

VARIOUS

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Various

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AUTUMN WOODS

Ere, in the northern gale,
The summer tresses of the trees are gone,
The woods of Autumn, all around our vale,
Have put their glory on.

The mountains that infold,
In their wide sweep, the colored landscape round,
Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and gold,
That guard the enchanted ground.

I roam the woods that crown
The uplands, where the mingled splendors glow,
Where the gay company of trees look down
On the green fields below.

My steps are not alone
In these bright walks; the sweet southwest, at play,
Flies, rustling, where the painted leaves are strown
Along the winding way.

And far in heaven, the while,
The sun, that sends that gale to wander here,
Pours out on the fair earth his quiet smile —
The sweetest of the year.

— *William Cullen Bryant.*

THE PHILIPPINE SUN-BIRD (*Cinnyris jugularis*.)

Darlings of children and of bard,
Perfect kinds by vice unmarred,
All of worth and beauty set
Gems in Nature's cabinet:
These the fables she esteems
Reality most like to dreams.

– *Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature."*

The sun-birds bear a similar relation to the oriental tropics that the humming birds do to the warmer regions of the Western hemisphere. Both have a remarkably brilliant plumage which is in harmony with the gorgeous flowers that grow in the tropical fields. It is probable that natives of Asia first gave the name sun-birds to these bright creatures because of their splendid and shining plumage. By the Anglo-Indians they have been called hummingbirds, but they are perching birds while the hummingbirds are not. There are over one hundred species of these birds. They are graceful in all their motions and very active in their habits. Like the hummingbirds, they flit from flower to flower, feeding on the minute insects which are attracted by the nectar, and probably to some extent on the honey, for their tongues are fitted for gathering it. However, their habit while gathering food is unlike that of the hummingbird, for they do not hover over the flower, but perch upon it while feeding. The plumage of the males nearly always differs very strongly from that of the females. The brilliantly colored patches are unlike those of the hummingbirds for they blend gradually and are not sharply contrasted, though the iridescent character is just as marked. The bills are long and slender, finely pointed and curved. The edges of the mandibles are finely serrated.

The nests are beautiful structures suspended from the end of a bough or even from the underside of a leaf. The entrance is near the top and usually on the side. Over the entrance a projecting portico is often constructed. The outside of the nest is usually covered with coarse materials, apparently to give the effect of a pile of rubbish. Two eggs are usually laid in these cozy homes, but in rare instances three have been found. The Philippine Sun-bird of our illustration is a native of the Philippines and is found on nearly all the islands from Luzon to Mindanao. The throat of the male has a beautiful iridescence shaded with green, while that of the female, shown on the nest, is yellow.

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail pale wings for the winds to try;
Small white wings that we scarce can see
Here and there may a chance-caught eye
Fly.

Note, in a score of you, twain or three
Brighter or darker of tinge or dye;
Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh:
All to the haven where each would be —
Fly.

– *Swinburne*.

THE ANIMALS' FAIR

PART II – THE FAIR

Days and weeks of busy preparation rolled around and promptly at the appointed time the Animals' Fair opened in splendor.

A large football field had been secured for the show, and a striking sight met the eyes of curious men, women and children, who crowded through the gates on the opening day.

Two immense St. Bernard dogs had been appointed gatekeepers, and the human crowd were uncommonly respectful and subdued as they paid their entrance fee of a handful of grain or a juicy bone and passed these representatives of animal law.

The first thing to attract the eye as one entered the Fair was a large band stand which was occupied by a band of monkeys in red coats and caps, who made up in quantity what their music lacked in quality, and went through their performance with a decorum unexcelled by more musical organizations.

The monkeys found themselves more at home in their booth, which, was near the grand stand, the entrance fee to which was a small sack of peanuts. Here the delighted human audience watched an unequaled show of daring rope and trapeze performances, of acrobatic feats which none but "four-handed" artists were able to accomplish, and of comical antics such as only monkeys can go through. The excited children screamed with laughter and showered peanuts upon the performers, who, following their instincts, forgot their scheduled program and joined in a wild rush and squabble over the unexpected treat. Such little episodes were soon over, however, and the entertainment and forgotten dignity were resumed together.

Next to the monkeys' booth was one occupied by geese, ducks and peacocks, and was one which deserves especial mention. It was elaborately decorated with garlands of feather flowers dyed in all the colors of the rainbow, hung against a background of snowy white feathers. On each side stood a peacock with gorgeous tail outspread, showing to lovely effect against the white walls behind them. Pillows and cushions of softest feathers, festoons of snowy down trimmings, quills and wings and breasts for millinery purposes, feather boas, feather brushes and dusters, quill pens and quill toothpicks were displayed to greatest advantage and offered for sale for a small sum of wheat or corn.

The hogs came next with a large and elaborate display, which included strings of sausages and Dewey hams, huge glass jars of snowy lard, hams and bacon put up in fancy ways, and piles of canned pork and deviled ham. In another part of the booth were brushes of all kinds made from hog bristles, soaps manufactured from otherwise unsalable parts of hog anatomy, saddles and other leather goods made from the hides, and – in a conspicuous position – a great pile of inflated pigskin footballs, which caught the eye of every schoolboy who came near the booth.

"Young man," grunted one of the boothkeepers to a boy who was examining this pile of balls, "young man, never despise a hog nor deride him for his slowness. There is nothing more lively than a pigskin when properly inflated. It is a thing for the possession of which the representatives of the largest colleges are proud to contend, and he is the hero of the day who carries the pigskin to a winning touchdown. Why, college students will leave their books behind them, will cast aside the cultivation of their brains for the glory of chasing the pigskin over a muddy field. They will sacrifice life itself in its pursuit and count broken limbs and bloody noses as badges of honor. Take my advice. Buy a pigskin football and enter at once upon the path of glory."

It is hardly necessary to add that this sale, and many like it, were made during the progress of the Fair.

The booth of the wild birds was the most beautiful one in the whole display. It was gotten up to represent a forest glade, with shadowy aisles and leafy retreats. Its carpet was made of grasses and

moss and ferns and flowers. A little fountain cast its waters into a tiny pool, where birds dipped their wings or quenched their thirst. Dainty nests were built in many curious ways, some hanging from the branches, others hiding beneath the grasses or sheltered by the leaves. A myriad of brilliant birds flitted through this miniature paradise, the bluebird, the redbird, the orange and black oriole, the scarlet tanager, golden canaries and many others, making up a flashing bouquet of color.

Then there were solos, and duets, and grand concerts, when thrush and lark and canary and redbird and warbler joined their voices in a great gush of melody through which ran the liquid trills and cadenzas of mocking-bird and nightingale. The quail piped his “Bob White” from the ferns and grasses; and the parrot – as clown of the occasion – imitated the human voice in comically jerky efforts.

Along the front of the booth were displayed rows of bottles filled with every imaginable kind of bug and worm which the industrious birds had gathered from orchards and fields, and which were exhibited as proof of the invaluable aid which the birds give to man.

The cattle display was next on the list – a notable one, and attractive to every man and woman. There were noble representatives from every breed of cattle, with the most beautiful, gentle-eyed calves that were ever seen. There was a tempting display of great glass jars of rich milk and yellow cream, huge cheeses and golden butter balls, daintily molded curds and glasses of whey. There was a free tank of delicious iced buttermilk, which was continually surrounded by a thirsty crowd who drank as if they had never tasted buttermilk before.

Then there were countless varieties of fancy articles made from horn and bone, pots of glue, cans of neatsfoot oil, and leather goods of every possible description.

There was dressed beef, and jerked beef, and dried beef, and potted and canned and corned and deviled and roasted. There was oxtail soup, and blood pudding, and cakes of suet, and stacks of tallow candles. There were hides tanned into soft carriage robes and rugs; there were bottles of rennet tablets; there were fancy colored bladders, and bunches of shoestrings. In short, the articles contained in this display were beyond enumeration in a short account like this.

The dogs came next with a wonderful display of fancy breeds, of trick dogs and trained dogs, of dogs little and big, varying from the shaggy Eskimo to the skinny little hairless Mexican, and from the huge St. Bernard to the tiny terrier. The Newfoundlands gave a life-saving exhibition every day, wherein monkeys dressed as people were rescued from the water or from buildings supposed to be on fire.

The St. Bernards dragged frozen traveler monkeys from snowbanks of cotton and carried them on their backs to places of safety.

Cute puppies and clumsy puppies went through their antics for the amusement of the children and rolled unconcernedly over beautiful carriage rugs which were labeled “Japanese Wolfskin.”

The sheep and goats had a booth together, wherein was a marvelous display of wools and woolen goods, yarns, pelts, angora furs, kid gloves, kid shoes, rugs, carpets and blankets.

There were ropes of goats’ hair which water could not destroy, and wigs which were destined to cover the heads of learned judges and barristers.

There was a wonderful red tally-ho coach, drawn by four snow-white goats driven by a monkey dressed as a coachman, which made the circuit of the Fair grounds every afternoon, while monkey passengers made the air lively and cleared the way by the loud notes of their tin horns. This exhibition set the children wild, and parents were daily teased to buy the charming turnout for the use of their little human monkeys.

The cats had a display which met with the highest favor from their little girl visitors. Here were beautiful pussies of every kind and color, with coats as soft and shiny as silk. There were numbers of the cunningest kittens, which rolled and tumbled and went through their most graceful motions to the unending delight of the little spectators.

This booth was gaily festooned with strings of mice and rats, caught up here and there by small rabbits, gophers and moles.

There was a string band that played in this booth every afternoon to demonstrate the superiority of cat-gut strings over those made of silk or wire, as used on violins, mandolins, guitars and all other stringed instruments. They never failed to announce that their bows were strung with the finest of horsehair which had been supplied by the horses whose booth was farther down the grounds.

The horses attracted every eye and aroused much discussion among the visitors as to whether horses would ever be entirely superseded by automobiles and electric engines.

The children went into ecstasies over the Shetland ponies, and the ladies declared the Arabian horses “too lovely for anything.”

Every boy who visited this booth was presented with a baseball covered with the best of horsehide leather.

But time fails me to tell of all the wonderful things which this Fair presented to the eyes of admiring men. On one point only was dissatisfaction expressed by the visitors – there was no Midway. President Monkey, when interviewed by a representative of the Associated Press in regard to the omission, made the following remarkable statement:

“No, it was not a matter of oversight. The camel volunteered to bring some of his Arabs to establish the Streets of Cairo, and some of the monkeys were anxious to put in a Gay Paris display. The lions wished to bring some trained Wild Men of Borneo for a Hagenbeck show, and the snakes wanted to do jugglery. You can see that there was no lack of what misguided people call ‘attractions.’

“The management discussed the Midway from every point of view, and decided that it was entirely too low grade for a first-class entertainment such as we desired to make. We felt that it would only attract a rough class of visitors, whose presence we did not desire. And so the unanimous decision was, ‘We will have a good, clean, respectable show or we will have no show at all.’

“No, sir. Say emphatically in your dispatches that the Midway was intentionally omitted. Such things may do for men, but beasts will have none of them.”

The Fair was in every way a success, being carried through without disturbance of any kind and coming out free of debt and with much legal tender in the treasury.

Men were so much impressed by the obligations which they owed to the animal world that there was a decided improvement in their treatment of its various representatives. While this state of affairs cannot be expected to last long, the animals have learned how to arouse such respect and have decided to make the Animal Fair an annual attraction.

Mary McCrae Culter.

A DAY

In the morning the path by the river
Sent me a messenger bird, —
“I’m all by myself and lonely,
Come,” as I waked I heard.

I walked the path by the water,
Till a daisy spoke and said,
“I am so tired of shining;
Why don’t you pat my head?”

So I kissed and fondled the daisy,
Till the clover upon the lea
Said, “It is time for eating,
Spread your luncheon on me.”

But first I went to the orchard,
And gathered the fruit that hung,
Before I answered the green-sward,
Where the clovery grasses swung.

Then the rocks on the hill-side called me,
And the flowers beside the way,
And I talked with the oaks and maples
Till Night was threatening Day.

Then I knelt at the foot of the sunset,
And laid thereon my prayer,
And the angels, star-crowned, hurried
To carry it up the stair.

And this was the plea I put there:
Make me so pure and good
That I shall be worthy the friendship
Of river, and field, and wood.

Lucia Belle Cook.

THE GREAT GRAY OWL (*Scotiaptex cinerea*.)

Through Mossy and viny vistas
Soaked ever with deepest shade,
Dimly the dull owl stared and stared
From his bosky ambuscade.

– *James Whitcomb Riley, “A Vision of Summer.”*

The Great Gray or Cinereous Owl is the largest of the American owls. The appearance of great size, however, is due to its thick and fluffy plumage. Its body is very small being only slightly larger than those of the barred or hoot owl. The eggs are also said to be small when compared with the size of the bird.

The range of this handsome Owl is practically confined to the most northern regions of North America, where it breeds from the latitude of Hudson Bay northward as far as forests extend. In the winter it is more or less migratory, the distance that it travels southward seeming to depend solely on the severity of the season. It has been captured in several of the northern United States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. It is related in “The Hawks and Owls of the United States,” that “Dr. Dall considers it a stupid bird and states that sometimes it may be caught in the hands. Its great predilection for thick woods, in which it dwells doubtless to the very limit of trees, prevents it from being an inhabitant of the barren grounds or other open country in the north. It is crepuscular or slightly nocturnal in the southern parts of its range, but in the high north it pursues its prey in the daytime. In the latter region, where the sun never passes below the horizon in summer, it is undoubtedly necessity and not choice that prompts it to be abroad in the daylight.” Its yellow eyes are very small and would indicate day-hunting proclivities.

Dr. A. K. Fisher states that its “food seems to consist principally of hares, mice and others of the smaller mammals as well as small birds.” Dr. W. H. Dall has taken “no less than thirteen skulls and other remains of red-poll linnets from the crop of a single bird.” Specimens in captivity are reported to have relished a diet of fish.

Its nest is described as a coarse structure built in the taller trees and composed of twigs and lined with moss and feathers. The note of this great bird is said to be “a tremulous, vibrating sound, somewhat resembling that of the screech owl.”

The Great Gray Owl is also known as the Great Sooty Owl and the Spectral Owl. Its generic title, *Scotiaptex*, is from two Greek words, one meaning darkness and the other to frighten.

The dignified mien of this great bird may well have been the inspiration that caused the poet to say,

Art thou, grave bird! so wondrous wise indeed?
Speak freely, without fear of jest or gibe —
What is thy moral and religious creed?
And what the metaphysics of thy tribe?

MY SUMMER ACQUAINTANCES

I spent last summer in a quiet, old country place where my only near neighbors were the birds, rabbits and squirrels, but I formed many pleasant acquaintances among these, and the dearest among them was a pair of little goldfinches that built their nest in the topmost bough of a young pear tree that overshadowed the porch where I spent a great part of my time.

I did not discover the nest until the little ones were already hatched. The early June days had been cloudy and cool and had kept me shut in, so I did not have the pleasure of watching my little neighbors build their home. The nest was so carefully hidden among the leafy boughs that no one would have suspected it was there. My attention was first arrested to it one morning by the faint cries of young birds, and on looking up I saw a little goldfinch perched on the topmost bough of the pear tree, bending fondly over what I knew must be the nest. She lingered but a moment and then darted away to an apple tree near by, where I discovered her mate. He was a tiny little fellow, not much larger than she, but his jacket seemed a brighter yellow and his head and the tips of his wings a glossier black. They rested a moment, seemingly in earnest conversation, then both darted away to a thicket of tall grass and weeds that grew along the banks of a creek that ran near by.

It was but a few moments until the little mother was back again and in her tiny yellow beak I saw the dainty morsel she was carrying to the hungry little family.

All day long, back and forth, from the nest to the thicket she flew, but the hungry little ones never seemed to be satisfied. The father bird did not come very often, and I wondered if he was spending his time in idleness or seeking pleasure for himself, while the poor, little mother was working so arduously for the support of the family. But I hardly think this was the case, for he always came from this same thicket and they always seemed confidential and happy. He would rest himself daintily on some branch overlooking the nest, and with many quips and turns watch the mother as she fed the hungry little ones. Sometimes he would bring food himself and then they would fly away together. I think he was searching for the food and probably gathering it, for sometimes Mistress Goldfinch would be gone but a moment until she would return with the food.

Every day the same scenes were repeated, only the cries of the little ones grew more clamorous, and I could see their gaping mouths as they stretched their necks, each one trying to convince the mother that he was the hungriest bird in the nest. The little mother was always patient and loving – what a lesson to us who so often chafe and fret under the petty trials of every day life! As the days went by the young birds grew bolder and I could see their little yellow bodies as they fluttered and pushed themselves near the edge of the nest, and I knew that there would soon be an empty nest in the pear tree.

It was one afternoon, about ten days after I discovered the nest, that the lessons in flying began. The father and mother would fly from the nest to some twig a few feet from the nest and then back again, then from twig to twig with many little chirps as if saying, “Don’t you see how easy it is? All you have to do is to try.” Then the boldest little fellow would perch himself on the edge of the nest, flutter his little wings, sit still for a minute, and then roll back into the nest as if it was too much for him. Then the father and mother would repeat the lesson, but all in vain that afternoon, so they finally gave up and went in search of food. The next morning the lessons began in earnest, and then the bold little youngster, who had made so many pretentions the afternoon before, grew bolder and with a nervous little flutter and a sidewise plunge landed on a twig some few feet below the nest. He rested a few moments and then, with a few encouraging chirps from his parents, tried it again with better results. One by one the other timid fledglings were induced to follow him. There were many tumbles and falls, but the little mother was always there to encourage and help, and by afternoon the little home was deserted. They staid a few days in the trees near by and then flew away to seek new homes, and all that was left to remind me of the happy family was the empty nest in the leafy bough.

Ellen Hampton Dick.

THE BIRD OF PEACE

The dove, bearing an olive branch, is, in Christian art, an emblem of peace. The early churches used vessels of precious metal fashioned in the shape of a dove in which to place the holy sacrament, no doubt because the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in the form of a dove.

Noah's dove, of still older fame, was immortalized as a constellation in the sky.

The plaintive "coo" of the dove has also added to the sentiment about it. The poets delight to refer to it as a sorrowful bird. One of them says:

"Oft I heard the tender dove
In fiery woodlands making moan."

The dove, "most musical, most melancholy," is the singer whom the mocking bird does not attempt to imitate.

There is a Philippine legend that of all birds only the dove understands the human tongue. The pigeon tribe is noted for its friendliness to man —

"Of all the feathered race
Alone it looks unscared on the human face."

The word dove means "diver" and refers to the way this bird ducks its head.

It has purposely designed "wing whistles" and often strikes the wings together when beginning to fly.

The broken wing dodge it often practices tends to prove that its ancestors built on the ground.

The nest of the dove has no architectural beauty and it is not a good housekeeper, and is something of a gad-about. Indeed, doves are not so gentle in character as they are usually portrayed. They are sometimes impolite to each other and occasionally indulge in a family "scrap." But as nothing in this world is quite perfect, the dove with its fine form, and beautiful quaker-like garb, may be accepted as one of the most interesting of our birds.

Belle Paxson Drury.

THE GREEN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens.*)

The Green-crested or Acadian Flycatcher is a frequent summer resident in the eastern United States, and through the valley of the Mississippi river it migrates as far northward as Manitoba, where it is said to be quite common.

This bird exhibits no haste in its northward spring journey, for it is one of the latest species to arrive on its breeding grounds in the higher latitudes and as winter approaches, it leaves the United States entirely and winters in Mexico, Central America and northern South America.

If we would make the acquaintance of the Green-crested Flycatcher, we must seek it in woodlands in the vicinity of some stream or other body of water. Its favorite haunts are “deep, shady, second-growth hardwood forests, on rather elevated ground, especially beech woods with little undergrowth, or bottom lands not subject to periodical overflow.” It is not an over shy bird, yet it is rather difficult to find, for its colors are in perfect harmony with its surroundings as it passes from tree to tree through the dark foliage of the lower limbs. So perfect is this color-harmony that Major Charles Bendire said, “I have several times failed to detect the bird when I was perfectly certain it was within twenty feet of me,” and Neltje Blanchan likens its movements to “a leaf that is being blown about, touched by the sunshine flittering through the trees, and partly shaded by the young foliage casting its first shadows.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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