

A NEW SONG FOR A COMMON BIRD.

By W. E. SAUNDERS, London, Ont.

On May 3rd of the present year Mr. H. Gould and I spent the day twenty-five miles west of London, seeking with some success the nests of the larger hawks. Near the close of the day there lay a few miles between us and the railway-station, and we chose the longer of two ways "for a walk," to see the country and to hear the birds. When the light had grown so dim that we could no longer see a bird at any distance, our attention was arrested by a harsh nasal "gaap," delivered in a tone midway between that of a snipe and a night-hawk, to the latter of which we were at first inclined to refer it. Sitting down to listen, we were in a few minutes startled to hear the bird evidently flying our way, and uttering all the time a most peculiar set of twitterings, which we could not accurately describe. When over our heads we caught a glimpse of it, still rising, then turning, and in a few seconds more the twitterings ceased and then the monotonous, regular "gaap" reached us again, from about the locality of his former perch. While awaiting further développments we speculated on the identity of the singer, and what we considered our best guess was the snipe, for the notes appeared to have some characters which fulfilled our ideas of the kind of song a snipe might sing—if he could. Continuing our vigil, we were favoured with several repetitions of the flight song, the "gaap" being continuously rendered at intervals of say five seconds during all the time when the bird was on the ground. It was too dark to see to shoot the bird, and much too dark to have found it, if we had shot it, and, besides, we had no gun; so we were compelled to leave it, and for some months were in ignorance of its identity, no one to whom the problem was referred being able to throw the least light on the matter.

Recently, however, in reviewing the pages of the "Nidologist" I read an interesting article (Page 6, vol. IV.) by Mr. R. B. McLain, of Elm Grove, W. Va., on the twilight song of the Meadow-lark which seems to parallel our own exactly, and as this opens up