

The Swallow.

A marked characteristic of the swallow is its attachment to man. In the unsettled parts of the country it builds its nest in overhanging cliffs and rocks, but so surely as a house is built in the neighborhood it leaves the old nesting places and builds under the roofs or eaves of the dwelling, to which this nest makes a picturesque addition.

As a rule swallows are very sociable birds, two or three pairs being generally found together. Some species build their nests in huge colonies, and it is quite an uncommon thing to find them in single pairs. Their food consists chiefly of small insects caught on the wing, such as mosquitoes, flying ants, and small beetles. Most of them are either injurious or irritating, and were it not for the prodigious numbers consumed by the swallows, the annoyance we should suffer from these myriads of insects which swarm in the air would be considerable.

So untiring and indefatigable are they in their efforts that one rarely sees a swallow at rest, except at the time they are ready to migrate, when they throng on roofs of buildings and telegraph wires, seeming to deliberate on the route they will take to their Southern home.

The Sparrow.

There are over 40 different species of the sparrow to be found in Canada, though one seldom finds more than six varieties in the same locality. Of these the snowbird and the tree sparrow are the most numerous. They are all more or less migratory in their habits, and that part of the country where the sparrow does not thrive has yet to be found. They are noted seed-eaters, but are not on that account injurious to the grain crops, as grass and weed seeds are preferred by them to all others; and of these they consume an immense quantity.

If we average ten sparrows to a square mile, each bird consuming one-fourth of an ounce of seed daily, and remaining in their winter quarters for six months, they would have eaten at the end of that time more than 850 tons of weed seeds—a very large quantity for one season.

As sparrows are very hardy little birds, there are vast numbers of these seed-consumers working diligently throughout the cold weather, thus considerably lessening the number of injurious weeds and useless plant, which would otherwise cumber the ground the ensuing season. We are accustomed to estimate the value of birds by the number of insects they destroy, but when their importance

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

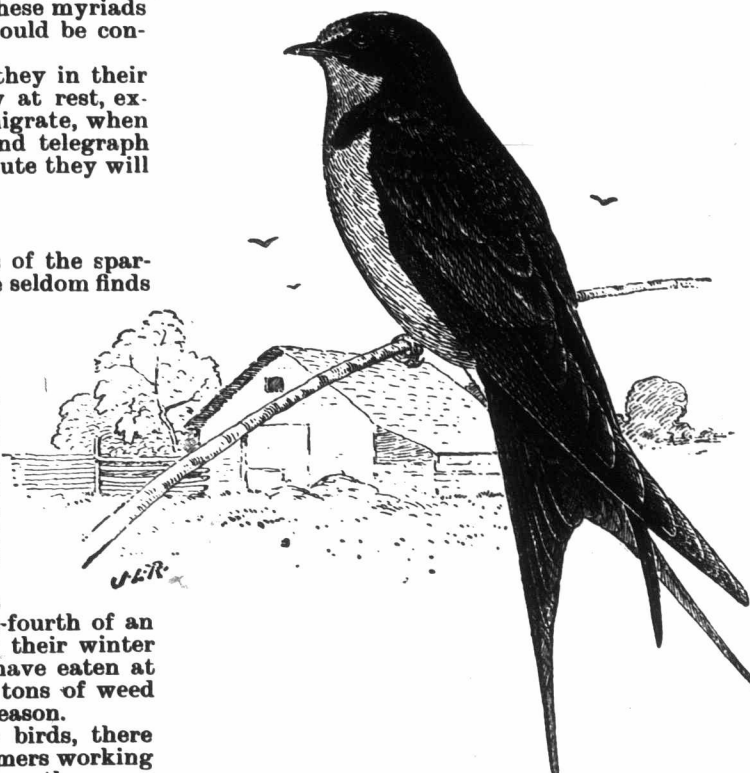
In the Tub.

The wind came fresh across the sand
And tossed the leaves and flowers,
It blew the storm clouds up the sky
And promised heavy showers.

"Come Willie! Willie, where are you?"
Cried mother at the door,
"Dear me, how black the sky has got,
I know it's going to pour."

But Willie, hidden in the tub,
His bread and butter ate,
And said, "I know if I stay here
I shan't get very wet."

Both loud and long the mother called,
But Willie made no sound,



THE SWALLOW.

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THE SPARROW.

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THE GOLDEN ORIOLE.

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as weed exterminators is more widely known their presence around the farm and garden will be considered an incalculable benefit.

The Golden Oriole.

A great contrast to the sparrow is the oriole, whose beautiful plumage and sweet song make it a most welcome addition to our feathered favorites. It seems to make its appearance just about the time the apple trees are in blossom, where it will be seen diligently searching for caterpillars, which constitute its principal food. It also consumes beetles, grasshoppers, wasps, spiders, and bark and plant lice: the latter, being very small, are seldom noticed by the other birds, so it is fortunate for us that they do not escape the bright eyes of the oriole, as they are most injurious to our flowers and foliage.

Its nest is almost inaccessible, as it hangs from the outermost point of the highest branch of an elm, or some other tall tree, to which it is so firmly fastened that it is safe from the most violent storms, or even from that more constant danger, the thievish fingers of the small boy who delights in robbing the nests of our blithe little birds.

"If I go in she'll make me work,
And drag that baby round.

"It's nicer far here in the tub,
And here I mean to stay
Until the rain is over quite,
And then I'll go and play."

So Willie stayed, and when at length
He sought his mother's side,
"Where have you been? I called and called,
But called in vain," she cried,

"For uncle Thomas wanted you
To go with him to town
And see the show of elephants
And bears, black, white and brown,

"The monkeys with their funny tricks,
The dog that fires a gun,
The camels with their ugly humps,
And every sort of fun.

"But as we couldn't make you hear,
He's taken Fan instead;
They won't be back till late, so you
Had better go to bed."

And Willie, as he crept away
With sober face felt sure
When mother called him in he'd hide
Oh never, never more.

Why Minnie Could Not Sleep.

She sat up in bed. The curtain was drawn up, and she saw the moon, and it looked as if it were laughing at her.

"You needn't look at me, moon," she said, "you don't know about it; you can't see in the daytime; besides, I am going to sleep."

She laid down and tried to go to sleep. Her clock on the mantel went "tick-tock, tick-tock."

She generally liked to hear it, but to-night it sounded just as if it said, "I know, I know, I know."

"You don't know, either," said Minnie, opening her eyes wide, "You weren't there, you old thing! You were up-stairs."

Her loud voice awoke the parrot. He took his head from under his wing, and cried out, "Polly did!"

"That's a wicked story, you naughty bird," said Minnie. "You were in Grandma's room, so now!"

Then Minnie tried to go to sleep again. She lay down and counted white sheep, just as grandma said she did when she couldn't sleep. But there was a big lump in her throat. "Oh, I wish I hadn't."

Pretty soon there came a soft pattering of four little feet, and her pussy jumped upon the bed, kissed Minnie's cheek, then began to purr-r-r. It was very queer; but that too sounded as if pussy said, "I know, I know, I know." "Yes, you do know, kitty," said Minnie; and then she threw her arms around kitty's neck and cried bitterly, "And—I—guess—I—want—to—see—my—mamma!"

Mamma opened her arms when she saw the little weeping girl coming, and then Minnie told her miserable story:

"I was awful naughty, mamma, but I did want the custard pie so bad, and so I ate it up, 'most a whole pie, and then, I—I—oh! I don't want to tell, but s'pect I must; I shut kitty in the pantry to make you think she did it. But I'm truly sorry, mamma."

Then mamma told Minnie that she had known all about it, but she had hoped that her little daughter would be brave enough to tell her all about it herself.

"But, mamma," she asked, "how did you know it wasn't kitty?"

"Because kitty would never have left a spoon in the pie," replied mamma smiling.

Sorrows of an Ex-King.

He wore a crown of golden curls, this little ex-King, with so pitiful a face. I saw him lying under a tree on grass too dew-wet for health, and coaxed him to me. Then I saw that his face and general attire bespoke unusual neglect at home. Little by little, as his heart and body grew warmer, he divulged his grief, often choked by sobs, poor little misunderstood, miserable King. "Dere's a new

baby ov-a dere—an'—an' my mamma do-ntie love me any more—cause papa told me so. Papa showed me the baby an' mamma said, Rexie, you must love baby, an'—an' she kissed baby, but she didn't kiss her Rexie. Rexie don't love that nasty red-baby; it's cross, ky-baby; tain't pretty, neiser."

True Love.

Here is part of an old Scotch tradesman's address to his old wife after forty-two years' marriage, expressing to the full the feelings that often live on to the golden wedding.

"A wedding heat o' strong young love
Will last through winters many;
The frosts of years but tend to prove
The links that bind to Nannie.
Though teeth are fled and locks grown gray,
She's yet sae kind and cannie,
Love that outlasts young life's heyday
Is the love I bear my Nannie."

"Mid a' the thoughts that trouble me,
The saddest thought o' any
Is wha may close each other's e'e,
May it be me or Nannie.
The aye that's left will sairly feel
Amid a warld uncannie;
I'd rather face auld age mysel
Than lanely leave my Nannie."