

EDUCATIONALIST.

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[AFTER THREE MONTHS, ONE DOLLAR

VOLUME I.

BRIGHTON, CANADA WEST, MAY 1, 1861.

NUMBER 16

Poet's Corner.

THE LITTLE BIRDS.

BY REV. G. G. FERGUSON.

Who divides the little birds,
Giving to each home a share;
Some to warble in the woods,—
In the fields and every where?

Who directs them as they fly,
Over mountain, mead and plain;
Over countries fur away,
To their little homes again?

On the poplar, by our door,
Where two branches clasp their hands,
Bullded nice, with curious floor,
There a little palace stands.

One year now has passed and gone,
Since two little travellers came,
Built there a tiny home,
Calling it some pretty name.

Day by day; I saw them work,
Tolling late, and tolling long,
How can little hearts like thine,
Know so much, and know so well?

And they turn their little eyes,
To the fields above, untrod—
To the crystal of the skies,
Warbling ever, "It is God."

Through the long, warm summer months,
I did mark with how much care,
They did teach their little ones
How to walk upon the air.

Autumn came with banners red,
Waving 'mid the harvest sheaves,
And the ground was thickly spread,
With the dead and dying leaves.

When the winter coming on,
Fleecy shadows cast before;
Then they sang one farewell song,
And I missed them from my door.

When the violets in the spring,
Caught the azure of the skies;
Then the little couple came,
Giving me a glad surprise.

And I ask no many a time,
Who directed them this way,
Guiding safe, through many a cime
To the self-same poplar tree?

Need I ask, while musing thus
Of the number every where,
Who divides the little birds,
Giving to each home a share?

Camden, N. J.

SINGING-BIRDS AND THEIR SONGS.

Those persons enjoy the most happiness, if possessed of a benevolent heart and favored by ordinary circumstances of fortune, who have acquired by habit and education the power of deriving pleasure from objects that lie immediately around them. But these common sources of happiness are opened to those only who are endowed with genius, or who have received a certain kind of intellectual training. The more ordinary the mental

and moral organization and culture of the individual, the more far-fetched and dear-bought must be his enjoyments. Nature has given us in full development only those appetites which are necessary to our physical well-being. She has left our moral appetites and capacities and in the germ to be developed by education and circumstances. Hence those agreeable sensations that come chiefly from the imagination, which may be called the pleasures of sentiment, are available only to persons of a peculiar refinement of mind. The ignorant and rude may be dazzled and delighted by physical beauty, and charmed by loud and stirring sound; but those more simple melodies and less attractive colors and forms that appeal to the mind for their principal effect act more powerfully upon individuals of superior culture.

In proportion as we have been trained to be agreeably affected by the outward forms of Nature, and the sounds that proceeded from the animate and inanimate world, we are capable of being made happy without resorting to expensive and vulgar recreations. It ought, therefore, to be one of the chief points in the education of youth, while teaching them the still more important offices of humanity, to cultivate and enliven their susceptibility to the charms of natural objects. Then would the aspects of Nature, continually changing with the progress of the seasons and the sounds that enliven their march, satisfy, in a great measure, that craving for agreeable sensations which leads mankind away from humble and healthful pursuits to those of a more artificial and exciting life. The value of such pleasures consists not so much in their cheapness as in their favorable moral influences, which improve the heart, while they lead the mind to observations that pleasantly exercise and develop, without tasking its powers. The quiet emotions, half musical and half poetical, which are awakened by listening to the songs of birds, belong to this class of refined enjoyments.

But the music of birds, though agreeable to all, conveys positive and durable pleasure only to those who have learned to associate with their notes, in connection with the scenes of Nature, a thousand interesting and romantic images.—To many persons of this character it affords more delight than the most brilliant music of the opera or the concert. In vain, therefore, will it be said, as an objection, that the notes of birds have no charm, save that which is derived from association, and that, considered as music, they do not equal that of the most simple reed or flageolet. It is sufficient to remark, that the most delightful influences of Nature proceed from these sights and sounds that appeal to the imagination and affections through the medium of slight and almost insensible impressions

made upon the eye and ear. At the moment when these physical impressions exceed a certain mean, the spell is broken, and the enjoyment becomes sensual, not intellectual. How soon, indeed, would the songs of birds lose their effect, if they were loud and brilliant, like a band of instruments! It is their simplicity that gives them their charm.

As a further illustration of this point, it may be remarked that simple melodies have among all people exercised a greater power over the imagination than louder and more complicated music. Nature employs a very small amount of physical sensation to create an intellectual passion, and when an excess is used a diminished effect is produced. I am persuaded that the effect of a great part of our sacred music is lost by an excess of harmony and a too great volume of sound. On the same principle, a loud crash of thunder deafens and terrifies; but its low and distant rumbling produces an agreeable emotion of sublimity.

The songs of birds are as intimately allied with poetry as with music. The lark has been aptly denominated a "feathered lyric," by one of the English poets; and the analogy becomes apparent when we consider how much the song of a bird resembles a lyrical pallad in its influence on the mind. Though it utters no words, how plainly it suggests a long train of agreeable images of love, beauty, friendship, and home! When a young person has suffered any severe wound of the affections, he seldom fails, if endowed with a sensitive mind, to listen to the birds as sharers in his affliction. Through them the deities of the groves seem to offer him their consolation. By indulging this habit of making companionship with the objects of Nature, all pleasing sights and sounds gradually become certain anodynes for his sorrow; and those who have this mental alchemy for turning grief into a poetic melancholy, can seldom be reduced to a state of absolute despondency. Poetry, or rather the poetic sentiment, exalts all our pleasures and soothes all our affections by some illusive charm, whether it be turned into the channel of religion or romance. Without this reflection of light from the imagination, what is the passion of love? and what is our love of beauty and of sweet sounds, but a mere gravitation?

The voice of every singing bird has its associations in the minds of all susceptible persons who were born and nurtured within the precincts of its untutored minstrelsy. The music of birds is modulated in pleasant unison with all the chords of affection and imagination, filling the soul with a lively consciousness of happiness and beauty, and soothing it with romantic visions of memory,—of love, when it was an ethereal sentiment of adoration and

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