

succession, and continue foraging for more, which he ate upon the spot as soon as caught. I never witnessed the act of impaling a bird or mouse, but I suppose it would be the same as for a grasshopper; and in the instance to which I refer the bird worked the unfortunate insect on the thorn with his beak, pushing and pressing it down with various strokes, until it was fixed to his satisfaction. But we have not yet finished our study of Shrikes—having still to consider their flight, their voice, and especially their domestic habits. There are two very different birds of this country which the Shrike resembles in the relative proportions of the wings and tail, as well as in the general conformation of the body. These are the Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottus*, and the Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter fuscus*. Now if we picture to ourselves a bird whose attitudes, movements, and especially whose mode of flight, may partake on occasion of those of either of the birds just named, we shall have no wrong idea of the varied actions of which the Shrike is capable. The close general resemblance of the Shrike to a Mockingbird is really remarkable. The two are about of the same size, shape and color—in fact, it is not the easiest thing to tell them apart at a little distance, especially when they are flying. The similarity has long since been duly noted and commented upon; in fact, Swainson went so far as to make it the basis of a strong argument in favor of his fanciful quaternary theory of affinity. The mode of flight, then, of the Shrike, under ordinary circumstances, is necessarily much the same as that of a Mockingbird, being light, wayward and even undulatory, when the bird is simply moving about at his ease, or foraging for the humbler kinds of prey that contribute to his support. Yet even under these conditions there is a certain dash about it; giving hint of the spirit he can infuse into his actions when he calls his powers to their full display. Then, in the manner of the Hawk, his flight is strengthened, firmly sustained for long distances, and on occasion quickened at a prodigious rate; the climax of this exploiting being reached when he plunges headlong after his prey, hurtling like a very Hawk. He is said at times to hover in the air, just over his intended victim, as if taking aim before he stoops to his quarry; but this can hardly be a characteristic habit, or it would not have escaped my attention. I do not remember to have ever witnessed it,

though it need not be doubted that the action is sometimes performed. When not on the wing, we may observe in the Shrike's habitual attitudes the same blending of Mockingbird and Hawk; or rather, the transition from one to the other, when his air of indifference and rather 'slouchy' appearance give way to the martial bearing which indicates that his attention is riveted upon intended conquest. So versatile and animated a spirit as that which the Shrike possesses necessarily seeks expression. There is no reticence about this bird, whose harsh outcries we may in turn interpret to mean anger and exultation—the challenge and the conquest—while the course of his passionate life runs on in almost incessant warfare. These notes mean much the same as the stridulation of the Kingbird, in whose temper there is much of kinship with the Shrike, both being impatient and aggressive birds. But notwithstanding the magnitude of his exploits, the Shrike is not a very lofty character after all; he picks many a needless quarrel with his fretful fellows, and all the petulance of a wilful, badly-governed disposition may be traced in some of the harshest of the cries that greet our ear. It is easy to say, and quite safe to make the assertion, that nothing more unmusical than the Shrike's notes is often heard; and it is usual to compare the voice of this bird to the creaking of a sign-board, or the grating of any other rusty hinge. But I suspect, though I am not a competent witness in this case, that those are right who ascribe to the Shrike some powers of song, limited though they be. Technically speaking, the Shrike is as truly Oscine as the Mockingbird itself; and no *a priori* reason appears why his notes should not at times be modulated with a tuneful quality. Several authors have in fact asserted such to be the case, protesting fairly against any sweeping denunciation in this particular. Thus, in speaking of the Great Northern Shrike, Audubon says:—'This valiant little warrior possesses the faculty of imitating the notes of other birds, especially such as are indicative of pain. Thus it will often mimic the cries of Sparrows and other small birds, so as to make you believe you hear them screaming in the claws of a Hawk; and I strongly suspect this is done for the purpose of inducing others to come out from their coverts to the rescue of their suffering brethren.'

(TO BE CONTINUED.)