

NATURE STUDY LESSONS

dependent on the same food. As soon as the frost is out, the worms come to the surface and the robins hold high carnival. Particularly after a good, warm rain when the ground is steaming and the earthworms are driven to the surface, our little friends batten on these delicate morsels. But they do not confine their attention to these, but a long list of fly larvae, cut-worms, slugs, ground-beetles, etc., appear on their menu cards. There is no doubt that at this season they are great friends of the farmers. As spring passes into summer and the farmer's small fruits become mature, his affections for the robin begins to wax weaker, as the latter must plead guilty to developing a marked appetite for raspberries, currants and particularly cherries, but even during these months, when the fruit diet is most strongly developed, over forty per cent. is still insectivorous. The robins prefer the wild fruits to the tame, if the latter are available, and it is the complete destruction of these shrubs and underwood which teemed with berries, that has driven our friend to the farmer's garden. It seems to be the young robins, that have recently left the nest, that are the chief offenders. It must also be remembered that even during July and August these same robins, that are feasting on the small fruits, are pouring an endless stream of injurious cut-worms, grubs and caterpillars into four gaping mouths belonging to four nestlings with insatiable appetites; so the robin in taking a few cherries is simply accepting a small payment for the immense benefit he does to the farmer. I confess it takes a good deal of argument to make the fruit grower see it in that light. A nestling robin will probably eat a good deal more than its parents, and its food is entirely of insects and their larvae, worms and grass.

2. ITS MIGRATION.

(a) Observations to be made by pupils.

Note the first appearance of the robin.

Compare records of first appearance for several years.

Note when they arrive in considerable numbers.

Which appear first, the males or females?

Do they come in flocks?

Do the same robins come back to the same districts each year?