

species from their hollow excavated in a dead pine. They rested upon rotten wood and bark.

The Northern Three-toed Woodpecker (3) is a fine bird and differs from most others of the family in having a lemon-yellow crest or patch on the crown. The upper part of the bird is jet-black; under parts, white.

The Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are speckled black and white, and the males have vermilion or scarlet crown patches. In both cases the males alone show the colors mentioned. These birds are of great service in preserving our forests and orchards from the ravages of insects, and although the little Downy species has been called "the sap-sucker," and was at one time accused of "girdling" and killing fruit trees, he is now generally acknowledged to be amongst our most active and useful insectivorous birds.

### The Shrike and the Sparrow.

The following remarks by Dr. Coues, relative to our Shrike and the English Sparrow, we endorse most heartily, and we do not know of another Ornithologist who is able to express an opinion so thoroughly backed up by actual field experience. He writes:—

"Nay, more, the Shrike is entitled to our special thanks and most favorable consideration for his interference in our behalf against the bird-pest of the country—the European Sparrow. In taking counsel with herself that she might right the balance of her forces, Nature—which we so fatuously interfered with when the Sparrow madness seized us, she be-thought herself of the Shrikes, and in her own mysterious way she summoned these trusty allies to her aid. The Shrikes, nothing loth, went right to work, and were abating the nuisance very perceptibly when 'Bostonese' idiocy confronted them and cut short their righteous warfare. Men shot them down in the very acts of destroying Sparrow after Sparrow; at each murderous discharge of the gun a noble Shrike was martyred in doing his best for the good of the community. I do not know who was responsible for this outrage. I hope that it was merely the blunder of some ignorant underling, not instigated by any one professing to be an Ornithologist." Hear! Hear! And Dr. Coues is right. Canada could hardly do a wiser thing, as far as the Sparrow plague—for plague it is—is concerned, than support a colony of Shrikes.—*Ed.*

### Hanged by the Neck—Curious Death of a Little Sparrow.

In the overhanging cornice of a brick house on the corner of Eighty-fifth street and Lexington Avenue a number of sparrows have built their nests and have made very comfortable little homes. This evening while sitting at our window, directly opposite, we discovered quite a commotion among the little colony of sparrows under the coping, and taking a careful view in order to find out the cause of the trouble, and with the aid of an opera glass, we discovered one of the little sparrows hanging by the neck by means of a small thread which

was attached to something above, leaving a few inches of the string in plain sight. The other little birds were in a terrible state of excitement over the accident, and were trying all the means within their power to extricate their companion, but they evidently did not understand the force of attraction and gravitation, as in their efforts to free their companion they would sometimes two at once light on his body, and would pick at the string above, but in doing so they gave the additional weight which all the time was drawing on the neck of the little sufferer. But we finally had to give up looking at them, as the shades of evening were closing around us, and to him also, poor little fellow, as he seemed by this time to be quite dead. We suppose that in carrying up material for nest-making they took up this string, with the above result. We would gladly have released him, but it was not in our power to do so. We are speculating in regard to the case whether or no it may not have been a case of suicide caused by jealousy, or crossed in love by a stern parent, or some family troubles. But our final verdict was that it was a case of accidental death as above described.

### French Field Mice.

Darwin's now familiar paradox, that the fertilization of certain flowers may depend upon the number of cats in their neighborhood, has an illustration now in France, where it may even be carried a step further. Any observer who knows the French rural districts well must be struck by the immense number of mouse holes which may be seen in some places. The surface of the ground at times has quite the appearance of a network of little burrows where it would be impossible for one of the field bees required for the fertilization of Mr. Darwin's flowers to find a secure spot for its nest. In the department of the Aisne alone it has just been calculated by a special commission that these field mice have cost the farmers no less than thirteen million francs. The climate seems to be especially favorable to these creatures; and the population being sparse, the number of cats is few, and the mice increase and multiply beyond belief. Arsenic has been tried in the open; but the hares and rabbits get killed first, and now the plan adopted is to construct heaps or small stacks of straw, to which the mice resort in myriads. These heaps are placed partly below the level of the ground and securely packed and covered in, being first stored with poisoned beet-root, turnips and carrots. This plan is said to be succeeding well, and without harm to the hares and rabbits.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

—April has given us thunder and lightning, wind storms, and snow storms in Canada; and in the United States—not far from us—*Earthquakes*. In our first issue of the BULLETIN, we predicted "volcanic disturbances" for the present year on the North American Continent.

### India in Hot Weather.

I will briefly indicate the thermometric features, say at a central position like Allahabad. In January the indoor temperature will reach its minimum, perhaps standing at fifty-four degrees. The rise is very gradual, and gets into the "eighties" toward the middle of March; when steady at eighty-five degrees punkahs become necessary. Above ninety degrees the heat is oppressive, and at ninety-five degrees horribly so. This is generally the temperature during the lull between the moon-soons. In exceptional years I have known pillows and sheets to be uncomfortably hot, requiring sprinkling with water; and I similarly retired to rest in drenched night clothes. But the hot weather is mercifully interrupted by two remarkable meteorological phenomena. First, at its commencement we have almost always violent hailstorms, which beneficially cool the air, and then at its acme we have those very remarkable electrical dust-storms, which impress fresh life and vigor all around. Let me describe one. Nature seems subdued under the great heat, and is in absolute repose. Not the faintest breath is there to coax the faintest movement in the leaves: silence prevails, for even the gurgulous crows can't caw because their beaks are wide open to assist respiration. Suddenly the welcome cry is heard, "Tufan ata!" (A storm is coming! and the house servants rush in to) close all doors. Anxious to witness the magnificence of the approaching storm, you remain out to brave it, and soon feel its approaching breath on your cheek. Looking to windward you see a black cloud approaching, and before it leaves and sticks, kites and crows circling around in wild confusion. You now hear its roar while rapt in admiration, you are enveloped in its grimy mantle, and have to look to your footing in resisting fury; and this is no joke, for eyes, nostrils, and ears are clouded with dust. As the blast approaches you may see a flash of lightning and hear its clap of thunder, and then feel the heavy cold raindrops which sparsely fall around. Darkness black as Erebus surrounds you, darkness which literally may be felt, for clouds of dust occasion it; and if you are within doors night prevails, requiring the lighting of lamps. The storm passes, light returns, and you find everything begrimed with dust. Every door is now thrown open to admit the cool, ozone-charged air, which you eagerly inhale with dilated nostrils, and feel that you have secured a fresh lease of existence.

COLUMBUS, O., April 10.—The Governor has designated April 27th for the planting of forest trees in Ohio, by the roadsides and in groves about homes. He recommends the formation of forestry societies.

—A cool and wet summer is almost invariably followed by a cold and stormy winter; and a muggy and moist summer by an open autumn and late setting-in of winter—but of course there are a number of other points that require to be considered in connection with these conditions in each instance.