

# Northern Messenger

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## The Migration of Birds.

The distances birds travel are enormous. Many of our summer migrants journey to the African lakes. How they manage to cross the wide stretches of water and come back year by year to the same hedgerow, man has not been able to find out.

The swallow knows not the existence of frost nor the extreme of heat, passing from Europe to Africa as soon as the cold weather begins to draw in, and migrating again to the colder climes as soon as the temperature of its second home becomes inconvenient to its comfort.

The time of its arrival in England is various, and depends almost entirely on the state of the weather. Solitary individuals are now and then seen in very early months, but as a rule the swallow does not

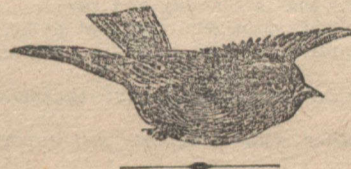
arrive until the second week in April; the time of its departure is generally about the middle of September, although some few lingerers remain in the country for more than a month after the departure of their fellows.

ous that the birds almost invariably fly in a line directly north and south, influenced, doubtless, by the magnetic current that ever flows in that direction.

Sometimes the poor birds are so utterly worn out with fatigue that when they have perched upon the rigging or sides of a ship they are unable to take wing again, and if disturbed can hardly fly from one end of the ship to the other. They have even been seen to settle upon the surface of the waves, and to lie with outspread wings until rested sufficiently to resume their journey.

Guided by some wondrous instinct, the swallow always finds its way back to the nest which it had made the previous season, or in which it had been reared, as has frequently been proved by affixing certain marks to individual birds, and watching for

birds of prey, as well as by man; but shaded by the friendly veil of night, they pass on safely, proclaiming to each other by friendly calls the route to be kept.—'Friendly Greetings.'



## A Word With Young People.

Gaining discipline for eternity is the work of a whole life time, and those who begin young are most likely to complete their task perfectly.

If a man thinks he can devote the greater part of his earthly life to the service of self and sin, and then in the little time that remains to him accomplish a perfect redemption of his life and character from the moral effects of his own waywardness, he will be grievously mistaken.

We do not say that salvation is impossible at an advanced age, but we do say that it is not only improbable, but even in case of it the soul will bear to all eternity the scars of its own wicked career.

Nearness to the throne in heaven is for those who gain the most complete preparation for it. Other things being equal, they gain the most complete preparation for eternal joys who devote all their lifetime to the work; who begin in early life before evil practices have injured the soul, before evil habits are formed which mar the symmetry of character and give existence a downward bent.

Religion never appears to a better advantage than in the persons of those who remember the Creator in the days of their youth, and are early admitted into the number of the disciples of the holy Jesus. It is then like a diamond set in gold.

As Bishop Horne says: 'There is something more noble in renouncing the world for the love of Christ when the relish for sensible enjoyments is at the highest, than there can be in doing it when the evil days come, in which there is no further pleasure or satisfaction to be had in earthly things. He surely is not so likely to accomplish his journey who begins it when the sun is going down, as he is who sets out at the hour of its rising. Youth, like the morning, is the proper season for every task that requires time and pains. Then all the powers of body and soul are fresh and vigorous as those of one awakened from a sound and kindly sleep. Then is the golden opportunity, the sweet hour of prime, when the day is before us.'

The night cometh when no man can work. That night may be nearer many young people who read these lines than they have been wont to think. No person, however young or strong or healthy, has unfailing assurance of long-continued life. And were it so, how much better to devote that life faithfully to the service of God.

In the next world, how sweet the reflection will be that we devoted all our time and



BIRDS RESTING ON THE RIGGING OF A SHIP.

arrive until the second week in April; the time of its departure is generally about the middle of September, although some few lingerers remain in the country for more than a month after the departure of their fellows.

Before the time of migration they may be seen assembled in great numbers, chattering noisily, and appearing to be holding a great parliament for the settlement of affairs before starting on their long journey. The dome of the Radcliffe Library at Oxford is a favorite assembling place of these birds, all the lines of its architecture being studded with swallows, whose white breasts look like pearl beads strung upon the dark surface of the leaden dome.

Although such powerful and swift fliers, they become fatigued in crossing the sea, and will flock in great numbers to rest upon the rigging of some ship that may happen to pass their course. It is rather curi-

ous that the birds almost invariably fly in a line directly north and south, influenced, doubtless, by the magnetic current that ever flows in that direction.

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