

How Our Birds Protect Our Trees.

Trees are like great hotels, they are so alive with their busy little insect people. Like hotels, when looking for rooms, there is a choice between outside ones and dark inside ones. The outside ones are in cracks in the bark, and here, in fall, visiting moths stow away their eggs in snug bed chambers and sleepy butterfly children wind themselves in their silken covers and rest quietly till spring calls them to unfold their wings and seek the flowers.

Beneath the bark, in the inside rooms, live the wood borers, and up and down the long hallways boring ants run busily to and fro.

In the spring the eggs left in the bark hatch into hungry worms and thousands of these new guests climb up to the airy roof gardens of the hotels to dine in the green restaurants on fruit and leaves. Indeed, so many hungry insect folk board in the hotels and live on the wood and leaves that if no bound were put to their work, the boarders would quite eat up their hotels.

One small wood borer alone can eat a whole great tree, and myriads of the hungry creatures are always at work in our shade trees.

Wood ants find the holes the borers have made and go on from them, tunneling deeper and deeper into the heart of the trees until they have honey-combed the timber with their galleries. Anyone who goes to the woods can see them work. Did you never find a pile of sawdust at the foot of a tree, or see a streak of dust on the bark? That is the work of the ants; and while you watch, one of the little black workmen will often come out of a hole in the bark, drop its load of dust, and hurry back inside for more. The poor trees suffer sorely. But fortunately they are not only hungry insects but hungry birds also, and the birds, knowing full well that the trees are among the best bird restaurants, flock to them eagerly.

The woodpeckers spend most of their time chiseling through the bark for insects, so well hidden in the wood that only such sharp bills and barbed tongues as theirs can reach them. In the winter they join the cheery chickadees and nuthatches as eggers, searching diligently over the crannies of the bark for insects' eggs. The champion of their band seems to be the chickadee, which has such a hearty

winter appetite it thinks nothing of eating 5000 eggs a day.

Every country boy knows how mice girdle the apple trees, gnawing their bark just above the snow in winter. They do so much harm we should often have to go without apples if it were not for the hawks and owls; but these are great mousers, and, between them, work night and day to save the orchards.

The tree-top protectors are more numerous than any of the other tree birds, and when the leaves come out in spring, fall to work with a will.

Orioles, vireos, cedar birds, and cuckoos are the prize caterpillar birds, but when there has been a plague of insects in an orchard or village, baring the trees of leaves, nearly all the birds of the neighborhood have come to the rescue. And so the birds work all through the year—the tree-trunk birds and owls in winter and the tree-top birds in summer—all working to protect the trees, saving for us both our shade and our fruit, which the insects are only waiting to destroy. —*Selected.*

Are Church-Goers the Only Sufferers?

Mr. A. Wylie Mahon, of St. Andrews, N. B., contributes a clever article to the September Canadian Magazine on "The Souls of Anecdotes," in which the following occurs:

"I know a clergyman who, in a dream, found himself in a strange land, where every worn and wasted form had a laughable suggestion about it of better days, where every tearful voice had a faint, far-off echo of mirth and merriment, and every groan was the ghost of a laugh. Some of these strange forms cast reproachful looks of blame at the dreamer. At length, he discovered that he was in a weird ghostland of anecdote, and that the weary, wasted ones who looked blame upon him were the ghosts of the stories he had worn the life out of by telling them so often in his sermons."

Five-year-old Tommy was being put through a test in numbers, before the admiring family, one day at dinner. Finally, papa asked him the question that had proved the Waterloo of the older children in past years.

"Now, Tommy," said papa, "how many are two apples and three pears?"

"Five fruits!" promptly answered Tommy.—*The August Delineator.*