

## WITH THE BIRDS.

"The trees are full of crimson buds  
And the woods are full of birds,  
And the waters flow to music  
Like a tune with pleasant words."

But what does it avail if our hearts are so full of other things that our eyes see not the color and our ears are closed to the music? I have so often heard people say, "I love birds, but few come around my home, and I have no opportunity of going afield to study them." But cannot one learn something of birds without taking this special time? I have discovered that to look for birds is to see them, or as one writer puts it, "You must have the bird in your heart before you can see it in the bush." I remember, one April morning a few years ago, watching a flock of juncos in the yard. When I discovered a number of redpolls among them I was delighted, but when I found two fox sparrows scratching among the leaves on the outside, I felt that I had indeed made a discovery. I had never identified a fox sparrow before.

I have noticed too that if you see a bird once, you are nearly certain to see it again and again. I have seen fox sparrows many times since; they come annually to a corner of my school-yard, scratch about among the leaves for a few days and allow us to observe them at our pleasure. If they came before that spring morning, I had never noticed them.

When walking along in the spring, a flutter in a hedge, a note from a tree above, a sound of rustling wings anywhere should cause the ears and eyes to attend.

I had read of the particular dislike of the kingbird for the crow; that he would drive crows from his neighbourhood with a great deal of vigour and clamour. The story seemed hardly credible. I had discovered that a pair of kingbirds nested yearly in an orchard near my home. One morning I was attracted to the door by an unusual noise, then my disbelief vanished. Two crows flew rapidly over my head uttering loud cries of distress, while one kingbird followed triumphantly in their wake.

Another day, lingering at the back of the school house, I was attracted by a little bird which I supposed was the chipping sparrow. It was early in the season and I had not yet seen a chipping sparrow. This little bird seemed shy, whereas "chippy" is such a friendly little fellow, and in other ways he seemed not to conform to

my mental picture of "chippy." Here was the chestnut crown, but it did not seem just right; where were the stripes on either side? Had I forgotten his appearance since last year? Then it dawned on me that I was beholding for the first time a tree sparrow.

A redstart visits a certain tree in front of our school-house each year. A black-and-white creeper appears somewhere between May 11th and May 14th creeping along the trunk of a tree across the road. A little brown creeper plays hide and seek on the trunk of a tree behind the school-house,—at least when we try to observe him on one side, he invariably seeks the other side of the tree trunk. A flock of palm warblers visits our school-yard each year and just now the tall trees in the yard are filled with myrtle warblers. They flit from tree to tree, and their song reaches us through the windows. The children near the windows can observe them as they work.

But why interest children in birds and nature? We wish to secure better bird protection. What better way to combat the boy's natural instinct to destroy, than to interest him in the living bird? Chapman says,— "Birds more than any other animals serve as bonds between man and nature."

The child is naturally curious about things—about anything that comes within his experience. He is interested in anything that his teacher is interested in; if his teacher likes wild flowers, he will go out of his way to find flowers for her; if his attention is directed to the budding of trees, he will bring her buds from so many different kinds of trees that her education in that line will grow apace; if she reads and tells him stories about birds, he will look for birds, and all the time he will be unconsciously storing up impressions of birds, trees and flowers upon which to draw in later life.

Little children are quick to see birds, but cannot at first be depended upon for accurate description, especially in the matter of color. They are, however, eager to describe what they have seen and with a little direction soon improve in their manner of expression. A junco is to many at first a small black bird with white tail feathers. They are easily led, however, to see that it is not black like a crow but nearly the color of their slates. A question or two as to the color of the bill and the number of white