

### Where Birds Spend the Winter.

A correspondent asks the REVIEW where our song birds spend the winter. She is not satisfied with the answer, "In the South." She wants more particular information. The manuals tell us the winter range of the birds that come to us for the summer season; and the book reviewed in our December number, "The Birds of Maine," by Ora Willis Knight, is very precise in its information regarding the geographical areas visited.

It is an interesting question, where our birds spend the winter. The vast hosts that make up the autumnal exodus, leaving our groves almost silent for the winter, fly to the Southern States, Mexico and Central America, and even to Northern South America. Birds dislike crossing the sea, and always prefer an overland journey, although it may be much longer. Thus the birds that summer in Great Britain cross the English Channel and the Mediterranean Sea at the narrowest points, then fly eastward through Northern Africa to their destination in Egypt and Arabia. One probable reason is the opportunity that the land route gives for frequent rest and food.

Then when the first breath of spring comes from the northern latitudes, they feel their way back by easy stages and zig-zag courses to their summer homes. And this they have done from times immemorial, followed the "fly lines" of their ancestors with unerring certainty.

The following idyl from the Norwegian writer, Alexander Kjelldand, has truth as well as fancy. Who will write for us a similar picture of our bird migration to the North?

"The banks of the Nile were packed with birds, broiling in the glowing sun. They picked at their feathers and smoothed them, and then flapped their wings to try them, and lazily snatched one of the worms or lizards swarming in the swamps. Food was indeed too plentiful, it was too hot, too quiet; they longed for cold rain, cloudy weather and a spanking breeze. Innumerable flocks of wild geese swam about in the pools between the rushes and out to the far-reaching swamps. Here and there, rising above the others, the storks and the herons stood on one leg, crouching and hanging their heads; they felt bored, frightfully bored. All kinds of snipes and water-fowls, lapwings, ruffs, brent-geese, water-hens, quails, swallows—yes, even the common starling,—all bored!

"The ibis felt scandalized by the presence of that foreign, shabbily-dressed trash, and went even so far as to lower itself by complaining to the ridiculous flamingoes which otherwise it so utterly despised. The crocodiles blinked their slimy pale-green eyes, now and then snatching a fat

goose, that raised a cry and a clatter which were answered up and down the river, at last dying away in the distance—far away. And again the stillness of the desert reigned throughout the glowing landscape and among that host of drowsy birds, sitting and waiting for—they didn't quite know what they were waiting for. Then a little gray bird flew straight up in the air, hung quiet there for one moment and, flapping its wings with great rapidity, poured forth a tiny bit of a twitter; then it descended and hid itself in the grass.

"All the birds had raised their heads and listened. And at once there was a jabbering and a gabbling and a great bustle in every nook. Young foppy snipes flew up making cartwheels in the air, to show what expert flyers they were. But the cranes were more sensible; they held a general meeting to consider the lark's proposal to break up. All of them had recognized the lark by its notes, although it had but two or three, the full power of song not being in its throat yet. But while the cranes held council a terrible splash was heard and the sky darkened. The wild geese were breaking up. Divided in huge flocks they began circling in the air; then, forming a line, they started northward, and soon their cries were lost in the distance. In black throngs the starlings rose, the lapwings followed, in couples the storks screwed themselves up in the air, high up, and, becoming almost invisible, they winged their way toward the North. The great noise and uproar, of course, upset the crane's meeting; all the world was bent on getting away, there was no time left for considering. Every moment new flocks of birds passed over North Africa, and, looking down, each with its beak greeted the merry, blue Mediterranean. The nightingales tarried the longest; but when the Danish birds started they, too, for old friendship's sake, went away. The travelling fever had spread to such an extent that even the swallow and the cuckoos went along; at all events they would cross the Mediterranean, and in the meantime they could make up their minds what to do next. The ibis had regained its composure, and, like an archbishop, strutted with gravity along the beach, the rosy flamingoes making way for His Grace, while with a solemn air they dropped their foolish heads with the broken bill.

"It grew quieter and hotter along the Nile, and the crocodiles had now to be content with nigger-beef, and, on rare occasions, with that of a tough English tourist.

"But day and night the birds of passage were on their way to the North. And as a flock reached well-known places and recognized their homes, they descended, crying "goodbye" to those who were bound for a longer journey. And so they spread life and merriment throughout old frozen Europe—in woods, on fields, around the houses of the people, far out among the rushes and on the big quiet lakes. In Italy they shimmered with clusters of tiny rose-buds, up toward Southern France. The apple-trees were snowed over with pinky blossoms, and on the Parisian boulevards the leaves of the chestnut-tree were about to burst their glossy, tenacious covers. The good people of Dresden stood on the "Brühlsche" Terrace, basking in the sun and watching blocks of ice drifting down the river and piling up before the massive pillars of the bridge.