

perhaps bootlessly, a cure for those evils which our own greediness and want of caution have brought upon us.

Already our enormous forests are rapidly disappearing under the axe of the blind and improvident farmer. It would sometimes seem as if the mad fury of a destructive energy had aimed at the ruin of all our forest glories. Fire, even, is called in as an auxiliary to the axe. The woods are swept off so completely, that already in many parishes vast spaces are to be seen where not a solitary tree exists in the midst of the cultivated soil to yield its refreshing shade to the cattle, or around the dwellings of the husbandman, to enliven their appearance, and purify the air which the inhabitants breathe. To such an extent has this been carried, that in many places, farms of sufficient extent to afford all the land necessary for cultivation and, at the same time, plenty of wood for the wants of the owners, have not enough to-day to make an axe-



[Fig. 3—*a* Fly-catcher, *Contopus virens*, Cab.  
King-bird, *Tyrannus Carolinensis*, Baird.

handle, a fence-rail, a post, or even a shackle! Fire-wood has to be carted 5, 6, even 7 leagues! And how will it be 20, 30, 40 years hence?

But I will leave aside the question of wood-wasting for the present, and restrict myself to the blindness which characterises the dealings of the farmer with insectivorous birds.

These birds, though protected by law, and of great importance to the countryman, are persecuted with a foolish vigour only equalled by the vigour displayed in the destruction of our forests. And when I say *foolish*, I do not think I am using too strong a word. Is not the useless destruction of beings full of the enjoyment of life, sensible to pain like ourselves,

beings who actually seem to seek our society, not as enemies but as friends—is not this folly? What is more charming than the twittering of the swallow, the note of the song-sparrow, of the goldfinch (figs. 1 and 2), who at break of day pour forth the glad feelings of their grateful hearts, and before the first ray of the rising sun has struck the window of the cottage, have already provided their young with the necessary aliment of their morning repast.

The swallow, quitting the river-side, its beak full of mortar for its new nest, seems to amuse itself by mounding in a hundred gyrations on its road to the eaves of your house, warbling at the same time its amorous song (What! with its beak full of mortar? A. R. J. F.); does it not seem to say to the ploughman, as he wearily leans on the stilts of his implement, that he too should do his work gaily? That the regard, the love of the beings who are there, in his abode, will well repay him for the sweat which he pours forth for their good.

I must be allowed to quote from Buffon, that great painter from nature, the following passage with regard to the lessons we may derive from the love shown by birds for their families.

“Every marriage, says he, presupposes the necessity of an arrangement for our own benefit, and for the benefit of the beings which are the results of it; the birds, who are obliged to build a nest for their eggs, at which nest the female works from necessity, and the male from complaisance, during this



Fig. 4—*a* Black-cap, *Parus atricapillus*, Linn.  
Hudson's Bay titmouse, *Parus Hudsonius*, Forst.

Fig. 5—The Golden warbler, *Setophaga ruticilla*, Swains.

labour become attached to each other; the multiplied cares, with her as an alleviation of her loneliness. The love which the mutual assistance, strengthen this sentiment, which is still more increased and made more lasting by a necessity of a second sort, that of not allowing the eggs to become cold, and of preserving the fruits of their love, for which they have taken such pains, from destruction; the female cannot leave them, so the male brings her food; he sometimes, even takes her place, and occasionally adds his own warmth to hers for the better cherishing of the eggs, and shares the nest—needs to passion subsists in all its force during incubation, and it seems to flourish and expand still more when the eggs are hatched; now comes a new pleasure, but at the same time come new cares; the education of the young is a novel work, at which both parents labour together. Birds thus represent to us all that passes in the chaste union of human beings: love followed by undivided tenderness, restricted, in the sequel, to the bosom of the family. All this springs, as we see, from the necessity the parents are under of occupying themselves together in these indispensable cares and in these common labours; and is it not easy to see, that as, among men, the necessity of working is only found in the lower orders, so