

at hand, are not easily distinguishable from each other. Unlike the European Cuckoo, these birds show much care and affection in bringing up their young. Their nests, it is true, are very carelessly put together, being composed of a few dry twigs, mixed with weeds and grass, and with so little concavity as sometimes to endanger the safety of the young birds, who not unfrequently fall out of their uncomfortable cradle. The nest is generally fastened to the horizontal branch of a tree at no great distance from the ground.

The eggs, four or five in number, are of a bright green colour. The young are fed with insects, which also constitute the principal food of the old birds, although the latter are also said to be addicted to the bad habit of sucking the eggs of other birds, and thus committing sad havoc amongst their neighbour's nests. The flight of the Cuckoo is rapid and silent, and although awkward in its movements on the ground, it is a very elegant looking bird when seen perched among the branches of the trees. The shape of its body, and the long tail feathers, giving it some resemblance to the Carolina Dove, or the Passenger Pigeon. The plumage of the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo is a light greenish brown over the whole of the upper parts, including the wing coverts, and two middle tail feathers. Primary quills, with the inner webs, brownish orange. Tail feathers, excepting the two middle ones, black, the next two entirely black, the rest broadly tipped with white—the under parts are greyish white. The upper mandible brownish black with yellow margin—the under mandible yellow. The black-billed variety differs but little in the general colour of the plumage, but the upper mandible is brownish black, and the lower bluish black, and there is a narrow space of a deep scarlet tint around the eye.

A striking contrast to the shy retiring habits of the birds just described is presented by the very pugnacious Tyrant Fly-Catcher (*Tyrannus carolinensis*) or King Bird, as he is commonly called, whose shrill tremulous note is as familiar to every dweller in the country as the peewee of the Peewee Fly-Catcher. Like the latter, it seldom enters the forest, but is fond of orchards, fields of clover, and gardens or paddocks near a farmer's dwelling. The King Bird comes to

us in June, and leaves again for more southern latitudes about the beginning of September. It is a bold, fearless bird, attacking, without scruple, Hawk, Crow, or Jay that may happen to approach the neighbourhood of its nest, or even the orchard or field which it frequents. Mounting rapidly in the air, it pounces down upon the head or back of the larger intruders, who become so annoyed and tormented, as willingly to make a precipitate retreat. It pursues the enemy sometimes for a mile, and then satisfied that it has done its duty, returns to its post quivering its wings, and uttering its shrill notes in triumph.

Beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, and winged insects of all kinds form the principal food of this bird, and it may sometimes be seen hovering over a field of clover, with beating wing, after the manner of a hawk, surveying the ground and herbage for grasshoppers, which are a favourite diet. At other times, it takes its stand on the top of an apple tree, a stake, or tall weed, from which it swoops down upon the passing insects, the snapping of its bill—the death warrant of its prey—being audible at some little distance. Towards autumn, wild fruits of different kinds, such as blackberries, elderberries, and whortleberries, constitute a favourite part of its subsistence, but it seldom or never touches garden fruit of any kind. It is accused of occasionally feeding upon honey bees, but its depredations in that way are so slight that they well deserve to be condoned for the good service the bird renders the farmer, both by the quantity of insects which it devours, as well as by its unceasing hostility to the plunderers of the poultry yards and the crops.

The nest of the King Bird is usually built on the horizontal branch of an apple or pear tree. The outside consists of dried grass and weeds, interwoven with flakes of wool or tow, and lined with fine dry grass, fibrous roots, and horsehair. The eggs, from four to five in number, are reddish white, marked with spots of dark brown. The plumage of this bird is very handsome. The general colour of the upper parts is a dark bluish grey, the head darker. The feathers of the crown can be erected at will, so as to form a crest, below the black surface of which is seen a rich scarlet, or flame coloured patch margined with yellow. Wings and tail brownish black, each feather of the latter tipped with white. Under parts greyish-white, throat pure white, the breast tinged with ash-gray.

Few of the birds, which visit our gardens and orchards at this season of the year, are more remarkable for the beauty of their plumage and the melody of their song, than the Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Guiraca ludoviciana*). In general, it is a shy bird, keeping much in the forest, where it feeds mostly upon the tender buds and blossoms of the trees, and upon insects which it catches on the wing, but when the cherries are ripe in the gardens and orchards, it often approaches our dwellings, and amply repays us for the fruit which it consumes by the beauty and harmony of its notes. I have never met with a