

For the REVIEW.]

NATURE LESSONS.

GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis* L.)

"Oh! the yellow bird!"

"A canary!"

"No, it is the American goldfinch. It comes here after the middle of May from the south. Is this the first you have seen this summer?"

"Yes. They are later some years than others, are they not?"

"Of course."

"What a beautiful bright yellow its body is! And how well the black trimming on its head, wings and tail looks! Don't you notice the white bars across its black wings?"

"I do. But by September all that bright gold and jet black will be toned down to dull quaker's dress of olive browns and grays. This bright uniform of gold and black is the full dress of the male during spring and summer. The plumage of the female is not brilliant at any time, much like the male's in winter, but more greenish olive in spring and summer."

"How curiously it flies, in low, rising curves, one after the other, with its short song *dee-ree, dee-ee-ree*, every time it rises!"

"Yes, its flight is very peculiar. Do you see that yellow on the yellow flowered spike of the mullein plant there. He looks like a part of the flower cluster itself."

"Why, yes, I wouldn't have noticed him if you hadn't pointed out the exact place. Isn't that one there plucking out thistle-down from that large thistle there."

"Of course. They are known to be so fond of the thistle seed that it is called the "Thistle bird" as often as it is called the "Yellow bird." And its bill like that of all the sparrows and finches, to which family it belongs, is quite stout enough for shelling any of those little seeds. But if we can find its nest we will find that it is probably lined with this fine,

silky down. They make exquisitely comfortable nests by this fine lining of the more substantial part of the structure."

"When does it begin to build?"

"Strange to say, not until about July, although the male and female may be together from the end of May in the place. But they have dainty eggs, a very pale greenish blue-white, four or five of them in the little cup shaped, silk lined nest, often placed in tall bushes or low trees."

"Are the little chicks golden colored?"

"No, not at all. They are quite brown. They are safer I fancy by being not conspicuous. They are very noisy sometimes when learning to fly. They follow the old bird, screaming *tweet-ee, tweet-ee, tweet-ee*. The old bird, with exquisite sweetness, in his swinging flight, soothes them with the strains, *bay-bee, bay-ee-bee*. It has a variety of chattering notes, but sometimes sings nearly as well as a canary, to which it is closely related."

"It is very strange, is it not, that the bright color of the male birds changes so much in the fall when it goes south to pass the winter, and that in spring when it returns to us its brilliant color should return again. But another yellow bird comes here in May, does there not?"

"Yes, the summer warbler is chiefly golden yellow. There are many species of these little warblers. The yellow-rumped warbler, bluish-ash streaked with black, has a yellow patch on its rump, crown, and sides of the breast. The black and yellow warbler has its rump and under parts yellow, but its head is ash colored, its back and side of head black, and a white stripe behind the eye. But there are seven or eight warblers without any conspicuous yellow. But the warblers are neither sparrows nor finches and we shall have a look at them again."

For the REVIEW.]

Flowers of Forest Trees.

Many of the forest trees on or before Arbor Day will have put forth their blossoms. These blossoms are so inconspicuous that they will not be noticed, or if noticed their true nature will not be known unless the children's attention is directed to them. Very many of our trees have their flowers clustered in spikes, called catkins. The willow, poplar, alder, birch, hazel and many others have such flowers.

The soft, delicate catkins of the willow are clusters of many hundreds of simple flowers, some of which (the staminate) have two stamens growing from the base of a little bract, others (the pistillate flowers) have one pistil also growing from the base of a little bract. How simple are such flowers! And yet they