

## The Rockwood Review.

tunities for the observation of avian manners.

It was here that I started up recently a neutral tawny mother bird with thickly streaked breast, her identity quite unknown to me (perhaps a hermit-thrush, but I would not vouch for it), who went trailing lamely off just beyond reach, now here, now there, with the most awkwardly pathetic attempt at deception that I have seen among many such. Of course her feint defeated its purpose and guided my eye to the bird baby almost under my feet—an indeterminate downy mass with weak flesh-colored legs and scarcely a hint of quills, much too young according to my ideas to be "out." The little creature was perfectly tame, however, and nestled, down in my outstretched palm among the running pine and pyrola leaves, while I drew my hat over my face and studied the maternal behavior through the brim of it. For the space of half an hour there was comparative silence in our paradise; then the nestling grew hungry and began to send up such piteous chirps, varied by shrieks, as would have melted an ostrich's heart. Near and nearer circled the mother bird, until I could hear her fanning the air with her wings, while the little heart beat wildly against my hand, and I lay scarcely daring to breathe and wondering how much mother-love would venture. But hersimplicity knew an art that I had not reckoned with. About two feet off, at the foot of a stump, she alighted, and suddenly changed her cries to a tender twittering, a lisp of invitation and encouragement, and recognizable and irresistible even to a human ear. Away fluttered the captive, and I had no wish to detain it, although she coaxed it forward by short stages to a distance of a couple of rods before she felt to rejoice over it in an outburst of

ecstasy.

I must confess here to a grateful partiality for those birds that, like the whippoorwill and the phoebe, distinctly announce their names on first acquaintance, and render discussion unnecessary. What anguish of spirit it would save us if they all did it! Especially the warblers, who never intimate by a syllable whether they are blue-winged yellows, black-throated greens, yellow red polls, or some one of a dozen other combinations. To the considerable class which I have mentioned belongs the "chewink" or "towhee"—by either name unmistakable, when his clear call rings out from the grassy margin of the glade, or over the lawn to which he comes at sundown to trill his simple air, since the familiar cry is not his only musical performance. A little sprightly chirruping will often bring two or three families out of the copse, where they are scratching like hens, or flitting from birch to birch, and by whistling and talking—for the voice of man has a taming power over wild fowl—you may watch and play with them by the hour together. They are handsome birds, nearly as large as robins, black above, white and ruddy chestnut beneath, and they seldom fly far from the ground or the piles of brush beside which their somewhat clumsy nests are concealed.

The endearing voice of the song sparrow is heard in these thickets as elsewhere, and glimpses of his dusk-brown family may be hid behind the old rail fence or in the corners of the pasture lot, no singer perhaps, being more universally known and loved in New England; the swamp sparrow haunts the spot, and in April and again in November the migrating fox-sparrow passes this way. But of all the birds that gather in the low undergrowth, the woonthrush stands first as musician,