

The Rockwood Review.

brighter and better when he listens to the happy spring song of the Grey Bird, and cannot rejoice in the blithesome welcome to brighter days, must possess a soul dead to much that is best in nature.

Early in June if we sit quietly near the edge of a hardwood clearing, we shall be rewarded by a song so beautiful that we cannot help feeling enchanted. The notes are few, but the quality of tone is indescribably sweet and satisfying. There is a woodsy flavor to the song that is delightful. Some difficulty in locating the songster may be experienced, and when you discover him, if you have read your bird book well you will recognize the red-eyed Vireo. Last summer the enjoyment of a cruise up the Bay of Quinte was greatly intensified by the music of the red-eyed Vireos. The Bluffs at Glenora and along the Reach seemed alive with these songsters. In the grey of morning, when the mists were stealing up the wooded heights, it was my delight to have the yacht's skylight open, and to listen to the hymn of praise by the birds, but none of the performers at Glenora could approach the Vireos as they answered each other with a rhythm and regularity suggestive of a well balanced orchestra. In *By Ways and Bird Notes* Maurice Thompson has called attention to the fact that THEORETICALLY the Blue Jay should be an accomplished singer, as he has a structurally perfect larynx, and he details an instance where this bird was heard singing beautifully. This statement seems incredible in view of the fact that the Jay ordinarily delights in screaming in a discordant manner, that is suggestive of a bragging defiance of the whole world. The blue jays are constant visitors in the Rockwood grounds during winter, and two years ago were more common than usual. One bright morning

in February a friend was with us enjoying a brisk walk before going to the office, when suddenly we were astonished at hearing a bird singing brilliantly and sweetly. The bird could be seen sitting in the top of a high tree some two hundred yards away, and the notes sounded like those of a robin, but more varied. The whole thing was so unusual and mysterious that curiosity was at once aroused, and immediately steps were taken to unravel the mystery. It required a good deal of perseverance and hard work to get through the deep snow to a vantage spot, but fortunately the bird was so much taken up with his song, that we succeeded in getting a good view of what proved to be a musical bluejay. The performance entitled him to a high place among songsters, and if he would relieve the monotony of the winter by an occasional selection, he would soon occupy a more reputable position in society than is at present accorded to him.

In rambling notes of this kind it is impossible to do justice to any of the birds, and if numbers of our songsters are unnoticed, it is not because they are forgotten, but because the object of this lecture is to direct attention to some of the common birds rather than to attempt even a simple classification.

Possibly some or all of you know the smallest of our blackbirds, popularly styled the Cow Bird, which of course must not be for one moment confounded with the Crow Blackbird or Grackle. Generally speaking I find it difficult to harbor resentment against any bird, but I should like to see the Cow Bird educated to a realization of the fact that the desire to escape the worries of maternity is not an honorable desire, even if it is fashionable with a large class of the community. The habit of nest building, if ever possessed, has