

generous liberality be extended to this useful family of birds which forms so powerful a phalanx against the inroads of many millions of destructive vermin?"

The rich, varied and striking plumage, together with the familiar sounds and movements of this bird are among the most interesting adjuncts of the rural scenery of North America. No field is perfect without its lively family of Red-headed Woodpeckers. No traveller, with a taste for the natural, can visit the inland districts without bearing away with him a recollection of the red cap and conspicuous black and white jacket of *P. erythrocephalus*. This bird delights most in sunny fields, where there are a few trees standing, or in half cleared spots with numbers of those tall stumps in Canada, known by the elegant name of *Rampikes*. In such places, during the whole of the warmer portion of the year, you are sure to meet with numbers amusing themselves by pursuing or playing with each other. They do not seem to dread the proximity of human habitations, but on the contrary are often somewhat numerous in the immediate neighbourhood of towns and cities.—In the country they sometimes breed within two or three hundred yards of the farm house, when a tree suitable to their purpose can be found. "When alighted on a fence stake by the road or in a field, and one approaches them (says Audubon,) they generally move sideways out of sight, peeping now and then to discover your intention; and when you are quite close and opposite, lie still until you have passed, when they hop to the top of the stake, and rattle upon it with their bill as if to congratulate themselves on the success of their cunning. Should you approach within an arms length, which may frequently be done, the Woodpecker flies to the first stake or the second from you, bends his head to peep, and rattles again as if to provoke you to a continuance of what appears to him to be excellent sport. He alights upon the roof of the house, hops along it, beats the shingles, utters a cry, and dives into your garden to pick the finest strawberries he can discover." "No sooner have they satisfied their hunger, than small parties of them assemble on the tops and branches of decayed trees, from which they chase different insects that are passing through the air, launching after them for eight or ten yards, at times performing the most singular manœuvres, and on securing their victim return to the tree, where immediately after a cry of exultation is uttered. They pursue each other on wing in a very amicable manner, in long beautifully curved sweeps, during which the remarkable variety of their plumage becomes conspicuous, and is highly pleasing to the eye. When passing from one tree to another, their flight resembles the motion of a great swing, and is performed by a single opening of the wings, descending at first, and rising towards the spot on which they are going to alight, with ease and in the most graceful manner."

The nest of the Red-headed Woodpecker is placed in a hole bored in a tree by the indefatigable bill of the bird, and is not lined with leaves, feathers, or other materials, but simply enlarged to the proper dimensions, and made smooth and comfortable. The female lays six eggs of pure white, and the young are hatched in the beginning of the summer. They leave Canada for