

DANISH SUPERSTITION REGARDING THE CUCKOO.

SIR,—Having admitted into your journal "The Legend of the Crossbill," and a controversy regarding the Robin as "God's Bird," I think the following may interest your readers:—

On the appearance of the Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) in Denmark the village girls, in spring time, kiss their hands—addressing the bird when they hear its note—exclaiming, "Cuckoo, cuckoo, when shall I be married?" Then the old Danish folks, born down with age and rheumatism, repeat the words, "Cuckoo, cuckoo, when shall we be released from this world's care?" The bird continues to call "Cuckoo" so many times as years will elapse, evidently satisfying and dissatisfying many young and old regarding their peculiar wishes. But as some people live to a maximum age and girls may become old maids it is supposed that the poor Cuckoos are so much engaged in annually answering these superstitious people, that they have no time to build nests. Therefore, the eggs of the Cuckoo are deposited in the nest of the Hedge Sparrow (*Accentor modularis*.) R. S.

Montreal, December, 1881.

NOTE.—The female Cuckoo should, in accordance with the general nature of birds, be the nest-builder, and the male is only supposed to call "cuckoo." Our correspondent evidently writes the above to show that one European legend is as good as another. They are either childish or doting thoughts compounded from a want of proper education. We do not wish to have any more of this kind of matter. Give us something original.—C.

THE ACCLIMATIZED SPARROW.

SIR,—As a lover of birds, and being a friend to that pert little bird called the European or English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), will you kindly insert in your valuable journal the following extract from the "Gardener's Chronicle," London, Eng., July, 1879, on the

USES OF THE SPARROW:

"We are sorry that Sparrows are still regarded as enemies by many of our village husbandmen; thus the overseers are yet empowered by the vestry meeting to pay one-half

penny per head for all destroyed. It is a pity we have not yet learned more humanity, for without doubt this persecuted bird is one of the best friends both to the gardener and farmer. A calculation has been made that a pair of Sparrows destroy nearly four thousand caterpillars per week; besides other insects, while rearing their young. When Cockchafer (*Melolontha vulgaris*) abound, which happens periodically, they would speedily become a perfect pest but for the Sparrow. It is true the Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) destroys an immense quantity, yet it should be remembered the despised Sparrow has access to gardens and other small enclosures where the Rook is denied access. The Sparrow fortunately does more for our house comfort, for he destroys one of our greatest pests, the common house-fly, which, were it not for his persistent efforts, would multiply to an alarming extent. Scarcely anything in the way of insect food comes amiss, for he is a voracious feeder. Therefore he should be regarded more as a friend than a foe."

P.S.—I believe since the above was written, the "Wild Bird's Act" protects the Sparrow.—R.S.

NOTE.—The Domestic Sparrow's habits have considerably changed since its introduction into Canada.—C.

A GENERAL DELUGE.

BY G. W. BROWN, M.D.

(Continued from page 96.)

On many of the islands of the Pacific are found traces of an ancient people who possessed an order of civilization closely resembling that of Oriental nations, as first revealed to us at the commencement of the historic period, and almost identical with those now being explored in Mexico and Yucatan, and similar to those of Peru in South America. These people passed away, as did the mound builders of our own country, leaving enduring monuments of their labors, which modern travellers look upon with astonishment, as they reveal a period of considerable advancement in the arts, and a knowledge of mechanics unknown to their degenerated successors. In support of this proposition, we make the following quotation from a newspaper article which we find floating through the press without credit, but sur-