

Then the djin laughed, an eldritch laugh :—
 "Why do men call thee Wise, O King?
 Pride counts for half, and Care for half,
 Nor comes Content with anything
 Men are not wise; their ways are droll:
 Let me get back into my hole."

Hornewood, P. E. I.

BITS ABOUT BIRDS.

BY PASTOR FELIX.

"**F**AR away a wood-bird sings
 In the spruce's purple shade,
 And I follow at the call
 From a leafy cool arcade;
 O how far, how clear, how pure
 Is his liquid floating song!
 Sweet bird-spirit, vain my quest,
 Though I hear you all day, long,—
 'Come, come, follow me, follow me!'"

—*Anna B. Averill.*

Often, in some outskirts of the Whiting woods, have I listened to this bird,—or in the Connecticut Mills hollow. It had an enticing note, though plaintive, and seemed saying,—“O-dear-y-me! Pitee-me, pitee-me!” This is the song-sparrow, and one of the shy children of the woods. Here she

“builds her home
 In the creviced mossy ledge,
 And the startled red-wing flies
 Like a fire-spark in the hedge;
 And the dusky wood is filled
 With clear songs and flapping wings,
 While I follow, wrapped in dreams,
 Where this lovely spirit sings,—
 'Come, come, follow me, follow me!'"

I first heard a whippoorwill in the lonely Franklin forest, riding at night. It seemed like a disembodied sorrow. But all these sounds are sweet, whether interpreted cheerfully or mournfully. The sharp call of the jay, the chatter of the scolding blackbird, the delicate softness of the purple finch's note, the hoo of the wild goose, the whistle of the robin—are sweet; all the feathered tribe add something to the grand concert.

We have a settled partiality for Jack Robin. He is to us a harbinger of spring, and convinces us of sunnier days and greener fields with the abundance of flowers. He does not wait for all the leaves, but comes to make fellowship with us among the budding twigs; and for his dear familiarity we love him. He may claim the like praise with the English cuckoo; for, before the snow-patches are gone out of the hollows, his “certain voice we hear”. Out of his clump of evergreen in the cedar swamp he comes and undertakes a nest in the maple close to the door, prepared to run the gauntlet of cats and children.

Nor is the blue-bird a tardy comer. He, too, has a gleesome flute to announce the season beautiful. The robin shall not sing his song alone. Though redbreast may come nearer to us, we love the little darling who has made sweetly vocal for us so many an Acadian spring. While yet March is brusquely crackling the streamside bushes, the minstrel “with a tinge of earth on his breast, and the sky tinge on his back”, assures us the reign of winter has broken, and the hillsides will soon be vocal with the “sound of many waters”.

And there is another much beloved bird, that comes with April. We have heard it so often here in Maine; and never hear it now without a thought of Lowell's exquisite lines:

“Ere pales in Heaven the morning star,
 A bird, the loneliest of its kind,
 Hears Dawn's faint foot-fall from afar,
 While all its mates are dumb and blind.

* * * * *

“It seems pain-prompted to repeat
 The story of some silent ill;
 But, *Phæbe! Phæbe!* sadly sweet,
 Is all, it says, and then is still.”

Does its name, though domestic, suggest the shy and lonely thing the poet makes it to be? Or is it that we knew a maiden, bearing that name, who was shy, and had the air of loneliness about her? Come, little Phæbe, or “Pe-wee”, from thy nook of retreat, by the water-courses, perhaps under some ramshackled old bridge or caved bank,—and shew thyself! The poets have desired thee; and the hearts of the children will leap gladly to see thee, darling, near them, calling,—“Pe-wee, pe-wee, perch, pe-wee!”

Then the gentry must arrive, and the gay gallants. We are always glad to see them, too. The earth has got herself attired for them. The dandelions have spotted the grass with their golden disks before the gentleman swallow is seen evolving in the sunny air, or the oriole puts in his flashy appearance. This oriole swings his shapely cradle from some elm tip. He does not mean his domicile shall be molested. He is too beautiful a bird to put himself or his nestlings in danger.

Then another visitor launches himself with song, like an arrow out of Spring's quiver. Who does not know the saucy, glancing, musical fellow? “Robert of Lincoln is telling his name” to the smiling meadows and the rejoicing hills. What a musical tangle, what a gibberish of melody! This was a favourite of Whittier's hero, Hugh Tallant:

“Of all the birds of singing,
 Best he loved the bobolink.”

And he is also a favourite of ours. How Lowell goes into raptures over him, and what rhyming tricks he plays with him!

“Gladness on wings, the bobolink is here.”

And Bryant forgets to be cold when he listens to this musical well-spring, “bubbling over with exhilaration and quivering with delight”.