

of a canary. I at last succeeded in shooting one of the singers and was surprised to find what a tiny being it was, that gave forth such a volume of sound, for it was the Ruby Crowned Kinglet."

This was my first close acquaintance with the Ruby Crowns, nor have I been able to push it much farther, for in spite of all endeavors I cannot find them here, excepting about mid-May. They, no doubt, go farther north to breed, and it may be that in the fall they return to the south by some other way.

It is not yet known exactly where they breed and so far as I know, their nests and eggs have never been found. If therefore this should meet the eye of some northern student, who thirsts for immortality, let him remember that a talisman that will enable him to gratify his desire, will be found in the cradle of the Ruby-Crowned Kinglet.

It may be well to remark here, that rare nests and eggs do not pass as authentic, unless the bird be shot at the nest, and sent, for identification, to some undoubted authority.

It is rather difficult to identify this bird without shooting it; for being usually above you its most striking part, the crown—is not seen. Yet its peculiar nimbleness and its habits of playing and dashing about the top-most twigs, and of twisting and scrambling about in a Chicadee-like manner, will often cause it to be suspected, if indeed these ways do not entirely distinguish it from some of the true warblers.

Its food consists mainly of flies and other small insects, as might be inferred from the shape of the bill and from the rictal bristles at the corners of the mouth; for the use of these last is to assist in the capture of flies, and we generally find that the extent of a bird's fly-catching propensities, is indicated by the development of these hairs; while from the slender bill, we might safely infer this bird's habit of picking up insects from twigs and crevices.

Early in the fall the Ruby-Crowns begin to return from the vague Lone Land, bringing with them their newly fledged young, which being as yet without the diadem of their kind, have more than once proved stumbling blocks to the student, whose only help in such cases is a careful comparison with the structural details of the old ones, unless he can refer to some more experienced friend for a solution of the difficulty.

WINTER NOTES ON ORNITHOLOGY.

By PROF. C. B. WILSON.

PAPER IV.

ORDER IV.—COLUMBAE, the pigeons.
—This order is so well known in, and so well represented by our domestic doves and their allies that it needs only passing comment. In one sub-family, represented by a single isolated American species, but not referable to any established old world group, the hallux or hind toe is not perfectly insistent. This fact, together with other