

VARIOUS

BIRDS ILLUSTRATED BY
COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY
[JANUARY, 1898]

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Photography [January, 1898]

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*Birds Illustrated by Color Photography [January, 1898] A Monthly Serial
designed to Promote Knowledge of Bird-Life:*

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INTRODUCTION

With the January number of *Birds*, we enter upon a new year with the satisfaction of having pleased our readers, as well as rendered an actual service to the cause of education, ornithological literature, and art. Among the hundreds of testimonials from competent judges, (many of them scientists), which we have received, we will permit ourselves the use of one only, as exemplifying the excellence which we have sought to attain and the rightful claim which we may make for the future. The writer says: "I find *Birds* an everlasting source of pleasure to the children, not less than to myself. I have one of the few almost absolutely *fresh* copies of 'Audubon's *Birds*,' for which I

have refused \$3,000, besides later works, and I will say that the pictures of birds given in your magazine are infinitely more true to life, and more pleasing, every way, than any of those presented in either work. The other day I compared some of your pictures with the birds mounted by myself, notably a Wood-duck and a Wood-cock, and every marking co-incided. The photographs might have been taken from my own specimens, so accurately were they delineated, attesting the truth of your work.”

Some of our subscribers, unaware of the prodigality with which nature has scattered birds throughout the world, have asked whether the supply of specimens may not soon be exhausted. Our answer is, that there are many thousands of rare and attractive birds, all of them interesting for study, from which, for years to come, we might select many of the loveliest forms and richest plumage. Of North American birds alone there are more than twelve hundred species.

The success of *Birds* is due to its superior color illustrations and the unique treatment of the text. Popular and yet scientific, it is interesting to old and young alike.

The classification and nomenclature followed are those adopted by the American Ornithological Union in 1895.

Nature Study Publishing Company.

THE PIGEONS

Under the big nursery table
Are Sue, Don, Harold, and Mabel,
All playing, with joy and delight,
That pigeons they are, dressed in white.

Don't you hear their gentle "coo, coo"?
Ah, now they fly out in full view!
And over the meadow they go —
'Tis their own dear nursery, you know —

Where, quick to the tops of the trees
They fly, with lightness and ease;
There each birdie is glad to be
Perched high upon a big chair-tree.

But to their home in swiftest flight
They haste, ere day has changed to night;
Then in they go, with cooing sweet,
And find their home a blest retreat.

And now they tell just where they've been,
And all the wondrous sights they've seen.
Then with their "coo, coo," soft and low,
Each pigeon goes to sleep, I trow.

– *Emma G. Saulsbury.*

THE CROWNED PIGEON

WE regret that a full monograph of this remarkable bird cannot be given in this number. It is the giant among Pigeons and has some characteristics, on account of its great size, not common to the family. Very little has been written about it, and it would be a real service to ornithology if some one familiar with the subject would communicate his knowledge to the public. These birds pair for life, and the loss or death of a mate is in many cases mourned and grieved over, the survivor frequently refusing to be consoled.

The Pigeon family is an exceedingly interesting one, of great variety of form and color, undergoing constant change by interbreeding. There are about three hundred known species of Pigeons and Doves, about one third of which number are found in the New World. In North America but twelve species occur, a family small enough to find room in Birds to sit for their pictures. Some of these birds, says Chapman, are arboreal, others are strictly terrestrial. Some seek the forests and others prefer the fields and clearings. Some nest in colonies, others in isolated pairs, but most species are found in flocks of greater or less size after the nesting season. When drinking, they do not raise the head as others do to swallow, but keep the bill immersed until the draught is finished. The young are born naked and are fed by regurgitation.

Living specimens of this the largest species of Pigeons may some day be brought to the United States and made to increase as the Ring-necked English Pheasant has already been domesticated in their own country. It has been suggested that their introduction among us would be a comparatively easy matter.

THE RED-EYED VIREO

“A bird with red eyes! look, mamma,” said Bobby. “How funny!”

“And how beautiful,” replied his mamma. “Not plainly dressed, like his cousin, the Warbling Vireo, whose picture you saw in the October number of Birds.”

“The Yellow-Throated, in the June number,” said Bobbie, who has a remarkable memory, “was a lovely bird, too, mamma. Can Mr. Red-eye sing?”

“No, you can’t call his note a song; it is more like a chatter, which he keeps up from morning till night.”

“Like some children,” said Bobbie, with a sage nod of the head, “who talk all day long.”

“Yes,” smiled his mamma, “without saying very much, either. But this little bird works while he chatters.”

“I reckon he stops at noon time,” said Bobbie, “as other birds do.”

“No, even then the silence of the woods is broken by the Red-eyed Vireo’s voice. He is such a busy little fellow, he can’t find time for a nap.”

“Hm!” remarked Bobbie; “the other birds must find him a tiresome fellow, I think.

“Has he any other names, mamma?”

“Yes, he is called the Red-eyed Greenlet or Red-eyed Fly-

catcher. One gentleman calls him ‘The Preacher.’ To him the bird seems to say, ‘*You see it; you know it; do you hear me? do you believe it?*’”

“I’m going to look out for that red-eyed preacher next summer,” said Bobby, with a laugh.

“One lady who makes a study of birds thinks he says, ‘*I know it! would you think it? musn’t touch it; you’ll rue it!*’ He makes a pause, as you see, after each sentence.”

“Tell me something about their nests?” said Bobbie, deeply interested.

“They are made of bark fibers, cobwebs, bits of paper, and scraps of hornets’ nests, in the form of a little pocket. This is suspended from the fork of two or more twigs high up in the tree, making a sort of cradle for the little ones.”

“Rock-a-by, baby, on the tree top,
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.”

hummed Bobby. “How jolly!”

“Yes,” said mamma; “and they take care that it is under some green leaves, which act as an umbrella to keep the sun out of the mother’s eyes while she sits on the four pretty white eggs.”

“And out of the little ones’ red eyes, too,” laughed Bobbie. “How cute!”

THE RED EYED VIREO

RED-EYED VIREO, Red-eyed Greenlet, and Red-eyed Fly-catcher are the names variously applied to this pretty representative of his family, of which there are about fifty species. The Red-eye is an inhabitant of Central America and Mexico, its northern limit being the lower Rio Grande valley in Texas.

The exquisite little creature is tinted even more delicately than the Wax-wing, but with much the same glossy look and elegant air. The ruby-tinted eye, and the conspicuous white line above it, with its border, are good characteristics by which to distinguish it from its relatives.

The Red-eyed Vireo is found alike in the shade trees of lawns, in orchards or woodlands, and is especially fond of sycamore groves along streams. The male is a tireless songster, and even at noon-tide of a sultry summer-day, when all other warblers are silent, his monotonous song will be heard. *He-ha-wha*, or *he, ha, whip*, in rising inflection, and *he, ha, whee*, in falling cadence. He has also a *chip*, a chatter like a miniature of the Oriole's scold, heard only in the season of courtship, and a peculiarly characteristic querulous note which, like others, can not be described with accuracy.

“The Preacher,” a name which Wilson Flagg has given this Vireo, exactly reflects the character of the bird and its song. “His

style of preaching is not declamation,” says the writer. “Though constantly talking, he takes the part of a deliberate orator who explains his subject in a few words and then makes a pause for his hearers to reflect upon it. We might suppose him to be repeating moderately, with a pause between each sentence, ‘You see it – You know it – Do you hear me? – Do you believe it?’ All these strains are delivered with a rising inflection at the close, and with a pause, as if waiting for an answer.”

From morning till night this cheery bird sings as he works, from May to September. “His tender and pathetic utterances,” says Brewer, “are in striking contrast to the apparent indifference or unconsciousness of the little vocalist who, while thus delighting the ear of the listener, seems to be all the while bent on procuring its daily food, which it pursues with unabated ardor.”

As noxious and destructive insects constitute the Vireo’s chief food he may properly be classed among the beneficent birds. Seeking for these is his constant occupation, as he hops along a branch, now peering into some crevice of the bark or nook among the foliage, ever uttering his pretty song during the interval between swallowing the last worm and finding the next.

The nest of the Red-eye is built in a horizontal branch of a tree, usually in a small sapling that responds to all the caprices of the wind, thus acting as a cradle for the little ones within. The nest is cup-like in shape, and always dependent from small twigs, around which its upper edges are firmly bound, with a canopy of leaves overhead. It is woven of a variety of materials, fine strips

of bark, fibres of vegetables, and webs of spiders and caterpillars. It is said that two nests of the same species are rarely found alike. Some are built of paper fibres, and bits of hornets' nests, and another may be a perfect collection of scraps of all sorts.

The eggs are three or four, white with a few black or umber specks about the larger end.

It was in the nest of the Red-eyed Vireo that Hamilton Gibson found twisted a bit of newspaper, whose single legible sentence read: “* * * have in view the will of God.”*

THE EARLY OWL

An Owl once lived in a hollow tree,
And he was as wise as wise could be.
The branch of learning he didn't know
Could scarce on the tree of knowledge grow,
He knew the tree from branch to root,
And an owl like that can afford to hoot.

And he hooted – until, alas! one day,
He chanced to hear, in a casual way,
An insignificant little bird
Make use of a term he had never heard.
He was flying to bed in the dawning light
When he heard her singing with all her might,
“Hurray! hurray! for the early worm!”
“Dear me,” said the owl, “what a singular term!
I would look it up if it weren't so late,
I must rise at dusk to investigate.
Early to bed and early to rise
Makes an owl healthy, and stealthy, and wise!”

So he slept like an honest owl all day,
And rose in the early twilight gray,
And went to work in the dusky light
To look for the early worm at night.

He searched the country for miles around,
But the early worm was not to be found;
So he went to bed in the dawning light
And looked for the “worm” again next night.
And again and again, and again and again,
He sought and he sought, but all in vain,
Till he must have looked for a year and a day
For the early worm in the twilight gray.

At last in despair he gave up the search,
And was heard to remark as he sat on his perch
By the side of his nest in the hollow tree:
“The thing is as plain as night to me —
Nothing can shake my conviction firm.
There’s no such thing as the early worm.”

— *O. Herford.*

THE FOX-COLORED SPARROW

IN "Wood Notes Wild," S. P. Cheney says this song-loving Sparrow has a sweet voice and a pleasing song, which he has set to music. No Sparrow, he says, sings with a better quality of tone. A distinguished musician himself, no one was better qualified to give a final opinion upon the subject. Others have spoken in praise of it, Burroughs characterizing it as "a strong, richly modulated whistle, the finest Sparrow note I have ever heard." Baird says, "in the spring the male becomes quite musical, and is one of our sweetest and most remarkable singers. His voice is loud, clear, and melodious; his notes full, rich, and varied; and his song is unequalled by any of this family that I have ever heard." Mr. Torrey finds a "Thrush-like" quality in the song of the Fox Sparrow. In his "Birds in the Bush" Mr. Torrey describes an interesting contest as follows:

"One afternoon I stood still while a Fox Sparrow and a Song Sparrow sang alternately on either side of me, both exceptionally good vocalists, and each doing his best. The songs were of about equal length, and as far as theme was concerned were not a little alike; but the Fox Sparrow's tone was both louder and more mellow than the others, while his notes were longer, – more sustained, – and his voice was 'carried' from one pitch to another. On the whole, I had no hesitation about giving him the palm; but I am bound to say that his rival was a worthy competitor."

The Fox-colored Sparrow is also one of the largest and finest of his tribe, breeding from the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Labrador north into Alaska; in winter it is met with south over the whole of the eastern United States to the Gulf coast. Audubon found it nesting in Labrador from the middle of June to the 5th of July. Its nest has been found in trees and on the ground in the Arctic regions, on the Yukon river in July. According to many observers, the nests are, for the most part, placed on the ground, usually concealed by the drooping branches of evergreens. They are made of grass and moss, lined with fine grass and feathers. Some nests are three or four inches in depth, strong, compact, and handsome. The eggs are three or five, oval in form, of a clayey greenish ground color, dotted with dull reddish brown and chocolate. They vary in coloration.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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