

THE STORY OF THE BIRDS.

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THE snow has gone, the grass is growing green again, the buds are swelling in the trees, the leaves begin to open. Spring has come; and, in a few days, we may expect to see our feathered friends again. They have been paying a visit to the people of the South, and, having travelled in foreign places and seen strange sights, they will greet us on their return with a merry tale set to sweetest music.

Many kinds of birds spend the summer with us, and in autumn go southward to spend the winter months. Others come to us from the northern districts and remain here over winter, returning in the spring to the place whence they came. There are other birds that spend the winter season south of us and the summer season to the north of us, so that in their migratory flight, they simply pass through our district on the way to and from their breeding places. These are "passing migrants." A few remain with us summer and winter. Who has not heard the peculiar "quank, quank" of the White-breasted Nuthatch coming from the almost lifeless snow-clad woods. In spring and summer these same birds may be seen running up and down and around the trunk and limbs of the trees. As climbers, the Nuthatches excel. They can run rapidly



Fig. 57. Swallows migrating.



Fig. 58. The Cuckoo migrating.

down the trunk of a tree headforemost. Woodpeckers even do not attempt this feat. In the southern part of the Province, the Crow remains all winter; and so, along with the Nuthatch, must be classed as a "resident."

The migratory flight of birds is a most interesting study, and has engaged the attention of bird-lovers for centuries. A great deal, however, is not yet understood regarding the "lines of flight." For instance, "The Eastern and Western Movement of the Blue-bird" in our Province remains unexplained.

What causes these migratory flights? You immediately answer: "The change in temperature." This answer is partially correct, but you are leaving out of consideration a very important factor, viz., food