

## NATURE STUDY—No. IV.

## BIRD STUDY.

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In connection with the widespread awakening of interest in Nature Study, some attention has been and is being directed to Birds and their habits. Birds are among the most conspicuous, attractive, and easily observed objects in Nature, and, when attention is once drawn to them, the student is led into other avenues of Nature Study which will be found pleasant and profitable to pursue. A fairly comprehensive and accurate knowledge of most of our common birds is more readily obtained than would at first sight appear possible, and many good books are now to be had which render identification comparatively easy. Of these Chapman's "Bird Life," with coloured plates, and Chapman's "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America," are probably as good as any. These books are useful in identifying birds, and perhaps also as a guide to their study; but, to be of any value educationally, our further knowledge must come from a study of the living birds in their haunts and homes.

While children probably do not consciously love nature, they have a curiosity to know more of the living things they see about them, and there can be no doubt that if children were taught more of the things they wish to know and fewer dead uninteresting facts, better educational results would be secured.

A bird which is likely to be more or less familiar to children, particularly in rural schools, is the Bobolink, and a study of its life history will be found most captivating and instructive. The beauty of his plumage and the contrast with the duller dress of the female, his rollicking joyous song, his skill in concealing his nest, his extensive migrations, in the course of which he visits many countries, can be woven into many interesting lessons. The Meadow Lark is an expert decoy, and the sight of a bird endeavouring to decoy an enemy from its young never fails to arouse the most intense interest.

It is unnecessary, however, to leave bird study to those living in the country; for, in the town in which I am now writing, many