

“With the Birds”

The Present Truth – May 10, 1900

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We do not know what this world would be like to us if God had not made the birds to help to fill it with beauty, life, and song. Thinking of this some one has written these verses to show what a difference they make, and how much they add to our enjoyment:

“Fair was the blue sky overhead,
Fair was the earth below;
Soft as an infant’s breath, the wind
Went wandering to and fro.
The creeping grasses clad the earth
In garniture of green;
A summer day more fair, more sweet,
The earth has never seen.

“Yet something still it seemed to lack
To satisfy my heart;
Lovely, but lifeless, as a thing
Created by some art.
But lo! I heard a gush of song,
The whirring of a wing,
And into happy, joyous life
The whole world seemed to spring.”

Think of the awful silence of the world on that third day of time when the voice of God called forth from the earth the trees, plants, flowers, that clothed it with verdure and beauty. No song among the branches, no flutter of a wing, nor even the buzz of insects among the flowers.

But the earth that God had made so beautiful “He created not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited.” And so He spoke again, and the same Word that was the seed of all the plant life of the earth also gave birth to myriads of living creatures to enjoy it.

First came the birds, to break the dread silence, and to wake into happy, joyous life the whole beautiful world. Have you ever thought that every little bird you see had, like yourself, its first parent in Paradise? For all the kinds of birds that God has ever made to live in this earth were brought forth at that time.

A gentleman who lately visited the South of France and enjoyed the bright sunshine, the beautiful scenery and flowers of that lovely clime, yet noticed particularly that there was no music,—the dear little song birds of our own land were missing. This is because so many of these tiny helpless creatures have been

killed and used as food for man, that the few that are left are very timid and hide themselves at the approach of a human being.

If we could have been with Adam and Eve in Eden, and seen the birds of paradise, we could have learned easily much more than can now be found out about them with a great deal of trouble. For their beautiful nests are now as much hidden as possible for fear of other birds, animals, thoughtless little children, careless and cruel persons, who might steal their eggs or hurt their nestlings.

They usually find a sheltered nook where their nests are the least likely to be found, and they are very much afraid if anyone comes too near.

But by and by, in the happy time when "they shall not hurt nor destroy" in all the glad new earth for which we look, according to God's promise, the birds will not, through fear, try to hide themselves or their young ones from us. We shall then be able to watch them at work and learn all that we want to without making them afraid.

A good way to go "birds' nesting" is to take a Kodak [camera] if possible, and get a "snapshot" at all the nests you can find. In this way you can carry away nest and eggs and even the young birds, without causing any loss of life, or filling the breasts of the parent birds with anguish. And the pictures will give you just as much pleasure as the nests or eggs themselves, without causing any pangs of remorse or prickings of conscience.

Farmers, sportsmen, bird-catchers and others catch or kill the birds for various reasons. Where there are the most people there are usually the fewest birds. But in lands where there are very few people the birds are much more numerous. By visiting them in their native haunts and carefully watching them, a great deal has been found out about them.

No doubt you know more or less about the birds at home, the soaring lark, sweet-singing thrush and blackbird, homely robin, swallow, cuckoo, nightingale and others whose recent return tells us that summer is coming. So we will call upon a few of the birds that never come to visit us in this country, and take a peep into their nurseries.