

in which the veery loves to hide. The present bird is more confiding, also, than others of the group, and comes closer to the houses. A pair of wood thrushes have been known to build their nest in the centre of a village.

All our thrushes have voices of rich sweet tones, and liquid, flute-like quality, and three of the group sing melodies that have made them famous. No one of the three has the compass of voice nor the volume that is so conspicuous in the performances of the cat-bird and the thrasher; but the songs the thrushes sing are of a higher grade as musical compositions than are the songs of their stronger-voiced rivals. Of the three the veery has the most metallic tone—suggestive of a silver horn rather than a flute—and its song is the most brilliant. The hermit's voice excels in richness, and the song of the hermit surpasses his cousins' in spiritual quality. The voice of the wood thrush partakes of the quality of both, though it is not quite so silvery as the veery's nor so mellow as the hermit's. But the song the wood thrush sings has a beauty that is all its own, and it never fails to delight a lover of sweet bird music. We do not always hear the bird at his best, for he frequently sings a part only of his full song—sings in a broken faltering way as if trying his voice—"tuning up," as some one has written. His full song is an exquisite melody, and though not so spiritual as the hermit's it is sweet and placid, and when it comes to the ear during the early spring days, the days when nature is awakening, it carries in its tones a sense of refreshment, of buoyant hopefulness and of serene content. But like other birds' songs this sweet psalm of the wood thrush must be heard to be appreciated—it cannot be described.

The thrushes are seen on the ground quite as often as on a perch, for their food during most of the year consists of grubs, beetles, ground worms, and other insects that gather under the fallen leaves; but when wild fruits are ripe the thrush changes his diet to more dainty fare.

When at a distance these birds appear to be much alike—brown backed birds with spotted breasts—but in the hand they prove to differ considerably in coloration.

The wood thrush bears on his upper parts the tribal hue, a dull russet brown, but his crown wears a rich rufous tint, and the neck and