

and the creaking of a sign in high winds. Barrington says his pipes came nearest to the nightingale of any bird he ever heard. The description given by Wilson in his own inimitable manner, as far exceeds Pennant and Barrington as the bird exceeds its fellow-songsters. Wilson tells us that the ease, elegance and rapidity of his movements in listening to and laying up lessons, mark the peculiarity of his genius. His voice is full, strong and musical, and capable of almost every modulation, from the clear, mellow tones of the wood-thrush to the savage screams of the baldcagle. In measure and accent he faithfully follows his originals, while in strength and sweetness of expression he greatly improves them. In his native woods, upon a dewy morning, his song rises above every competitor, for the others appear merely as inferior accompaniments. His own notes are bold and full, and varied seemingly beyond all limits. They consist of short expressions of two, three, or at most five or six syllables, generally uttered with great emphasis and rapidity, and continued with undiminished ardor for half-an-hour or an hour at a time. While singing, he expands his tail, glistening with white, keeping time to his own music; and the buoyant gaiety of his action is no less fascinating than his song. He sweeps around with enthusiastic ecstasy; he mounts and descends, as his song swells and dies away; he bounds aloft with the celerity of an arrow, as if to recover or recall his very soul, expired in the last elevated strain.

A bystander might suppose that the whole feathered tribe had assembled together on a trial of skill—each striving to produce his utmost effort—so perfect are his imitations. He often deceives the sportsman, and even birds themselves are sometimes imposed upon by this admirable mimic. In confinement he loses a little of the power or energy of his song. He whistles for the dog; Cæsar starts up, wags his tail, and runs to meet his master. He cries like a hurt chicken, and the hen hurries about with feathers on end to protect her injured brood. He repeats the tune taught him, though it be of considerable length, with perfect accuracy. He runs over the notes of the canary, and of the red-bird, with such superior execution and effect that the mortified songsters confess his triumph

by their immediate silence. His fondness for variety, some suppose, injures his song. His imitations of the brown-thrush are often interrupted by the crowing of cocks; and his exquisite warblings after the blue-bird are mingled with the screaming of swallows, or the cackling of hens.

During moonlight, both in the wild and tame state, he sings the whole night long. The hunters, in their nocturnal excursions, know the moon is rising the instant they hear the delightful solo. After Shakspeare, Barrington attributes, in part, the exquisiteness of the nightingale's song to the silence of the night; but if so, what are we to think of the bird which, in the open glare of day overpowers and often silences all competition? The natural notes of the American mocking-bird are similar to those of the brown-thrush.

A MODEL COMPOSITION.

Boys and girls who are perplexed to know what to write about, and how to write it, when required to bring a "composition," will be amused by the following model:—

WINTER.—Winter is the coldest season of the year because it comes in the winter. In some countries winter comes in the summer, and then it is very pleasant. I wish winter came in the summer in this country. Then I could go skating barefoot and slide down hill in linen trousers. We could snowball without getting our fingers cold—and men who go out riding wouldn't have to stop at every tavern to warm, as they do now. It snows more in the winter than it does in any other season of the year. This is because so many cutters and sleighs are made at that time.

Ice grows much better in winter than in summer, which was an inconvenience before the discovery of ice-houses. Water that is left out of doors is apt to freeze at this season. If people could take in their wells and cisterns on a cold night and keep them by the fire, they wouldn't freeze.

Skating is great fun in winter. The boys get their skates on when the river is frozen over, and race, play tag, break through the ice and get wet all over, (sometimes they get drowned,) fall and break their heads, and enjoy themselves in many other ways. A wicked boy once borrowed my skates and ran off with

them, and I could not catch him. Mother said punishment would overtake him one day. Punishment will have to be pretty lively on its legs if it does, for he runs bully.

There ain't much sleigh-riding except in the winter—folks don't seem to care about it in warm weather. The grown-up boys and girls like to go sleigh-riding. The boys generally drive with one hand, and help the girls to hold their muffs with the other. Brother Bob let me go along a little way once, when he took Celia Crane out sleigh-riding, and I thought he paid more attention to holding the muff than he did to holding the horse.

Snow-balling is another winter sport. I have snow-balled in summer. But we used stones and hard apples. It isn't so amusing as in the winter, somehow.

But enough. I have dashed off these little things about winter, while sister is getting ready for school. Good-bye.

NEDDY.

THE BEST LIQUOR.

In the announcement of a great public meeting in the open air, better liquor than usual was promised. When the people were assembled, a rowdy cried out: "Where is that better liquor?" "There," replied the principal speaker, pointing to a bubbling spring, "there is the liquor which God brews for all his children. Not in the simmering still, over smoky fires, choked with poisonous gases, does our Father in heaven prepare the precious essence of life—pure, cold water; but in the green and grassy dell, where the red-deer wanders and the child loves to play, there God brews it; and down, down in the deepest valleys, where the fountains murmur and the rills sing; and high up the tall mountain-tops, where naked granite glitters in the sun, where the storm-cloud broods; and away, far out on the wild, wild sea—there He brews it, that beverage of life, health-giving water. And everywhere is it a thing of beauty—gleaming in the dew-drops, shining in the gem, till the trees all seem to turn to living jewels—spreading a golden veil over the sun, or a white gauze around the midnight moon—sporting in the cataracts, dancing in the hail-showers, folding its bright snow-curtain softly about the wintry world, and weaving the many-colored iris of the sky, whose roof is the sunbeam