VARIOUS

BIRDS ILLUSTRATED BY COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY VOL 3. NO 4.

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Содержание

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AVIARIES

AN admirer of birds recently said to us: "Much is said of the brilliant specimens which you have presented in your magazine, but I confess that they have not been the most attractive to me. Many birds of no special beauty of plumage seem to me far more interesting than those which have little more than bright colors and a pretty song to recommend them to the observer." He did not particularize, but a little reflection will readily account for the justness of his opinion. Many plain birds have characteristics which indicate considerable intelligence, and may be watched and studied with continued and increasing interest. To get sufficiently near to them in their native haunts for this purpose is seldom practicable, hence the limited knowledge of individual naturalists, who are often mere generalizers, and the necessity of the accumulated knowledge of many patient students. In an aviary of sufficient size, in which there is little or no interference with the natural habits of the birds, a vast number of interesting facts may be obtained, and the birds themselves

suffer no harm, but are rather protected from it. Such an aviary is that of Mr. J. W. Sefton, of San Diego, California. In a recent letter Mrs. Sefton pleasantly writes of it for the benefit of readers of Birds. She says:

"My aviary is out in the grounds of our home. It is built almost entirely of wire, protected only on the north and west by an open shed, under which the birds sleep, build their nests and gather during the rains which we occasionally have throughout the winter months. The building is forty feet long, twenty feet wide, and at the center of the arch is seventeen feet high. Running water trickles over rocks, affording the birds the opportunity of bathing as they desire. There are forty-seven varieties of birds and about four hundred specimens. The varieties include a great many whose pictures have appeared in Birds: Quail, Partridge, Doves, Skylarks, Starlings, Bobolinks, Robins, Blackbirds, Buntings, Grosbeaks, Blue Mountain Lory, Cockateel, Rosellas, Grass Parrakeet, Java Sparrows, Canaries, Nonpariels, Nightingales, Cardinals of North and South America, and a large number of rare foreign Finches, indeed nearly every country of the world has a representative in the aviary.

"We have hollow trees in which the birds of the Parrot family set up housekeeping. They lay their eggs on the bottom of the hole, make no pretention of building a nest, and sit three weeks. The young birds are nearly as large as the parents, and are fully feathered and colored when they crawl out of the home nest. We have been very successful, raising two broods of Cockateel and

one of Rosellas last season. They lay from four to six round white eggs. We have a number of Bob White and California Quail. Last season one pair of Bob Whites decided to go to housekeeping in some brush in a corner, and the hen laid twenty-three eggs, while another pair made their nest in the opposite corner and the hen laid nine eggs. After sitting two weeks the hen with the nine eggs abandoned her nest, when the male took her place upon the eggs, only leaving them for food and water, and finally brought out six babies, two days after the other hen hatched twenty-three little ones. For six days the six followed the lone cock around the aviary, when three of them left him and went over to the others. A few days later another little fellow abandoned him and took up with a California Quail hen. The next day the poor fellow was alone, every chick having deserted him. The last little one remained with his adopted mother over two weeks, but at last he too went with the crowd. These birds seemed just as happy as though they were unconfined to the limits of an aviary.

"We have had this aviary over two years and have raised a large number of birds. All are healthy and happy, although they are out in the open both day and night all the year round. Many persons, observant of the happiness and security of our family of birds, have brought us their pets for safe-keeping, being unwilling, after seeing the freedom which our birds enjoy, to keep them longer confined in small cages.

"Around the fountain are calla lillies, flags, and other growing plants, small trees are scattered about, and the merry whistles

and sweet songs testify to the perfect contentment of this happy family."

Yes, these birds are happy in *such* confinement. They are actually deprived of nothing but the opportunity to migrate. They have abundance of food, are protected from predatory animals, Hawks, conscienceless hunters, small boys, and nature herself, who destroys more of them than all other instrumentalities combined. Under the snow lie the bodies of hundreds of frozen birds whenever the winter has seemed unkind. A walk in the park, just after the thaw in early March, revealed to us the remorselessness of winter. They have no defense against the icy blast of a severe season. And yet, how many escape its ruthlessness. On the first day of March we saw a white-breasted Sparrow standing on the crust of snow by the roadside. When we came up close to it it flew a few yards and alighted. As we again approached, thinking to catch it, and extending our hand for the purpose, it flew farther away, on apparently feeble wing. It was in need of food. The whole earth seemed covered with snow, and where food might be found was the problem the poor Sparrow was no doubt considering.

Yes, the birds are happy when nature is bountiful. And they are none the less happy when man provides for them with humane tenderness. For two years we devoted a large room – which we never thought of calling an aviary – to the exclusive use of a beautiful pair of Hartz mountain Canaries. In that short time they increased to the number of more than three dozen. All

were healthy; many of them sang with ecstacy, especially when the sun shone brightly; in the warmth of the sun they would lie with wings raised and seem to fairly revel in it; they would bathe once every day, sometimes twice, and, like the English Sparrows and the barnyard fowl, they would wallow in dry sand provided for them; they would recognize a call note and become attentive to its meaning, take a seed from the hand or the lips, derive infinite pleasure from any vegetable food of which they had long been deprived; if a Sparrow Hawk, which they seemed to see instantly, appeared at a great height they hastily took refuge in the darkest corner of the room, venturing to the windows only after all danger seemed past; at the first glimmering of dawn they twittered, preened, and sang a prodigious welcome to the morn, and as the evening shades began to appear they became as silent as midnight and put their little heads away under their delicate yellow wings.

Charles C. Marble.

FOREIGN SONG BIRDS IN OREGON

IN 1889 and 1892 the German Song Bird Society of Oregon introduced there 400 pairs of the following species of German song birds, to-wit: Song Thrushes, Black Thrushes, Skylarks, Woodlarks, Goldfinches, Chaffinches, Ziskins, Greenfinches, Bullfinches, Grossbeaks, Black Starlings, Robin Redbreasts, Linnets, Singing Quails, Goldhammers, Linnets, Forest Finches, and the plain and black headed Nightingales. The funds for defraying the cost of importation and other incidental expenses, and for the keeping of the birds through the winter, were subscribed by the citizens of Portland and other localities in Oregon. To import the first lot cost about $1,400. After the birds were received they were placed on exhibition at the Exposition building for some days, and about $400 was realized, which was applied toward the expense. Subsequently all the birds, with the exception of the Sky and Wood Larks, were liberated near the City Park. The latter birds were turned loose about the fields in the Willamette Valley.

When the second invoice of birds arrived it was late in the season, and Mr. Frank Dekum caused a very large aviary to be built near his residence where all the sweet little strangers were safely housed and cared for during the winter. The birds were

all liberated early in April. Up to that time (Spring of 1893) the total cost of importing the birds amounted to $2,100.

Since these birds were given their liberty the most encouraging results have followed. It is generally believed that the two varieties of Nightingales have become extinct, as few survived the long trip and none have since been seen. All the other varieties have multiplied with great rapidity. This is true especially of the Skylarks. These birds rear from two to four broods every season. Hundreds of them are seen in the fields and meadows in and about East Portland, and their sweet songs are a source of delight to every one. About Rooster Rock, twenty-five miles east of Portland on the Columbia, great numbers are to be seen. In fact the whole Willamette Valley from Portland to Roseburg is full of them, probably not as plentiful as the Ring-neck Pheasant but plentiful enough for all practical purposes. In and about the city these sweet little songsters are in considerable abundance. A number of the Black Starling make their homes about the high school building. The Woodlarks are also in evidence to a pleasing extent.

There is a special State law in force for the protection of these imported birds. They are all friends of the farmer, especially of the orchardists. They are the tireless and unremitting enemy of every species of bug and worm infesting vegetables, crops, fruit, etc. – S. H. Greene, in *Forest and Stream*.

BIRD SONGS OF MEMORY

Oh, surpassing all expression by the rhythmic use of words,
Are the memories that gather of the singing of the birds;
When as a child I listened to the Whipporwill at dark,
And with the dawn awakened to the music of the lark.

Then what a chorus wonderful when morning had begun!
The very leaves it seemed to me were singing to the sun,
And calling on the world asleep to waken and behold
The king in glory coming forth along his path of gold.

The crimson-fronted Linnet sang above the river's edge;
The Finches from the evergreens, the Thrushes in the hedge;
Each one as if a dozen songs were chorused in his own,
And all the world were listening to him and him alone.

In gladness sang the Bobolink upon ascending wing,
With cheering voice the bird of blue, the pioneer of spring;
The Oriole upon the elm with martial note and clear,
While Martins twittered gaily by the cottage window near.

Among the orchard trees were heard the Robin and the Wren,
And the army of the Blackbirds along the marshy fen;
The songsters in the meadow, and the Quail upon the wheat,
And the Warbler's minor music, made the symphony

complete.

Beyond the towering chimneyd walls that daily meet my eyes
I hold a vision beautiful, beneath the summer skies;
Within the city's grim confines, above the roaring street,
The *happy birds of memory* are singing clear and sweet.

– Garrett Newkirk.

THE OVENBIRD

NOW and then an observer has the somewhat rare pleasure of seeing this Warbler (a trifle smaller than the English Sparrow) as he scratches away, fowl fashion, for his food. He has more than one name, and is generally known as the Golden-crowned Thrush, which name, it seems to us, is an appropriate one, for by any one acquainted with the Thrush family he would at once be recognized as of the genus. He has still other names, as the Teacher, Wood Wagtail, and Golden-crowned Accentor.

This warbler is found nearly all over the United States, hence all the American readers of Birds should be able to make its personal acquaintance.

Mr. Ridgway, in "Birds of Illinois," a book which should be especially valued by the citizens of that state, has given so delightful an account of the habits of the Golden-crown, that we may be forgiven for using a part of it. He declares that it is one of the most generally distributed and numerous birds of eastern North America, that it is almost certain to be found in any piece of woodland, if not too wet, and its frequently repeated song, which, in his opinion, is not musical, or otherwise particularly attractive, but very sharp, clear, and emphatic, is often, especially during noonday in midsummer, the only bird note to be heard.

You will generally see the Ovenbird upon the ground walking gracefully over the dead leaves, or upon an old log, making

occasional halts, during which its body is tilted daintily up and down. Its ordinary note, a rather faint but sharp *chip*, is prolonged into a chatter when one is chased by another. The usual song is very clear and penetrating, but not musical, and is well expressed by Burroughs as sounding like the words *Teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher!* the accent on the first syllable, and each word uttered with increased force. Mr. Burroughs adds, however, that it has a far rarer song, which it reserves for some nymph whom it meets in the air. Mounting by easy flights to the top of the tallest tree, it launches into the air with a sort of suspended, hovering flight, and bursts into a perfect ecstacy of song, rivaling the Gold Finch's in vivacity and the Linnet's in melody. Thus do observers differ. To many, no doubt, it is one of the least disagreeable of noises. Col. Goss is a very enthusiastic admirer of the song of this Warbler. Hear him: "Reader, if you wish to hear this birds' love song in its fullest power, visit the deep woods in the early summer, as the shades of night deepen and most of the diurnal birds have retired, for it is then its lively, resonant voice falls upon the air unbroken, save by the silvery flute-like song of the Wood Thrush; and if your heart does not thrill with pleasure, it is dead to harmonious sounds." What more has been said in prose of the song of the English Nightingale?

The nests of the Golden Crown are placed on the ground, usually in a depression among leaves, and hidden in a low bush, log, or overhanging roots; when in an open space roofed over, a dome-shaped structure made of leaves, strippings from plants

and grasses, with entrance on the side. The eggs are from three to six, white or creamy white, glossy, spotted as a rule rather sparingly over the surface. In shape it is like a Dutch oven, hence the name of the bird.

ARCTIC THREE-TOED WOODPECKER

Well, here I am, one of those "three-toed fellows," as the Red-bellied Woodpecker called me in the February number of Birds. It is remarkable how impolite some folks can be, and how anxious they are to talk about their neighbors.

I don't deny I have only three toes, but why he should crow over the fact of having four mystifies me. I can run up a tree, zig-zag fashion, just as fast as he can, and play hide-and-seek around the trunk and among the branches, too. Another toe wouldn't do me a bit of good. In fact it would be in my way; a superfluity, so to speak.

In the eyes of those people who like red caps, and red clothes, I may not be as handsome as some other Woodpeckers whose pictures you have seen, but to my eye, the black coat I wear, and the white vest, and square, saffron-yellow cap are just as handsome. The Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, who sent their pictures to Birds in the March number, were funny looking creatures, *I*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.