacle for fowl.

(To be continued.)

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

BY GERTRUDE PAGE, Author of "If Loving Hearts Were Never Lonely," etc.

CHAPTER III.

THE following morning Jack started off on his bicycle for a day's tour, and in the afternoon Peggy went sketching, so that Mrs. Nelson was quite alone when Ethel Rivers called to see her. Jack had forgotten to mention that she was coming, so that she was both surprised and pleased when the mysterious stranger she had heard so much about was actually sitting beside her couch. One look into the girl's face sufficed to draw out all her tenderest sympathy towards her, and with a smile, that sometimes made those who saw it think vaguely of angels, she said simply—

"I am so glad to see you, for I have heard of you often from my young people, and I feel I know you quite well."

Ethel tried to retain her distant manner, but after ten minutes she gave it up, metaphorically kneeling down with all the rest before this perfect lady's wonderful charm and sweetness. Before she had been with her half an hour she was, to her own incredible surprise, actually telling her her story. She sat as she did so with straining eyes fixed on the blue Atlantic, now rolling great swelling waves one over the other in rampant glee on to the rocky shore.

"We had loved each other for four years," she was saying in a low voice steadied with an effort, "but we had only been engaged for two. My people were all opposed to the match because of his position, but it would never have made any difference to our love, and in the end they had to give way." She paused, then added, "I think I might tell you they had no reasonable objection. Basil was of good family and a fine character, but he was only a poor doctor, and my mother had high views for all her girls. I think especially for me, because I was the eldest, and she never forgave Basil for winning my heart, although she consented to our engagement when she found I would not change."

"Poor girlie," said Mrs. Nelson in her soft, sweet voice, "it must have been very hard not to have your mother's sympathy!"

Ethel leaned her head back wearily.

"It did not matter so much as it might have done, because Basil was so good to me. He was father, mother and lover all in one."

There was another silence, and Mrs. Nelson went on quietly with her knitting, giving her her own time in which to finish her story.

"The wedding was fixed for the nineteenth of January," she continued presently. "Everything was ready for us, and on the tenth Basil died."

Mrs. Nelson uttered a smothered exclamation of pained surprise, and Ethel suddenly rose to her feet and walked to the window, standing with her back to the room while she tried to recover her self-control. The struggle was sharp, but it would have ended in victory had not her companion's charm once more carried all before it. For Mrs. Nelson, divining from the girl's manner much that had passed since the blow had fallen, went up to her and putting her arm round her murmured tenderly—

"Poor child, poor child! It will do you more good to cry than to struggle against it."

Ethel caught her breath with a gulp, and then, burying her face against her new friend, burst into tears. Mrs. Nelson did not seek to stay her, but soothed her gradually with tender words and caresses, as she would have done her own child.

"I am very weak," Ethel said at last, drying her tears, "but sympathy like yours is so new. The others tried, but they only seemed to make things worse, until I could not bear the subject mentioned, and then they said I was hard. After a little it got so that I could not bear being at home at all, and I came away here with an old nurse who was with us when we were children."

"Poor girlie!" said Mrs. Nelson again, softly stroking her hair, and waited.

"Basil and I were once here together," Ethel went on. "We were driving from Portrush and we stayed a few hours, and we said afterwards we would come again some day when we were married. We were both passionately fond of the sea, and I knew that when I came here the sea would comfort me more than any human being. It has been so, and I am going to stay always. I can't tell you why, but somehow it is not quite so lonely here. The sea seems to understand, and it whispers to me by night and day. When my heart is nearest breaking, it soothes me after a time and lulls the anguish to rest. They said at home it would be the death of me; but they do not understand, they never did, and so I just came away, and now I am here I shall not go back."

"Perhaps by-and-by you will want their companionship dear, and then it will be easier to go to them. They will be wanting you."

"No"—quietly, "I shall not go back. I have come here to wait until I can go to Basil. I have no further interest in the world or the things in the world. Everything seems a mockery to me now he is dead. It is as though I had dropped out of the tide of human affairs, never to actually live in them again. All my life will be just a waiting."

Mrs. Nelson continued to stroke her hair gently, but a pained expression had crept into her face, which made her lean back in the shadow that it might not be seen. Her whole soul cried out against this young heart's quiet contemplation of a life that could only be selfish through and through from every point of view, but she knew that this was not the time to speak. She knew that she might only estrange her, and lose the chance of helping her in the future.

So she only spoke of her deep sympathy and her earnest longing to give comfort; and the light in the girl's eyes, and the pressure of her hand when at last she rose to go, told her that she had won her affection at least, and paved the way for other things.

And Ethel went away with a lighter heart than she had known for six months. At the door she met Jack, looking dusty and fagged after his long ride, but he turned at once and asked if he might walk part of the way home with her.

"I think your aunt must be an angel," Ethel said, after a little; "I have never known anyone so good and sweet and beautiful before."

"That is what everyone thinks," Jack answered quietly. "Did she tell you anything about herself?"

"No, but I should like to hear about her."

"There is not much to tell, only that she and my uncle were in a railway accident, when he was killed on the spot and she was injured for life."

"Oh, how sad! How terribly sad!" she exclaimed. "What a dreadful lot of sorrow there is in the world."

Jack was silent a few moments, then he said—

"But I suppose it is her sorrow that has made her what she is. I believe, by nature, we are too much afraid of any suffering. No doubt the world would be badly off without it."

She shot a swift glance at him, remembering with a little

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PART II.

LORD LILFORD made a decoy on the river between Aldwinkle and Thrapston in 1844—the last decoy, he believes, which was constructed in England. The rectory of All Saints', Aldwinkle, was the birthplace of Dryden, "the glorious John," as he has been styled.

The grandest old cedar of Lebanon in this country—one on Lord Egerton of Tatton's property nearly comes up to it—is close to Lilford. In its branches Lord Lilford, as a boy, used to observe the nesting owls; he has counted there, by his watch, seventeen comings and goings of the parent birds bringing food to their young in one half-hour, the pellets found under the nest being composed almost entirely of the remains of rats! This cedar is in the garden of the rectory of Tichmarsh, now occupied by the Rev. F. M. Stopford, a relative of Lord Lilford's.

It is delightful to row through the rich meadows of Lilford Park, noting the warblers and the reed buntings as the boat passes between great patches of yellow iris in flower. After these follow the fair water-lilies and the flowering rushes, as the summer wears on into autumn. One of the finest of the old greystone bridges, which had formerly nine arches—but seven of these were swept away by a flood—crosses the river at a short distance from the house. The name of this manor was spelt Lilleforde—Little Ford, presumably—in the Norman survey. The box flourishes greatly here, and Northamptonshire was noted in old times for its vast thickets of blackthorn. In certain parts of this forest, too, a very few fallow deer are still to be found in their wild condition.

I had some pleasant talk with Mr. Jones, who has been the head gamekeeper at Lilford for the last forty-five years, and he told me many interesting facts about the wild life in the forest of Rockingham, which he knows thoroughly well, having been born there. In fact, for over two hundred years the office of Keeper of the Forest, under the Crown, had been filled by the successive heads of his family, and he was just ten years old when his father left this post to be head gamekeeper to Lord Cardigan, the brave officer who led the charge at Balaklava. The wild deer used to be driven in with toils and swivels—he had seen three hundred of them break cover at a time—nine or ten of these would be taken, to be sent off to the parks of Lord Winchelsea, the Hereditary Ranger of this forest, others to Lord Cardigan, and more to other landowners.

As we talked, Mr. Jones showed me a tree close to his house where a tame fox used to stop, chained to a tree. It seemed always to be well contented, but, Lord Lilford thinking that it ought to have its freedom, the keeper took it in a bag to a wood at some distance, and then turned it out. The poor beast wanted to follow him home again, and he had some difficulty in getting rid of it. Eventually it was taken by a stranger and, I believe, killed.

The grounds about Lilford have many old trees in them, but the disastrous gale—one might say hurricane—of March 24th, 1895, wrought great havoc amongst them. A great number of fallow dear are in the park, in colour ranging from a pure creamy white to almost black; and, as we ramble on, we come upon a few pure white Afghan cattle, as well as some black ones, picturesque-looking objects as they graze. The white Afghan calf yonder represents the third generation of her kind here. Hereditary instinct shows, in the way in which these cattle pass along, ever in single file, as though they were still following some narrow mountain track in their native country.

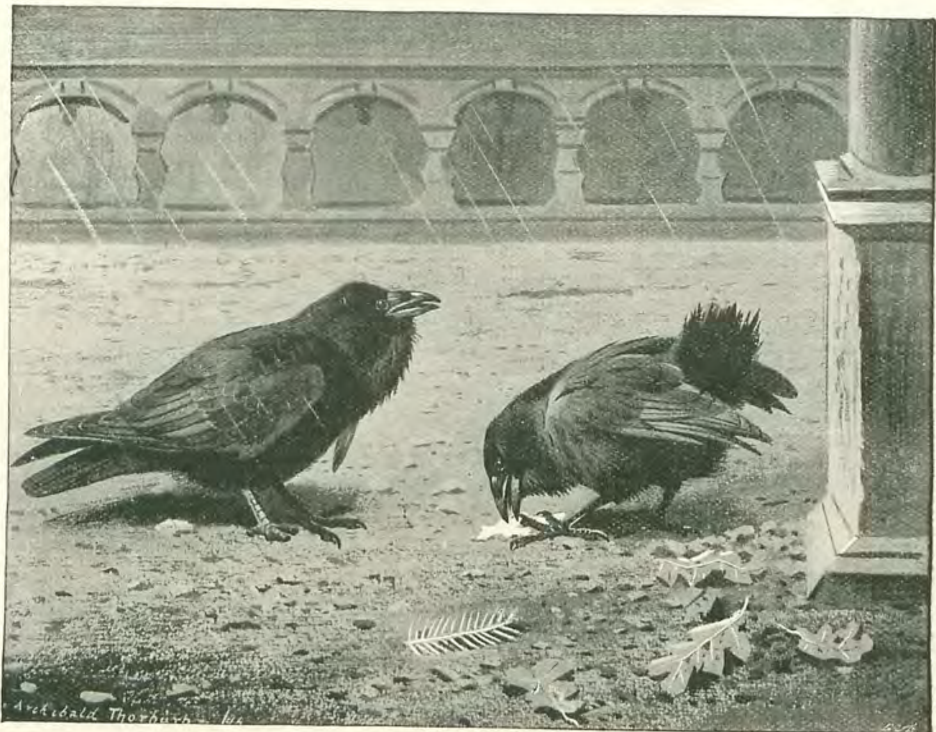
A most interesting sight was to be seen here for some time, a very novel one for this country—two lammergeiers, bearded vultures, soaring and circling high in air above the old greystone gables of the Hall. Over the deer-park, too, they flew freely, often pursued by a black crowd of rooks. None of these birds had ever flown free in England before, and a great joy they were to their owner; but after a time it was thought best to confine them, and, not taking kindly to this, they soon died.

Twenty years before, a raven, which had been taken from a nest in Northern Spain, had been introduced at Lilford, and had the name of Sankey bestowed upon it by the servants. This name he used often to repeat, as though proud of it, and he very quickly made himself at home on the lawn near a large old beech at the west corner of the house. This bird always made a point of meeting anyone who came out at the hall-door, and if it happened to be a man or a boy, Sankey had a provoking habit of seizing him by the trousers or pecking at his shoe-leather, but he was never so ungallant as to attack any feminine fripperies. Any dog, large or small, he always went for, gave a vigorous dig at its hinder parts, and then retired to some secure point from which he could bark in derision at his irritated enemy. Sankey never could bear to see a jackdaw or starling perched upon the back of a sheep; it seemed to make him envious, for he invariably drove these

A QUIET CORNER.

birds away and took possession of the seat himself. The hiding-places he chose for food were at times very remarkable; he was once seen carefully parting the feathers on the back of an emu in order to insert some small fishes beneath them from his pouch. Then, after rearranging the feathers, he hopped off with the air of having done a very clever thing indeed.

Some years ago a raven was brought from the south of Spain, and the last part of Sankey's life was spent in pleasant companionship with "Grip," as the new bird was called. After seventeen happy years Sankey died, then Grip was mated with an Andalusian brunette. When they began to build, he stealthily tore off a big corner of the hall-door mat, and with little handfuls of wool and other matters which he eagerly accepted from Lady Lilford, together with other trifles, another nest was built in the great old beech. This fact is worthy of note, as it is a most rare thing for ravens to build in a state of semi-domesticity. The new mate died unfortunately soon after four young ones were fledged and had been given away, and the widower was paired with a bird of the same hatching as his lost mate, after he had moped miserably for some time. At first he would only peck at the new bird, which was put in a cage at the foot of his tree, but at last he made friends, and the following year the two made a nest, which I saw when at Lilford, but I heard that no eggs were laid in it, and that there was a doubt whether the new bird was of the gentler sex at all. When it was sitting on the nest, it was so terrified by the great gale of March 24th that, having to a certain extent the use of its wings, it absented itself for some days, and was only caught up with some difficulty. During this absence, Grip carried up many stones to the nest—whether as a simple expression of despair, or as a suggestion to his mate, if it should return, that it ought to lay to these nest-eggs, who shall say? One day there was a grand commotion; these ravens had caught a fine peregrine falcon on flight, and they were hammering it to death with their iron beaks.



GRIP AND SANKEY.

Referring to notes made during a visit to Lilford, I find, "Two gigantic tortoises from Aldabara come past us on a trolley; the day being hot they are going to take the sun in an enclosure near to the ravens." These animals were received by Lord Lilford as a present last autumn; they travelled from the Seychelles to Portsmouth in H.M.S. *Boadicea*. The larger one, which weighs three hundred and forty-six pounds, is reputed to be three hundred years old. When they are placed on the grass, my little girl jumps on the back of one of them in order to have a ride round their enclosure. On cold days they are kept in a roomy building next to the main bird-gallery.

Moreña, an Asturian bear, shuffles up to the railings of her yard to see if we have brought out any buns for her. Moreña seems to have a special attraction for motherly persons who come with parties from neighbouring towns to see the collection here. From their satchels dainties are produced which would give a less case-hardened creature frightful indigestion. The kodak and the concertina are flashed and played before her nearly all the day long; yet only once has she been known to get furious, and that, oddly enough, was at the mere sight of a distinguished naturalist. What excited her in the aspect of that gentleman was a mystery.

Next to the bear's compartment, at the bottom of the courtyard, is a grass enclosure containing a number of fine wild swans; and beside these another, where five great bustards feed in company with a common skua and two common gulls. This skua was sent by the owner of the Island of Foula to Lord Lilford, who had written to the Press protesting against the wholesale attempts to exterminate this bird. It came in charge of one of the natives of the island, one of its few but unique human inhabitants. He was as interesting as his charge; up to the time of this journey he had never seen a tree, and the trees in the park here filled him with admiration and astonishment. Most graphic were his accounts of the vast myriads of birds that breed on the great cliffs of Foula; they were even poetic, and were always accompanied by very expressive gestures.

"Barbara Allen," Lord Lilford's favourite goshawk which came from France, has taken several hundred rabbits in her time here, besides other quarry, and as many as twelve of the former in one morning. After her autumn moult she is flown; the rabbit-hawking is practised from the end of her moult to the end of April. A good goshawk strikes a rabbit by driving a hind claw into the spinal marrow, paralysing the animal, and does not, as represented in a recent work, take it by the hinder part. Under a fine old cedar, at the corner of the terrace gardens, Barbara has her perch just now, in the company of three peregrine falcons, which come from different parts of the world; one is from Tasmania, another was taken fifteen hundred miles off the coast of Labrador, and the third is a British bird. These are each attached to a block by leash and jesses. A falconer's favourite toast used to be, "Swivel, leash and jesses."

Behind the falcons, in picturesque grottos with ivy-covered gables, a number of owls are housed in most roomy fashion. There are here about eighteen different species of owls; amongst them the Nepal wood owl is the most noticeable for its great rarity in a collection, its extreme tameness, grand eyes and the great beauty of the

pencillings of its plumage. It is, in fact, unique in an aviary. Savigny's eagle owl is a livelier bird, though less beautiful; he postures and dances about in a most comical fashion if he is much noticed. A pair of scops owls remind one, in their delicately-pencilled plumage, of the exquisite tints of the wryneck. The chestnut owl, the gigantic representative of our common barn owl of Tasmania, has a cage to himself. From time to time, during the last ten or twelve years, Lord Lilford had turned out a great many of the little owls into the paik. Many of these birds have become acclimatised, and they breed freely in the neighbourhood of Lilford. Twice a tenant farmer has had his hat knocked over his eyes and his neck scratched by a bird of this species as he passed near a tree where a pair were nesting.

(*To be continued.*)

A SPARK FROM THE FIRE OF ULLIN.

BY SARA ERWIN.

CHAPTER II.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST.

ICK was working the horses in the churning-machine when Belle came into the yard, carrying an egg-basket on her arm. She wore a great blue sun-bonnet, from under which a fringe of brown hair peeped out. She walked up to Dick, who was just completing his labours, and remarked that it was a lovely day. Dick's colour rose as he answered her. The blue bonnet was (he thought) exactly like a huge forget-me-not as it framed the pink, glowing face, and the County Down girl had really a pretty manner.

"I'm going to gather the eggs," she said, "and after that to take a hand in the housework; I needn't be idle because I'm on a visit, need I?"

Dick grew crimson. He was not versed in country small talk, and his answer sounded ungracious.

"Just as you please."

"Certainly! I always please myself." She swung the basket impatiently. "Will is going to take me up Slemish after dinner. He wanted me to go now, but I said I wouldn't."

Dick looked at her and kept silence. He was pleased to be addressed in such familiar fashion, but he did not know what to say in reply.

"Is the view from Slemish good?" asked the persistent Belle.

"Very. You can see the country for miles round from the top. It's just a little way from here, too."

"Didn't St. Patrick," began Belle, who was encouraged by Dick's thaw, "didn't St. Patrick——"

Mrs. McCance came out.

"I want the eggs, Belle, I'm going to make some cakes."

"Yes, aunt, I'll get them shortly!"

Belle stood where she was.

"Is it true that St. Patrick lived at Slemish for seven years?" she asked Dick.

Dick would have given his whole worldly wealth (three-and-sixpence) to have been able to tell the fair questioner something about their country's saint. His knowledge was very limited, so he answered lamely—

"I know little of St. Patrick, except that he stepped from Slemish to Skerry top. Skerry's a mountain about two miles away from this."

"I suppose you Braid people believe that story of Patrick?"

She was certainly laughing at him, undoubtedly teasing him. Dick's face relaxed a little, and he actually rose to the occasion. A gleam of humour flickered in his gloomy eyes as he retorted—

"If you go to Skerry you'll see the print of his foot upon it!"

"Oh, I must go if—— Yes, aunt, I'm coming!"

Considering that she was unable to express her feelings to the heiress, Aunt Agnes was in danger of having a fit. She did not usually practise self-restraint, and the present necessity for it tried her sorely. She would have ordered Dick away, but fear of Belle rendered her cautious.

"I had better get those eggs, or aunt will lose patience," said Belle.

She nodded to Dick and went off, leaving him in a rather bewildered frame of mind. He had a queer feeling that, for the first time in his life, he had been somebody's equal. The sensation thrilled him. He had occasional glimpses of Belle during the day, but no more conversation with her. She was very busy in the forenoon, and she spent the afternoon and evening with Will.

The following week brought many invitations to Belle and Will from well-to-do neighbours. Belle was astonished when, having dressed for her first Braid party, she found that Will was to be her sole escort.

"Aren't you coming, Dick?" she asked, turning to him as he stood by the trap which was to convey them to their destination.

Dick replied in the negative, and almost forgot to hold the horse, so surprised at Belle's tone was he. The name "Dick," as pronounced by the Lismoss family, had always seemed to spell "fool," "knave," "lout," and just now he could almost have affirmed that it spelled "dear." Next day old Henry remarked to his colleagues that Dick McCance was walking with his head up.

Belle solved her problem in a very short space of time. Dick was no mystery. He was the natural and inevitable result of constant ill-treatment and oppression. As for his supposed antipathy to herself, she had ceased to credit that idea. People who disliked other people didn't look at their aversions with such approving and wistful eyes. She was not afraid of Aunt Agnes. She insisted on talking to Dick as often as she could find an opportunity. In about a month he and she had become very friendly, considering the disadvantages under which the acquaintance was ripening. The farm hands discussed the matter with deepest interest.

"Dick's quarely altered this wee while," said Jamie Logan to Andy McNeil.

"Ay, he's that different that Ah hardly ken him—eh, Henry?"

Henry Wilson puffed at his clay pipe a second before replying.

"Ah would think he'd learnt tae smoke if Ah didna ken that that's no' the reason o' the change!"

"As sure as Ah'm alive Ah heerd him laughin' the ither day!" put in Johnnie McCarrol in awed tones.

"Ah hope he's in his richt mind," said Jamie Logan.

"Faags, he's comin' tae it!" asserted Henry. "Ah ken a' aboot it. Miss Belle would bring a puirer cratur to his senses, but Ah'm thinkin' there'll be murder when Will an' the mistress see how the lan' lies!"

There was a breathless pause.

"Surely she wouldn't tak' Dick?" said Andy McNeil.

"Heth, no!" answered Logan. "Sure we all kenned she was brocht here to fa' in love wi' Will!"

"She's fallin' in love sure enough," said Henry, watching the tobacco fumes, "but it's wi' the wrang man!"

band-box, which is what nurse says, but as stylish as could be—in the very last best style. That was what Annie said, and she ought to know, for she goes up to town most days, and walks in the park when she can get off from her teachers."

"It was not mere expensive dress," Alice sought to explain, "neither did it look as if the wearers thought of nothing else—though they must think a good deal of it for it to be what it is—high art, I suppose, and what novels call refinement and distinction. Oh, dear, how would our Japanese silks, made up by the village dress-maker and trimmed with the steel buckles out of Bea's old beaver hat, look in the Harrises' eyes?—and they were only in their travelling dresses—quite plain at a first glance. All the same, they made the people look like beings from another world, Katie and I agreed."

"You have fallen in love with them at first sight," Sophy rallied her sister. "I never heard you have so much to say for anyone before."

"Well, it must have been their clothes or their carriages, or something outside I fell in love with," said Alice, pausing to think, "for I don't know that I quite cared for themselves. They seemed so cool and careless, and yet so conscious of their superiority—like Gladys and Lilian Torrens, but more so. I daresay they have been at half a dozen colleges at home and abroad. There is one thing—they will never do for your Guild, Sophy, with that rule about not spending too much money and time on dress. Apparently plain though they were, there was not a frock, or coat, or mantle among them that had not cost three times as much as any the Torrenses wear. We have been accustomed to think Gladys and Lilian the most expensively dressed girls we were in the habit of seeing, though the Fields have always dressed more gaily and strikingly—'gaudy rags,' Katie called their best clothes to-day. The Harrises' furs alone—they wore a good deal of fur, even Mr. Harris had a fur-lined coat, though he had to throw it open, as if it oppressed him—showed they were next to millionaires."

"I will see your paragons and their toilets when you and I call, Alice—for we must represent father and mother and leave our cards—have you any?—at the Lodge, not later than next week."

But a good many weeks passed, before Sophy, not as representing either father or mother, but in her own individual character, called on the Harrises.

(To be continued.)

BIRD AMENITIES.

THE LATE LORD LILFORD AND HIS WORK.

BY JEAN A. OWEN.

PART III.

LORD LILFORD told me a curious story about the glass snake. He shot one when abroad which had another of its own species inside it. This again he opened, and found that it contained a third snake; in fact, he came to the conclusion that they might go on in this wise like a nest of Chinese boxes.

Another story he gave me about his oldest black vulture. When, in 1865, he had this bird as a nestling in Madrid, food happened to be scarce just when its own parent was being skinned for preserving as a specimen. The young wretch cheerfully devoured the body of its relative, and the stuffed skin of the latter is now in a case in the Hall.

In an enclosure with the wild swans was a cereopis goose. For some time this bird was in the pinetum, where the cranes are, and there it attached itself to a beautiful stately Stanley crane. I saw it waddling always close to the slender legs of the latter bird, gabbling and looking up into its face, and, indeed, behaving altogether in an absurdly affectionate way. Its attentions were, however, not only tolerated but apparently much appreciated by its companion, and the two birds were inseparable. It was thought well to separate them, however, and the homely grey goose was removed, to its very evident sorrow. As soon as it had moulted, the feathers of its clipped wings having grown, unnoticed it managed to fly over the fences and to rejoin its beloved crane. Unfortunately this constancy could not meet with its reward, and back to the bustards this Australian bird had to go. Another case of the like odd friendship occurs in the collection of my friend Mrs. Brightwen, between a tortoise and a dove. The dove coos and hops about that undemonstrative creature, and sits contentedly on its back by the hour.

The handsome roseate pelican at Kew, which affords delight to so many who see it, was, I find, sent there by Lord Lilford. It was one of several which were procured on the Lower Danube, below Galatz, by P. Saunderson, Esq., C.M.G., British Consul-General at New York, and formerly Commissioner of the Danube Navigation.

The Dominican gull of the South Pacific has been here for more than twenty years, and has paired with a male herring gull and become the mother of many hybrids.

In a huge "old leather bottel," which was slung in a yew tree, some oxeyes had their young. They came and went with green caterpillars for these; and, if they caught you watching them, many were the little manœuvres to approach the mouth of this delightful nesting-place from some point unseen by the "humans." In a shed, beside a mason who was at work, a pair of flycatchers had their young in one of his old cement tins. They did not mind his proximity in the least, and he had kindly put up a bit of board to shelter them a little.

During the month of August our author spent most of his time on a river barge, from which he noted and recorded much that is interesting. Sedge-warblers and reed-warblers abound on the banks of the stream, and their notes are heard throughout the summer night. The days spent thus were full of interest as he watched "the water-hens leading their downy young through the mazes of water-weeds, the young broods of wild ducks bustling out of some reedy nook at the approach of the boat, the kingfisher watching his prey from an overhanging spray, or darting past like a meteor, the heron standing motionless on a favourite shallow, the incessant song and rapid motions of the reed- and sedge-warblers, and the infinite variety of insects and of plants."

Birds undoubtedly know where the owners of houses are hospitably disposed towards them, and that they can congregate and build about these unmolested. During the winter months nut-hatches were seen from daybreak to mid-day opening and feeding on beechmast about an interstice in the masonry of the porch which is over the front entrance to the hall.

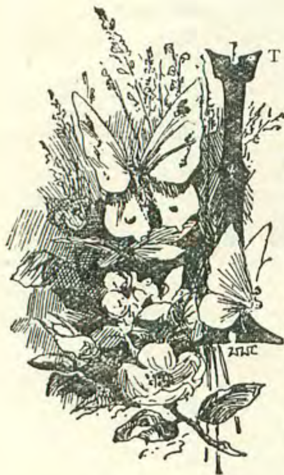
The brambling is a bird that is becoming much rarer than it was in many districts, but upon the old beeches in Northamptonshire it may be seen abundantly. Its breeding-places are of course in more northern forests.

The crossbill has always been a favourite of ours. Its quaint attitude and humorous disposition make it a very interesting bird in captivity. In Thuringia each peasant household likes to have a pair of these birds. If the mandibles cross each other at the end of the bill from left to right, the presence of the bird is said to counteract the diseases of the males of the family; if from right to left those of the females. Lord Lilford mentioned one which he received out of a flock of about a hundred which had been haunting the neighbourhood of Harleston Firs for some weeks. In fir-woods, however, these birds never breed.

Quails are becoming every year more scarce in Northamptonshire as in most parts of England and Ireland. The higher cultivation of our land is doing away with those rougher broken portions in which the quail has its favourite habitat. The water-rail is scarce, but the land-rail or corn-crake is a very common summer visitor to Northamptonshire. In Spain, Lord Lilford says, one or two of the latter species are supposed to accompany each great flight of quails on their vernal migration, acting as pilots to them, so that the land-rail is there called the "guide of the quails," and in France "king of quails."

ISRAEL'S ATONEMENT.

A STORY OF THE GREAT WHITE FAST.



IT was the afternoon of the Day of Atonement—the Great White Fast. The little synagogue at B—— was filled to overflowing. On the ground floor were the men and boys in white *talithim* (praying-shawls), with borders and fringes, and silk or velvet caps. Upstairs sat the ladies, attired in their lightest summer garments. The air was stifling, necessitating the use of smelling-salts and eau-de-Cologne. Not a few of the feminine portion of the congregation fainted, and even the men deigned to use ivory fans. They had been there since early morning; they meant to stay until after six o'clock. A long and trying service, truly, and one requiring considerable self-denial on the part of the devotee.

Not very far from the white-curtained Ark, which contained the scrolls of the Law, sat a youth, his eyes fixed diligently on his prayer-book. His features proclaimed his Semitic descent, but there was an air of refinement about them lacking in the countenances of many of his brethren. His eyes were large, dark, and mournful; his full red lips had a downward curve. One could almost trace unsatisfied longing in the wistful expression of his sweetly-earnest face.

He was conscientiously striving to fulfil the Law—to afflict his soul on this most solemn fast of the Jewish year. His fellow-worshippers evidently possessed different ideas on the subject, for some of them chatted pleasantly together concerning stocks and shares, others left the synagogue at intervals to satisfy the cravings of the inner man; but he, Israel Morris, was one of the truly sincere. Since sunset on the previous day neither food nor drink had passed his lips. His throat was parched, his lips dry, but he would not yield so far as to take a drop of water. He was determined to rigidly adhere to the fast.

At last it was over, and he mingled with his co-religionists in the spacious vestibule. His mother and sisters were awaiting him at the gates, where they had engaged a cab to drive them home. They were quite a lively party, despite their exhaustion, and chatted vivaciously as the vehicle pursued its way.

"I didn't have such a bad time after all," his mother remarked with satisfaction. "Mrs. Levy sat next to me and told me all about her son's wedding. Just fancy, he got seven thousand pounds with the girl and all the house furniture! And then Mrs. Samuel and Mrs. Joseph paid me a visit during the course of the afternoon. It all helped to pass the time, you know. I am frightfully hungry now. How did you get on, Izzy?"

"I fasted very well, thank you," the lad replied wearily, "if that is what you mean, mother. I don't feel any the better for it, though, unfortunately."

Mrs. Morris stared.

"How do you expect to feel?" she said with a sharp glance. "I really don't understand you, Izzy."

"I mean that I do not feel that the fast has done me any good spiritually," he answered, with a slight flush on his usually pale cheeks. "I have fulfilled an irksome duty and that is all. I felt the same about it last year. I cannot help it. I don't believe I am a bit nearer to God than before I began to fast. I have been trying to atone for my