

for a more remarkable growth of individuality than this world has ever seen.

Again, this material economic life of ours, this production of goods, this buying, selling, and getting gain, it must ever be remembered, is not an end in itself. It is but a means to an end. It is the basis of our higher life, and is to be valued merely as such. The noblest development of our being, the grandest triumphs of freedom, must be sought in other domains. The entire life of a people has been divided into eight departments or territories, if these expressions may be used. They are the following: first, language; second, art; third, science and education; fourth, the family life; fifth, social life; sixth, the religious life; seventh, political life; eighth,

the economic life. Now we observe such a measure of freedom, of opportunity for individuality, in the seven higher spheres of life as never could exist before. The eighth is merely basic, its purpose is to subserve most effectively the other spheres of life. That it accomplishes, on the whole, better than formerly. If the amount of freedom appears to diminish with progress, the appearance is deceptive. Some measures which we now advocate, as the abolition of child labor, restriction of the labor of women, inspection of factories, sanitary regulation, and the like, may lessen the amount of theoretical liberty; but they increase control over nature in the individual, and promote the growth of practical liberty.

### ON KEEPING BIRDS.

BY W. T. GREENE, M.A., F.Z.S.

WHO was the first person that put a bird in a cage? and what was the motive that prompted him or her to do so? In all probability it was a woman, who, moved by a feeling of tender pity for the sufferer, rescued some poor victim wounded in the chase, or maybe by a bird of prey; and the first cage was doubtless a slight affair, rudely built of rushes, or perhaps of willow rods, by loving hands, to shield the injured prisoner from further ill; but soon the desire to possess a bird of one's own must have taken possession of other people, and led to the native songsters' being trapped and caged; for Venus, we are told, had her doves, and Lesbia at least one sparrow.

Yes, it must have been a man that first caged a canary or a nightingale, in order to enjoy the pleasure of listening to its sweet notes in full security at home, without the necessity of dangerous rambling through dense woodlands infested by beasts of prey; and if so, I am not prepared to affirm that he did wrong, but on the contrary am exceedingly obliged to him for setting me an example I do not hesitate to follow, although I might not have had the moral courage to have taken the initiative in the matter, and been the first to cage a bird, which at first sight appears a questionable thing to do; but, after all, is it treating birds unkindly to put them in a cage? On the whole, I think not. See what they suffer when they

have their liberty out-of-doors: the rain drenches them, the wind buffets them, the cold of winter benumbs them, and when the ground is mantled in a garb of spotless snow, many thousands of them die of hunger, or become so weak from prolonged fasting that they fall an easy prey to rapacious birds and beasts; while in a cage their every want is anticipated and provided for, and in the society of the beloved lady who watches over them with tender care they find more than compensation for the doubtful boon of liberty that they have lost.

So true is this that I have known of more than one poor bird that actually died of grief when it no longer beheld the dear familiar form of the owner who had caressed and fed it.

There is no animal with which I am acquainted, not even that "friend of man" the dog, that forms so firm, so devoted, so tender an attachment for its master or mistress as the bullfinch—the naturally shy and wood-loving bullfinch, that almost dies of terror when first caught, but becomes more readily reconciled to captivity than any bird I know.

A word, however, to my readers here: do not buy one of these too charming birds unless you have leisure and love enough to make it your companion, to keep it on your study table or in your boudoir, talk to it, whistle to it, feed it with tidbits, and teach it to love you.

When you have won its confidence, which, with gentle perseverance on your part, will not take long, your care and attention will be more than rewarded by the *empressement* with which it will greet your return from your business or your pleasure; it will hop down to the door of the cage as soon as it sees you enter the room, and invite you with the most fascinating of bows to let it out and perch upon your finger, where it will talk to you in its sweetest tones, and rub its dear black velvet poll against your cheek or on your hand, purring the while with purest and most unalloyed pleasure. It will even try to feed you, and instead of feeling offended and annoyed—one lady who wrote to me used the word “disgusted”—by this profoundest mark of its affection, feel correspondingly grateful, and bless your stars that you have indeed a friend, one who would die for you, and will, too, if you are cruel enough or thoughtless enough to slight it or forget it.

I do not say that there are no other birds capable of becoming devotedly attached to their owners, but I do affirm that not one of them equals the bullfinch in this respect. True, I have known parrots that displayed quite a romantic affection for their master or mistress, and yet, when parted from them, sulked perhaps for a few days, but in the end accepted accomplished facts, and, acting upon the advice of the poet, when they could not be near the dear ones they loved, made love to those that were near, which, under the circumstances, was doubtless the most sensible thing they could do. But “Bully” is compact of far other clay, and I again entreat my readers not to buy him unless they mean to love him, for to neglect him is to torture him, and most cruelly kill him too.

What a pretty bird he is! and yet some writers have described him as clumsily made. Fie upon them! Can anything be more symmetrical than his form, or more quietly beautiful than the varied tints of his many-colored coat, or, I should say, costume? Velvety black and rosy red and delicate lavender gray form a charming combination of colors, not one of which is obtrusive or “kills” another, as the ladies say, but is rather enhanced by the rest, the three different shades forming a *tout-ensemble* that is simply perfect.

A newly captured bullfinch may be purchased for three or four shillings, but

one that has been tamed and educated will often be sold for twenty pounds, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is worth the money if it is like one dear bird I once possessed, that was as loving, sensible, and accomplished as a bird could be. I hope that he was happy while he called me master, and I believe he was; at least I know that he preferred my society to that of a lady of his own species, who was quite a beauty in her way, and a very clever little thing to boot; but he endured her, nothing more, and I never even saw him kiss her once all the time they lived together, though he would have fed and caressed me all day long if I would allow him.

The English robin is another charming bird that has until recently been very seldom caged; now, however, he has taken his place among our domesticated pets, and a most delightful one he is, if you have only one; for he is not good-tempered, I must confess, as a rule, and is, moreover, of a decidedly jealous and intolerant disposition as regards his fellows. He has peculiar tastes, too, in the matter of diet—repulsive, I might say, for a person of his sedate bearing and neat appearance. He is remarkably fond of those nasty wriggling creatures that make digging in the garden a horror for me, but afforded the late Mr. Darwin material for an instructive and interesting book.

These eccentricities apart, however, the robin is a very desirable bird. I need not say that he is pretty; his red frontlet and breast and his dark olive-green coat testify to that fact pretty plainly. He is very bold and familiar, and soon becomes quite tame, even to sitting on the hand of the person who feeds him; but it is all cupboard love on his part; he only pretends to be fond of his master for the sake of what he can get.

The robin's song is one of the prettiest to be heard in our English lanes, and has the further merit of being poured forth as frequently in winter as in spring or summer. In the house he will sing almost the whole year round, except while actually moulting. His diet in-doors should consist of bread and milk, ants' eggs, meal-worms, and a little lean meat occasionally, upon which he will grow tamer and prettier every day. It is a pity that two of these birds cannot usually be kept together—never, if they are both males, and not always even if they are a pair.

Our English robin has many near relations abroad, among which I may mention the well-known American blue-robin, and that charming Indian bird commonly called the Peking nightingale, which, it is scarcely necessary to observe, is a true robin, and not a nightingale at all. I have said so much about this bird, the *leiothrix* of scientific authors, in another place that I have but little to report about it here, except that tame and confiding, pretty and interesting, as it is in every way, it is nevertheless a perfect nuisance in a mixed aviary, where it will eat up every egg it finds that it is able to pierce with its orange-tipped dagger of a bill. The male *leiothrix* sings very prettily, but not as well as his English congener, the robin-redbreast.

There are a great many fine songsters. There are the nightingale, queen (king?) of song, the mocking-bird, the *leiothrix*, the drongo, an Indian bird, and the *prostemadera*, of New Zealand, where it is commonly called the tui, from its cry, or parson-bird, from two white plumes it wears beneath its chin.

Well, I need hardly say that while an American would probably award the palm to his native mocking-bird, I as a Britisher would vote for the nightingale, though I must confess that I think the blackcap runs *Philomela* very near, and my friend Señor Leite would doubtless record his for the *sabia* of his native Brazil, where it sings all day on the top of the palm-tree, and ravishes all hearts with the charms of its soul-entrancing melody.

The drongo's minstrelsy I do not care very much about; it is starlingish rather, and somewhat loud; but the small body from which this music proceeds (it is not as large as a thrush) is worth more than its weight in sterling gold, seeing that the importer will not part with one of these birds for a less sum of money than thirteen or fourteen pounds.

Another Indian favorite is the mynah, a handsome fellow, rather larger than a starling, or perhaps I should say about the size of a jackdaw, clad in velvety black, with golden yellow wattles, legs, and bill. He is an accomplished linguist, it is generally allowed, and used at one time to be very dear, but now he can be bought for about twenty-five or thirty shillings, thanks to Mr. A. H. Jamrach, of Poplar, who has done so much to popularize exotic birds by bringing down the

prohibitive prices formerly asked and obtained for them.

These mynahs, however, notwithstanding their value as speaking birds, are not great favorites of mine, for from the nature of their food—boiled rice, fruit, meat, egg, etc.—they require a very large cage and continual attention to keep them clean and presentable in refined society; nor do I, for the same reason, much admire the gorgeously plumaged cissa, or hunting crow, another magnificent Indian; or the hoopoes, with their crown which they are said to have exchanged for one of gold, or the jays of many kinds, that are certainly among the most beautiful of birds, and have their representatives in every land and clime.

In their wild state all the members of the jay family rob nests and eat the eggs and young of other birds, our British representative of the order being very destructive among youthful pheasants and partridges, for which reason he is persecuted by the game-keepers, who shoot him wherever found, while the gardeners bear him scarce less grudge for pilfering their fruit and pease.

All the *Corvidæ* are capable of imitating the human voice, though perhaps the raven is the most fluent speaker among them. I may add that I have never actually kept one of these ill-omened fowl, for that "bird or fiend" that sat above poor Edgar Poe's chamber door, and would persist in croaking "Nevermore," has prejudiced me against the whole race. I once saw several full-grown young ones in Leadenhall Market, one of which already barked in imitation of a puppy-dog, and I inquired their price of the attendant, who replied, "Thirty shillings each." "How much for this bird?" I continued, pointing to the barker. "Oh! that one's two pound," said the man. I thanked him and turned away.

Ravens will breed, I have been told, in captivity, and if the progeny could be regularly disposed of at the price indicated, it would not be an unprofitable speculation to keep a few of them, with their wings cut, in one's back yard, for these birds will eat and thrive upon anything that comes to table, and as they are decidedly long-lived, it is reasonable to suppose that their progeny would be numerous. In England the raven is becoming scarce, but it is yet to be met with in Scotland in considerable numbers.

The magpie is one of the *Corvidæ* which it would be invidious to pass over in silence after mentioning the raven and the jay. True, it is not as big as the former, nor as gorgeously apparelled as the latter, but it is a very nice bird nevertheless.

The Australian magpie, or pied crow, is justly famed above all its congeners for its talents as a songster, no less than for the power of mimicry it also possesses. I might fill a good-sized volume with anecdotes of these birds, but must content myself at present with relating one or two instances of their sagacity. One that belonged to a friend of mine in the colony of Victoria was allowed to ramble about the grounds at his sweet will, and would, when attacked by the wild crows, throw himself on his back and fight them with beak and claw; but presently finding that half a dozen to one was long odds against him, he would jump up and anathematize them in good—or bad—colonial English, when his enemies immediately retreated in terror, and Jack returned jauntily to his master's residence, whistling the tune of

“There's nae guid luck about the house,  
There's nae guid luck ava.”

The same bird was a clever hunter after centipedes and scorpions, which he displayed great ingenuity in extracting from their hiding-places.

Another magpie I had the privilege of knowing was almost equally intelligent, and saved his mistress the trouble of calling the maid every morning by shouting out, as soon as it was day, “Bella, get up, you lazy slut, and get Micky's breakfast!” He too had the run of the place, but disappeared at length. Whether stolen by a passing tramp, or a victim to domestic vengeance, who shall say?

There are no singing-birds in Australia, we have often been told, but the assertion is of far too sweeping a description, for these magpies, or pied crows, really sing a loud, certainly, but a very charming whistling song that wonderfully relieves the monotony of the antipodean “bush,” and forms an ever-welcome contrast to the incessant chirp of the cicadas that abound in every tree, and make daylight hideous by their unbearable noise.

The Australian bush, however, notwithstanding the cicadas and a few other drawbacks, is a charming place—that is, where its fastnesses have not been profaned by the advent of the almost ubiquitous pros-

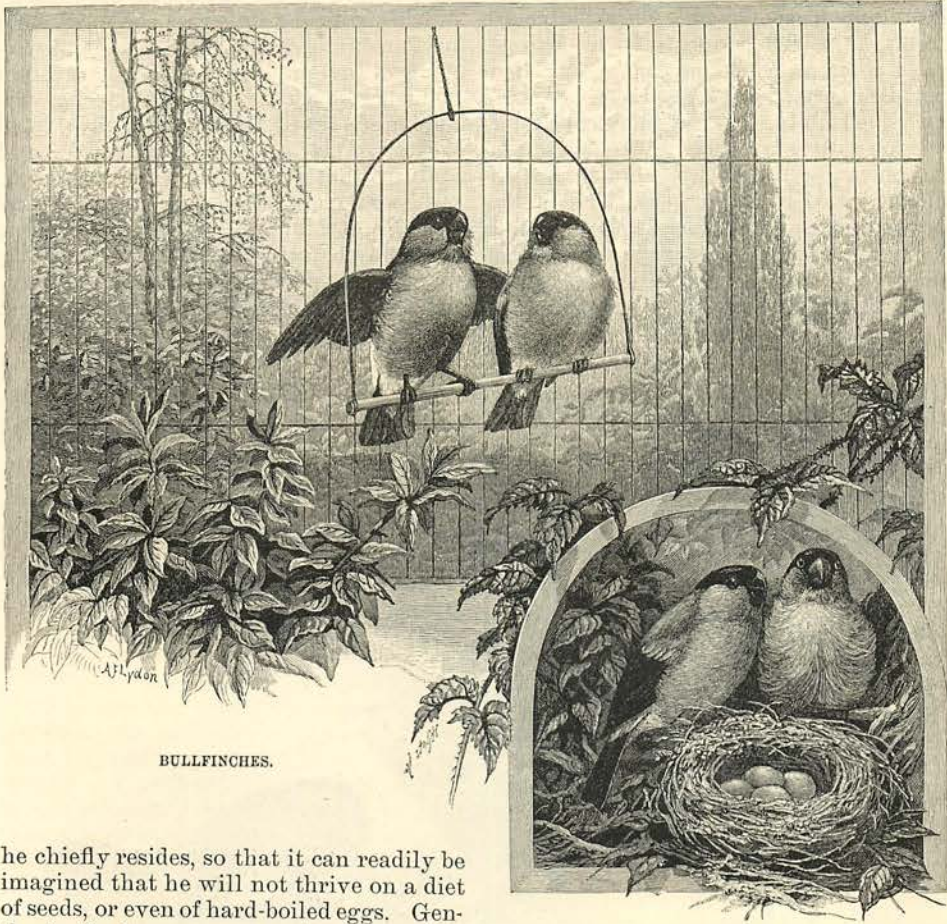
pector for gold—and its feathered inhabitants are among the most delightful of pets. I shall not have a great deal to say about them here, however, although I cannot refrain from briefly mentioning a few of the more desirable species, in addition to my old friend the magpie, or pied crow.

Every one knows the budgerigar—also called the undulated grass parakeet—but every one is not aware that he can by a little patience and perseverance be converted into a most charming pet, and taught to perform all sorts of clever and amusing tricks. One of these birds that I once possessed had learned of his own accord to sing like a canary, and I have received accurate and reliable information concerning other individuals of the same species that actually learned to repeat quite a number of words, which, however, I do not consider very extraordinary, in view of the conformation of this bird's beak and throat, seeing that I have also owned a genuine talking canary, and have seen bullfinches, blackbirds, and starlings that had the faculty of imitating the human voice.

The *Paridæ*, or tits, are charming birds with a strong family likeness running through the entire group; they are very delightful cage birds, and can be readily made quite tame by a judicious course of bribery with kernels of nuts, hemp-seed, and meal-worms. Care must be taken, however, not to place them in the same enclosure with weaker or more defenceless members of the feathered tribes, for they are all more or less mischievously disposed, and failing their favorite diet, are partial to a dish of brains—an expensive luxury at all times, but especially so where the providers are exotic birds, worth, perhaps, their weight in gold.

Nevertheless, as I have said, the tits in their proper place, which means a large cage or a sheltered garden aviary, are very delightful little creatures; but the quaint-looking bearded tit is perhaps the very nicest of them all. This bird seldom visits Britain of its own accord, but is frequently imported from Holland and Belgium, and is in considerable request by amateurs, who should, however, be possessed of some knowledge of this favorite's habits, or he will not long survive in their possession.

In his wild state the bearded tit lives exclusively on insects and young mollusca, which he collects among the reeds where



BULLFINCHES.

he chiefly resides, so that it can readily be imagined that he will not thrive on a diet of seeds, or even of hard-boiled eggs. Gentles in the larva or pupa stage, however, can be readily procured all the year round, and ants and their eggs are also obtainable—may, indeed, be preserved alive and fresh in perforated tin canisters for months, or a colony of them may be established in one's garden, where it will become no despicable boon for insectivorous captive birds, and, unless one has a peach-house, not interfere with the human proprietor of the place. In a glass case in a greenhouse, too, an old Wardian case, for instance, ants will even multiply as freely as fur moths in a barrel of rabbit-skins, providing some of the larvæ of the ubiquitous flesh-fly are given to them now and then for food.

The remaining English tits are the great tit, or ox-eye, the blue tit, the crested tit, the marsh-tit, and the coal-tit, otherwise coletit—all very charming birds, where there are no eggs to be sucked and no other birds to be tormented. The family is

largely represented in America and in Asia, nor in Africa and Australia are relations wanting of our English Paridæ, and without exception all of them are delightful birds, some even to an extreme degree.

The bulbuls I consider to be an allied group, and need only mention their name to set my readers thinking of the *Arabian Nights* and "Lalla Rookh." Some of these birds, as the Syrian bulbul, for instance, are easily kept in England, and at least one instance is reported from Germany of their having reared a brood in that country.

The Columbidae form a large and most natural group of birds, all of which are suited, I might say eminently suited, for domesticity, with the exception of a few species that live principally or entirely on fruit, and are distinguished from

their granivorous congeners by the generic name *Carpophaga*. These latter are rarely imported successfully to Europe, yet the magnificent, nay, gorgeous, Nicobar pigeon has been lodged at the "Zoo," and lived for some time there, while under the fostering care of M. Vekemann he has even multiplied his kind in the zoological gardens of Antwerp. The smaller doves, however, are more likely to attract the notice of lovers of cage birds; not that they particularly shine in a cage, for their lively disposition ill adapts them

semble the sound produced by tapping quickly with the finger on the musical (?) instrument in question, the gorgeous green-winged Indian dove and its Australian congener, to which it bears so strong a resemblance that I fancy one is but a local variety of the other, are quite hardy, and if turned out during the summer into an out-door aviary, become so thoroughly acclimatized before the winter sets in that they may be safely left out, even during the severest portion of the year, namely, the early spring, when the keenest east



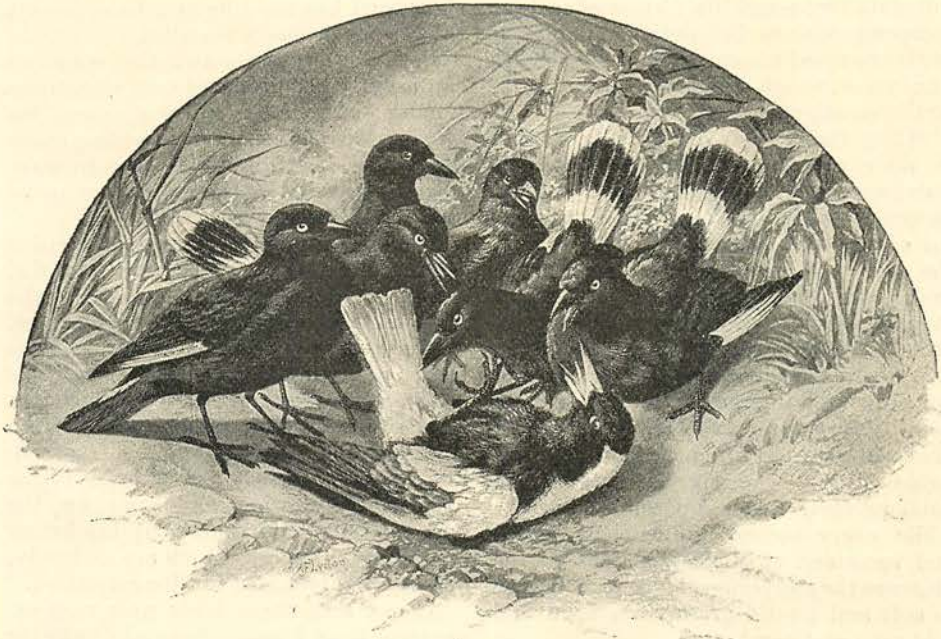
BLACKCAPS AND ROBIN-REDBREAST.

for confinement; but in an aviary of suitable dimensions, where they have room to fly freely about, and bushes in which to perch, they are seen to great advantage, and are really most delightful pets. One or two drawbacks, however, are inseparable from keeping doves; they are very quarrelsome, and most of them are very susceptible to cold.

No rule, however, is without its exception, and the zebra-dove, with its quaint undulated markings, the bronze-spotted dove, the tambourine-dove, so called from its peculiar note, which is thought to re-

winds are usually blowing, often for weeks at a time, so that these small exotic pigeons may be fairly looked upon as exceptionally hardy.

The tambourine-dove, however, is perhaps more susceptible to cold than the others, and experience has taught me that he does not become altogether acclimatized the first year he is turned out, but if housed from the middle of November until the middle or end of March, he may afterward be safely left to take his chance with the native and Northern birds in the garden aviary, especially if the aspect of



AUSTRALIAN CROWS AND MAGPIE.

the latter is, as it should be, south or southwestward.

Fogs and rain try these birds more than actual cold, and it is almost needless to point out that a snug air-tight, or I should say draught-proof, retreat should always be provided for their accommodation during the winter season, in addition to the open-air flight in which they love to bask during the warm and genial summer months.

Many of the exotic doves will breed quite freely in a good-sized aviary, Geoffrey's dove, for instance, the Australian crested dove, the rarer striated and spotted winged doves from northern Australia, and others, all of which, however, must be taken in-doors by the middle of October at latest, and kept in a warm room or house until the middle of May or the beginning of June, when they will much enjoy being turned out again.

Apropos of doves, it is a very common, I might almost say universal, error to designate the semi-domesticated collared or laughing turtle by the name of ring-dove, which belongs, rightfully or wrongfully I shall not now stay to inquire, to a totally different species, the wood-pigeon, to wit, which does *not* make an agreeable cage bird, for it is almost irreclaimably

wild. Of course there are instances on record contradicting this assertion, and proving *Columba palumbus* to be as tame and gentle as the bird to which I have just alluded really is; but there are exceptions to every rule, we know, and tame wood-pigeons merely confirm the general correctness of the proverb in question.

The collared turtle is admittedly gentle and tame; not that these birds do not occasionally squabble among themselves, for they both can and do wage fierce battle with each other in the spring-time if there chances to be an odd male or female in the dovery; so that the expression "as gentle as a dove" cannot be accepted without some qualification. With their owners, however, these pretty and very inexpensive birds are invariably most kind and gentle, and I know of no more delightful pets for a child in whom it is desired to foster the love of the feathered portion of creation.

A natural association of ideas now brings me to the gems of the bird world, considered as to their adaptability for household pets—the waxbills. They are more brilliantly colored than other birds; but for prettiness, neatness of carriage, sprightliness, happy, confiding disposition, frugality, endurance, and general

adaptability to cage life, I know of nothing to approach these Lilliputians among the birds, many of whom, when in full health and vigor, weigh about one dram each, or the eighth part of an ounce!

Millet forms their chief food, whether in their wild state or in captivity; this nutritious seed, however, may be advantageously varied now and then by a handful of hay seed scattered on the floor of the aviary or cage, and the waxbills will find a world of enjoyment in turning it over in search of the many tidbits it contains. A fresh sod of long grass they also appreciate highly, and it is both amusing and interesting to watch them daintily threading their way through the blades of verdure, which to them is a veritable jungle, wagging their tails, and bobbing their heads up and down the while every second, while their joyful and incessant twittering testifies to the pleasure they experience from the change to soft and humid grass from hard and arid sand and perches.

The smallest and most charming of these miniature birds are the orange-breasted, the orange-cheeked, the common gray, the lavender, the blue-eared (not unfrequently called the cordon bleu), the African fire-finch, the St. Helena waxbills, and the common and green avadavats. Given suitable temperature and appropriate surroundings, most of these pretty little creatures will build nests, lay eggs, and bring up young in England, and nothing can be more interesting than to watch them at play, to observe their antics, and even their little squabbles during what the French call *la saison des amours*.

Many of the waxbills are gifted with the faculty of song, notably the avadavats and the orange-cheek—an accomplishment, however, that I do not greatly value, although it adds considerably to their attractions in the eyes of numerous amateurs. For my part I have a great respect for the manikin family, of which the various members generally sing in dumb-show. The chief species belonging to this group, also frequently called nuns, are the black-headed, the white-headed, the brown, the two and the three colored, the bronze-winged, and the pied or magpie manikins, to which I add the spice-bird, which is usually classed with the grosbeaks, and the Australian manikin, also known by the inappropriate name of chocolate-finch, for it also sings in dumb-

show, and has no affinity whatever with the finches properly so called.

Both the waxbills and the manikins can usually be purchased very cheaply in London, often for a shilling apiece, but are, in view of their many sterling qualities, really worth their weight in gold. Their habitat, with the exceptions noted above, is either Africa or Asia.

There is an allied group of charming cage birds, rather larger than the waxbills, which is by some writers classed with the grosbeaks, in consequence of the thickness, or comparative stoutness rather, of their bills, but in my opinion these desirable birds are more nearly related to the sparrow. We receive, among others, from Australia the zebra-finch and the parson-finch, both of which are as beautiful as they are interesting and amusing, the double-headed and the cherry-headed or modest grass-finches, which are all hardy, and eminently suited for domestication.

At one time these birds were very expensive: thus I paid fifteen shillings for my first pair of zebras, thirty shillings for my parsons; and the diamond-sparrows, a closely allied species, were considered cheap at one pound sterling apiece. Now they can be obtained for five, eight, and twelve shillings a pair respectively.

Another prettily marked bird, now beginning to be known as the ribbon-finch, but which was formerly called by the less euphonious name of "cutthroat," in consequence of a band of bright red extending from ear to ear under the chin of the male, may be classed with the foregoing. In all its habits it is a sparrow, as fussy and quarrelsome as our semi-domestic London bird, makes like it a nest in any convenient hole, or, if in a tree, domes it with hay or fibre, feeds chiefly on seed, but brings up its young on insects or animal food of some kind. The male has a pleasing little song, but, as I have said, is decidedly quarrelsome, especially during the breeding season.

Some of these sparrows will nest anywhere and everywhere, and will rear a numerous progeny without any particular attention or interference on the part of the amateur; while others, on the contrary, are very fastidious in their choice of a dwelling-place, and even when they finally make up their minds to construct a nest and lay eggs, will very often not rear the young, but remorselessly toss them out of their cradle when they are





GROUP OF CAGE BIRDS.

about a week or ten days old, and immediately start to build a new nest. This cruel conduct of theirs is, I fancy, the result of inexperience, for as they get older I find, in the majority of cases, they get wiser too, and the lamentable slaughter of the innocents is not persisted in. Should the old birds, however, continue to maltreat their offspring after the first year, it will be better to get rid of them, and give their place to some of their fellows with less unnatural proclivities.

Nearly allied to the manikins are the Bengalis, or Bengalees, of which three varieties are in the market: one all white, another white and fawn, and a third white and brown. They are very nice little birds, but act capriciously in the matter of nesting and feeding their young, after the manner of the ribbon-finches. The price of these Japanese toys has declined from two or three guineas to about twelve or fifteen shillings a pair.

I cannot pass on to another section of my subject without a glance at that old favorite of connoisseurs, the Java sparrow, once an expensive acquisition, but now frequently sold for twelve or fourteen shillings a dozen. Of this well-known species there are now two varieties offered to amateurs by the dealers, namely, the common gray and the white. The latter is of Chinese or Japanese creation, and not long since was very expensive; at present, however, it is comparatively cheap; that is to say, a pair may be purchased for about fifteen shillings, possibly in some cases even less. Both the common Java sparrow, otherwise the paddy or rice bird, and the white variety, breed freely in captivity, making a large nest of hay, twigs, and fibre, lined with feathers, in a box or hole of any kind. The eggs are white, and the young are readily reared on bread and milk and ants' eggs.

What an amount of sentiment has been wasted on a class of small parrots commonly called love-birds, or inseparables, which are about the size of a bullfinch, but in one or two instances somewhat less! It was once currently believed that they must be procured in pairs, and that if one of them died, the other would not long survive; but this is quite a mistake, as I have proved in several instances, which I have related in detail in my work on *Parrots in Captivity*.

In the matter of plumage the love-birds are not showy, green being the ground

color with them all, relieved in some species by red on the face, by blue on the wings and back in others, and in yet others by delicate lavender gray on the head and neck; all are short and squat in figure, very dull and listless in a cage, but quick and lively in a large aviary, in which latter situation they ought only to be kept.

The love-birds seldom learn to speak, and most of them have a shrill, screaming note that is far from agreeable.

Some of them will breed in confinement—the blue-wings, rosy-faced, and lavender-headed species for example; but the red-faced love-birds do not; at least in this country they have not done so, to my knowledge, so far; but I imagine they have scarcely had fair play allowed them in this respect by their owners. With the exception of the Madagascar or lavender-headed love-bird, which is perfectly hardy, all these little parrots must be taken in-doors in the autumn, and be warmly housed during the inclement months of the year.

Formerly very dear, all the love-birds are now cheap, excepting the rosy-faced, for which dealers yet demand from five to seven pounds sterling a pair.

An article on cage-birds without any reference to the larger parrots seems something like the drama of *Hamlet* with the rôle of the Prince of Denmark left out; but I can do no more than mention them in this paper.

Who that has read books of American travel—South American travel at least—has not been fascinated by the accounts of the marvellous living gems that make the forests of Brazil, Mexico, and the intervening isthmus a realization of the dream of the author of Aladdin's adventures in the subterranean garden whither he went to seek the wonderful lamp for his pretended uncle the magician—a garden where the fruit upon the trees were precious stones of inestimable value? And a visit to the Gould collection of humming-birds at Kensington incontestably proves that the writers in question have scarcely if at all exaggerated in their account of what they saw, for what inconceivable combinations of form and color do we not behold in these miniature birds!—colors the most enchanting, and forms as eccentric and bizarre. To imagine them they must be seen, and when seen, the heart of the spectator is filled with an intense de-



TIT FAMILY.

sire to become the possessor of such unparalleled loveliness.

Well, such possession is not as impossible as might at first sight appear, for humming-birds have actually not only been brought to Europe alive, but have been preserved in Paris in perfect health and beauty for some time, and, for anything I know to the contrary, some of them may yet constitute a perpetual joy to their owners, for that they are things of beauty I suppose no one will deny.

Dr. Russ, of Berlin, the well-known ornithologist, thus relates in his *Hand-Book*, page 340, on the authority of Professor Alphonse Milne-Edwards, the circumstance to which I am alluding: "A French woman who formerly resided for some years in Mexico has already twice brought over a number of humming-birds (*colubris*) to Europe, and in the July of 1876 I saw more than fifty of them, belonging to five or six different species, flying about in her cage."

Amateurs may therefore confidently hope to see the living gems and blossoms of the tropics transferred to their aviaries in the south and west, for "there is a certain syrup," says the same authority, "in which these most lovely [*allerliebsten*] birds find suitable nourishment." True, he omits to give the formula, but no

doubt that is to be obtained, and then a collection of the Trochilidæ will be a sight to make men marvel, and ladies pause ere they authorize the wholesale slaughter of these animated jewels for the adornment (?) of their hats and bonnets.

The British song-thrush is, to my mind, a disappointing bird, and so is the lark of these humid islands, perhaps because too much is expected by a stranger of the former, and the latter cannot be readily reconciled to a life of captivity in a narrow cage when the boundless realms of space are his natural habitat.

In Brittany, where I lived for many years, we had no song-thrushes that I remember. Grives there were in plenty, but I fancy they were missel, and not song thrushes; at least they were larger than any I have seen in England; and redwings and fieldfares were abundant in winter. Of course I had read a great deal about the music of the spotted thrush in my natural history books, and was most anxious to compare the accounts I found there with the reality. At length my wish was gratified, and, as I have said, I was greatly disappointed. Yet hear what others have to say.

"The song-thrush," writes a German author, "is the great charm of our woods,

which it enlivens by the beauty of its song. The rival of the nightingale, it announces in varied accents the return of spring, and continues its delightful notes during all the summer months, particularly at morning and evening twilight." "It is," continues the same author, "to procure this gratification in his dwelling that the bird-fancier rears it, and deprives it of its liberty; and he thus enjoys the pleasure of the woods in the midst of the city."

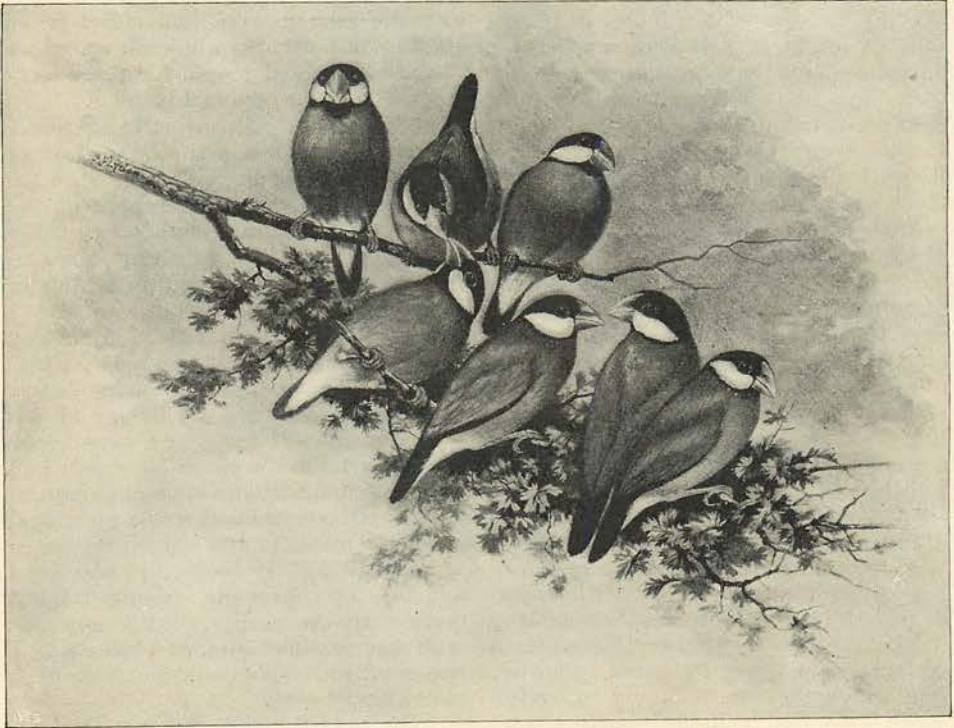
Selfishness, I fear, is at the bottom of the desire to keep birds in a cage, as I have already hinted, and if excusable at all, the motive must be consecrated and rendered legitimate by the most careful attention to the little prisoners, and the most earnest desire to render their lives as happy and as comfortable as possible.

There is one bird, however, I must, in conclusion, ask my readers not to cage—I mean the skylark. The free denizen of the empyrean is out of place behind the bars of even the best-appointed cage, and in an aviary his unconquerable love of liberty will prompt him to dash himself against the bars in a manner so distressing to be-

hold that no person with a heart could keep him captive for a moment.

I have known instances of young larks that were stolen from the parental nest when they were no more than a few days old, and were brought up by the hand of a gentle lady, which, nevertheless, on being turned into a large, well-grassed garden aviary, as soon as they were able to feed themselves, became quite wild in less than a fortnight, and so injured themselves in their frantic efforts to escape that one of them died from the effect of its self-inflicted wounds, and the others were allowed to fly away, which they did right joyfully, nor were they ever seen again by their former owner.

American birds I may not now dwell upon, but I cannot refrain from just mentioning that a multitude of delightful cage birds are imported from the dual continent. The cardinals, indigo-birds, nonpareils, the rare and beautiful rupicolos, the orioles, and numerous parrots, each more delightful than the other, are cases in point; but I must refrain, and bring my long-winded, but I hope not altogether uninteresting, article to a close.



JAVA SPARROWS.