

aristocracy—the family is given precedence over all others in modern classification—and this exalted position seems singularly appropriate, for in appearance as well as in manner they are unmistakably patricians. Their forms are models of elegance; their costumes are rich but inconspicuous, and their bearing under trying ordeals is calm, dignified, and courageous. While modest and retiring they are not shy, and though brave are never quarrelsome. They have no vulgar ways, and under all conditions display a well bred air and graceful manner.

A mistaken idea prevails that these birds are peculiarly solitary in their habits, and that they have a stronger preference for seclusion than other species. On the contrary their recluse habits are not peculiarly marked; their isolation and seclusion is not more pronounced than that of numerous other woodland birds. It is true that these thrushes are not gregarious, but comparatively few birds are. It is true also that during the nesting season—the season in which our birds are most conspicuous—the thrushes are not found in flocks as a rule; but it is equally true that they are not especially addicted to hermit-like habits. They have an immense expanse of country to wander over, and nowhere are they so abundant as to force their presence upon the notice of a superficial observer. The thrushes, like many other birds, lack demonstrative sociability, but I have on more than one occasion met with a dozen of them in as many minutes, during a stroll in their haunts. They enjoy the privacy and the shelter of the quiet groves, and share that feeling with many of the feathered throng. Not that they penetrate into the deeper forests—few of our songsters go there—but they find food in plenty, a grateful shade, and agreeable surroundings amid the dells and timber patches adjacent to the settlements, so they select these places for a nesting site, and spend in such secluded spots most of the summer days. To sum up the matter:—When it is said that our thrushes prefer the retirement of the groves and dingles to the glare of the open field or the bustle of the roadside, the entire story of their recluse habits has been told.

Of our four species the wood thrush is the most frequently encountered in a semi-open country, and is not a stranger to the parks and orchards. Many a time it builds its nest on a dry hill side, while it rarely haunts the alder swamps or the damp glens