

great devotion; he had trilled his refrain from beginning to end at least twenty times when it occurred to me to time and count his songs. The whole of each trilling occupied 15 seconds, and after I began to count he repeated it from beginning to end eighty-two times; just as he should have entered on the eighty-third, his wings closed, his tail went up, and down he fell headlong; but my eyes were blinded with the brightness, and my neck refused to take part in further proceedings, so that I was not able to mark the bird for closer examination. This singer had serenaded me for about an hour, and I do not think he ranked above his fellows in staying power.

On May 19 collected a skylark that sang its song only twenty times before it dashed down to earth. Saw another singing on the ground; this is the only case of the kind I have observed. It is one of the commonest of prairie birds in western Manitoba. Its loud ventriloqual voice is heard from the clouds on all hands when it is in full song. This song was for long a riddle past my solving. I felt sure of its being the utterance of some bird on the prairie, but where, I could not tell nor trace; wherever I went, it seemed to be just a little further ahead, or to one side or another, or suddenly behind. Throughout the whole season of 1882 I was thus duped, and it was by chance that at last I found the singer to be away up in the sky, but so high that as it was a bright day it was impossible to follow with the eye the tiny speck whose music was shaking the air for thousands of feet around. The song is sweet and far-reaching, and both Audubon (the discoverer) and Dr. Coues (the further elucidator) have given most enthusiastic descriptions of its moving power and melody. When the skylark feels the impulse to sing, he rises from the bare prairie ridge with a peculiar bounding flight, like that of the pipit; up, in silence, higher and higher he goes, up, up, 100, 200, 300, 500 feet; then, feeling his spirits correspondingly elevated, he spreads his wings and tail and pours forth the strains that are making him famous. The song at the beginning is much like that of the English Skylark, and the notes are uttered deliberately but continuously, and soon increase in rapidity and force, till in a few seconds the climax is reached, after which they fade away in a veery-like strain, and then suddenly stop. While this was being sung the bird had floated downwards, and as soon as it is finished he proceeds, by the bounding flight, to regain his elevation and once more pour out his silvery strains.

Several times after a skylark had sung and returned to earth, with the headlong descent already described, I purposely flushed him, and at once he rose without further preamble, soberly remounted his imaginary 500-foot platform, and again sang his serenade from beginning to end. Thus on one occasion I called the same bird three times "before the curtain;" to the fourth *encore*, however, he would not respond, and each subsequent time that he was disturbed he would fly off some 200 yards and again settle on the prairie. Once only have I observed this species singing his full song on the ground.

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