

It is at this season of the year that the great variety of birds may be most easily determined; from this point a very slight degree of observation must lead conviction to the mind of any natural being. Insects are making sad havoc in our orchards and gardens at the present moment, and to them, in addition to the effects of the abundant blossoms, noticed in our last, is attributed the damage doing at this time, we have not to complain of late spring frosts this season. Our contemporaries are one and all giving very dismal accounts of the fruit prospects in every part of the kingdom. The farmer deemed it necessary to join in the universal cry in favour of the birds, and even each has come out in his own peculiar manner with a well timed and forcible broadside. Birds when encouraged not only keep in check their insect enemies, but they greatly reduce the number of our noxious field and garden weeds feeding upon the seeds after the insect season is passed.

The following birds are insectivoreous—that is, they eat insects *alone*, and abstaining from fruits and seeds:—The golden-crested wren (*Regulus satrapa*), the wood wren (*Sylvia sibilatrix*), the flow wren or hay bird (*S. f. filis*), the chaffinch (*Fringilla coelestis*), the nightingale (*S. Luscinia*), the linnet (*Saxicola rubetra*), the stonechat (*S. rubicola*), the wheat-eater (*S. Oenanthe*), the flow wag-tail (*Motacilla flava*), the tree-pipit (*Anthus arboreus*), the meadow-pipit (*Pipit. pratensis*), the cuckoo, fly-catcher, the lesser or greater butcher-bird, the night jar, the night hawk, the wryneck, the creeper, the bottle-nose, and to these several others might be added. The following are insect-eaters, but also eat seeds:—Hedge sparrow, common wren, thrush, red-stark, tom-tit, cole-tit, marsh-tit, water-tit. The number of seeds of weeds which these devour are immense.

The following are fruit-eaters, and also feed on insects:—Black cap, garden warbler, white-throat, babillard, missel-thrush, song-thrush, robin, and starling.

The following are grain-eaters, some of which, like the house-sparrow, eat insects largely:—The finch, yellow-hammer, reed-bunting, corn-lark, skylark, woodlark, linnet, chaffinch, blackbird, mountain-finch, house-sparrow, and the sparrow.—*Scottish Farmer*.

The Birch—Its Varieties and Uses.

A correspondent of the *Cultivator* thus writes of the birch: "There are seven species described by the botanists of New England.

"The White birch, sometimes called the gray birch, is a well known tree, and cannot be mistaken for any other tree of the celebrated birch family. It is about a third tree in rank, growing from 20 to 30 feet in height, and sometimes much higher. It has been denominated the com-

panion of the pitch pine, which together usually indicates a light soil. Coleridge calls it the "lady of the woods." It grows rapidly in all soils. It makes good stove wood. One man said of it, "white birch is the most valuable fuel I have, for I can make a good fire of it, and have all the wood left." In good land a crop of birch wood may be taken off once in ten years. It ripens seed in September and October. The bark was formerly used by fishermen along our brooks for a torch-light. The seed should be sown in the fall if it all, and covered lightly.

The paper or Canoe birch is indigenous to deep soils as well as American, and is natural to river banks and intervals. It is a beautiful and most attractive tree. The smooth white bark of the trunk may be separated into delicate horizontal layers, which may be written on by pencil or pen and ink. It grows 40 to 70 feet in height, and varies from one foot to three feet in diameter. The bark was used in olden times in New England, as by the Indians, for making canoes. Michaux enumerates a great many uses to which it has been put in Canada and Maine. The wood takes a fine polish, and is therefore used for hat blocks and cabinet work, and for making shoe-pegs. The bark was formerly used beneath shingles, as I have seen in stripping roofs many years ago. It is almost imperishable.

The Black, Sweet, or Cherry birch is easily distinguished from either of the preceding species, from the dark color of its bark, which gives it the most common name of Black birch. The resemblance of its bark and leaves to the cherry has led some to call it the Cherry birch, and the pleasant sweet taste of the inner bark has led others to call it the Sweet birch. It grows from 30 to 70 feet high, and is from one foot to two feet, and more, in diameter. It is common in deep soils, and flourishes best in mountainous regions. The wood is easily wrought, and is used in arts. It is a delicate rose color, which deepens from exposure. It is used by some for ox-yokes. It makes good fuel; and its bark is used in coloring woollen drab, resembling or bordering on a wine color.

Yellow birch is a lofty tree, growing from 40 to 80 feet in height. It is common in moist woods and swamps. The wood is used for various purposes, especially in chair work, such as posts and bars. It is a valuable fuel.

The Red birch, in aspect, differs from the others. It is found bending over streams, with its roots in the water. It grows with the red maple and the swamp oak. The bark lacks the tenacity of the White and the Canoe birch. On old trees the bark is a dark grey, and very rough. Within, it is of ocre-red. The wood is white and hard. For fuel it is nearly equal to hickory. It is of rapid growth. Yokes are made of it; they are likely to crack unless seasoned in log under cover or in water. It is easily propagated