

Gunn. [Mr. Stephens was the first to find it in the coast region of California, in 1883 or earlier]."

I sent the specimen to Mr. Stephens at Witch Creek, San Diego Co., for further reference and he generously contributed the following notes, and remarks that the specimen appears to be in the normal male plumage. Mr. Stephens says: "All my notes and references are at San Diego so I cannot give you as definite information as I would like to. In a general way this species is more or less distributed over the brush-covered hillsides (chemisal) of Southern California, between 1,000 and 3,000 feet altitude. They appear in the latter part of March. By the end of June the song ceases, or nearly so. As they are retiring in habit, the song is the principal clue to their presence. I cannot say just how late the species remains but I doubt many birds being here after the first of August, perhaps none.

"The farthest north I have seen this species is near Independence, Inyo Co. (see Fisher's Report on the Ornithology of the Death Valley Expedition). The nest and eggs are of the usual *Spizella* character; the nest is placed in low bushes in the thick chemisal and May is the principal nesting month. I have seen small companies of fewer than a dozen birds in the migration, but usually not more than one or two pairs inhabit any one hillside. I do not consider the species common anywhere and there are large areas in southern California where it does not occur."



Echoes From An Outing.

A MEMORY OF THE SIERRAS.*

ON a bright morning in early June a trio of the Cooper Club consisting of Mr. Barlow, Mr. Carriger and the deponent set out from Placerville, the old "Hangtown" of blessed memory, and took our way up over the old stage road toward the divide. A pair of handsome "bays" relieved us of physical exertion and the blistering heat of the lower valleys was tempered by the mountain altitudes. Every breeze was redolent with the o-

dors of conifers, while the broad sweeps of the mountain suburbs were a continual revelation of fresh and inspiring scenery.

Our attention is early and often called to the substantial pavement with which Nature has invested the highway and hills, and to the superfluous materials left scattered about. But even these ungentle reminders are not devoid of sentiment, for was it not over these rocks that Horace Greeley made his flying record behind the relentless whip of Hank Monk? The incident is dim in the shadow of more important events connected with the old highway, but in the light of experience the solemn conviction remains that here the seeds of lingering dissolution were planted in the tangled viscera of the great journalist.

Tradition tells us that over this trail came many of the Argonauts of '49 and bands of gold-hunters who followed in succeeding years. When the hidden treasures of the old Comstock were unfolded to the world, the old trail was converted into a chartered thoroughfare and carried the products and supplies of that historic mining camp. No suburban avenue on the continent could then rival it in value and magnitude of its traffic and old residents, with watery eyes and far-away look, still delight to tell of those halcyon years when the road was crowded with a moving procession of dusty mules and ponderous trains, of flying stages and hurrying equipages and all the turmoil of congested business to be found where gold is prevalent. But the sentiment is all of the past! When the heart of the great industry ceased to beat, associated enterprises died for want of nourishment. A few lumber-laden teams from an adjacent mill plod up and down in monotonous routine.

The wandering camper urges his weary mules toward the clear waters

* [It is proper to here mention that the locality whence Mr. Welch gleaned the observations that have entered into his delightful "reverie," is Fyffe, El Dorado Co., Cal., a point on the Lake Tahoe Road, which has of late years become a favorite sojourning point for numerous members of the Cooper Club. It is most interesting to note the impressions which are inspired in one who does not give his time wholly to the fascinations of ornithology while in the field, as do most of the workers who have visited Fyffe in the summer. Mr. Welch's keen and ready wit and generous good nature were pleasing features of the outing, as one may judge who follows through the sketch. ED.]

and cool shades of Tahoe. Specters of decay linger in the neglected garden and unpruned orchard, and the old roadside houses stare out upon the deserted reaches like crumbling monuments in a cemetery of industries long since dead. As we ascend to higher altitudes the landscape stretches away until the pine-clad hills are melted in the mellow distance. Far down in the blue-tinted valley clustered hamlets mark the sites of busy mines, and gleams of white

caped their telescopic vision, not a flash of wings but has been promptly listed and bound in thongs of unspellable Latin. By gentle protest they are dissuaded from climbing to the top of a tall Lombard poplar to investigate the domestic affairs of a flycatcher, but there is no commercial taint to their enthusiasm,—they are not here to despoil in the name of Science! The outposts of the Sierran timber belt loom up in the distance and it is with admiration akin



Photo by Loren E. Taylor. Fyffe, Cal.

OUR OLD SIERRA CABIN IN WINTER.

(This patriarchal cabin among the pines has served often as a lodge for ornithologists sojourning at Fyffe, on the Lake Tahoe Road, during the summer.)

through spires of conifers reveal the sequestered homes of ranchmen. For more than half a century the gold-hunter has been writing history in these hills, and from the rude inscriptions 'graved with pick and shovel and drill may be read untold stories of Roaring Camp and tales of romance and pathos, of hope and despair.

With eager eyes my enthusiastic friends search the wayside for an alien visitant. Not an adjacent nest has es-

to reverence that we approach the grandest woodland in all the world. As we enter into the solemn shade and listen to the eternal whisper of its foliage, one is deeply reminded of that heritage of the supernatural which, in the ancient dawn of intelligence, peopled the solitudes with gods and phantoms.

Soon we arrive at our destination, a little nook, carved out of the forest, that might have been torn from an eastern

landscape. A plain, old road-house with adjacent out-buildings have survived in some degree the industrial paralysis. A garden with rows of cultivated vegetables and an orchard extending back to the woodland, lend an air of home-like comfort to the surroundings. We miss the rustle of Indian corn and the yellow plumes of golden-rod, but an old worm fence surrounding the enclosure completes a rustic scene that would appeal to the memory of them who know aught of eastern rural life.

Rustic simplicity prevails within. An old dusty bar, a relic of other days, before which many a weary soul has received spirituous consolation, has been promoted to the dignity of post-office. A broad, open fire-place hints of the evening blaze and the seductive pipe.

"This is the place we long have sought
And mourned because we found it not."

Here freedom is unconfined. We may occupy three chairs at a time, bunk on the post-office, skin birds on the table and smoke the room blue without provoking a questioning glance. The flag of the Cooper Club is unfurled over Sportsman's Hall, conventionality kicked out of the back door and freedom invited to shriek.

It is surprising how the appetite gains upon the clock but it is not yet the hour for luncheon and my colleagues have already assumed their nondescript costumes and vanished in the wilderness. Conservation of energy is my distinguishing trait and for what little popularity I have attained among my fellow-men, I am indebted to this virtue. Therefore I light my pipe and saunter out to see what Nature may add to the rustic picture. An "old oak-en bucket" that hangs in a well of clear, cold water tempts me to the verge of harmless intoxication and then I pause by a dripping trough where a band of small frogs are rehearsing for the evening entertainment. Barn Swallows circle and twitter about the old barn, wherein a noisy hen is proclaiming the accomplishment of a maternal duty.

A band of Lark Sparrows are exploring a barren pasture over the way, while far up in the adjacent cedars a

band of those mountain Gypsies,—Blue-fronted Jays,—are juggling bird language in a most distracting manner. A meadowlark perches himself on the old rail fence and utters his clear, ringing call like a bugler on parade, while a robin in a neighboring apple tree betrays the proximity of its nest by distressing cries. A pair of bluebirds have reared their brood in the cavity of a tall stub and now spend their time gossiping about the pasture with a band of purple finches. A patch of dead black-berry vines are investigated without result, but in a growth of young conifers by the orchard fence I can hear the whining plaint of the Spurred Towhee. Upon nearer approach I hear the cry of *tsit, tsit, tsit*, so common to many birds of divergent natures that it seems as if somewhere back in the history of bird evolution they had a common parentage and this the primal, perhaps only, note of their vocabulary. The alert, black head of a Junco discloses the author of the cries and upon parting the foliage, a feeble flutter of baby wings reveals the cause of parental anxiety. A Red-shafted Flicker with his merry "cheer-up" stops to explore a dead pine. With the exception of the Red-breasted Sapsucker he seems the only representative of his kind, for though this is a haunt of the Pileated and Cabanis' Woodpeckers as well as of their smaller White-headed cousin, they are not often in evidence. A number of goldfinches are flitting about the orchard but the hour for luncheon is at hand and one cannot spoon with Nature while suffering from the pangs of an unrequited appetite.

Nature has not here shown her boldest handiwork in mountain sculpture or in arboreal creations, for the pass is not the highest, and the majestic shafts about us are but wands as compared to the giant sequoias of Calaveras and Mariposa. Yet she has done enough to impress one most profoundly with the vastness of her conceptions. Well it is that the government has sought to rescue this great aviary from the hands of the despoiler for the desecration of the axe and saw-mill is in evidence on every side. The results of our daily excursions among the warblers and

other birds of the deeper forests have been recorded by those veterans in bird-craft, Messrs. Barlow and Carriger, and although every day was replete with pleasant incidents, further reference to the subject would here be superfluous.

Yet, after the last day's work is done, I linger to bid good-bye to the pleasant associations and go out again into the lengthening shadows to witness the coming of the night. Seated upon a fallen cedar with a mattress of brown needles at my feet, I examine the treasures around me. To the north a broad sweep of the low-lying valley, untrammelled by civilization, rests languorous and dreamy in the purple haze, while beyond rise the gray, granite walls and battlements that mark the course of that erstwhile Klondike,—the American River. To the east the bald granite ridges sweep ever upward until the gleaming fangs of the great divide stand clear and cold against the evening sky.

On every side the silver stars of "mountain misery" look up from their beds of feathery foliage, and groups of tiny figworts, some robed in vestments of white and gold and others in imperial purple, are scattered over the soft carpet. Near them a snowy iris stands like a chaste nun guarding her worldly flock. A dead cedar thrusts its tapering spire far up into the blue ether and on its pinnacle an Olive-sided Flycatcher assumes his solitary watch, uttering now and anon his peculiar note. In adjacent thickets the warblers and vireos are completing their evening repast and their gentle gossip falls on the evening stillness like baby prattle of bird-land. The low, happy notes of the Chickadee are heard from every side, while from the slanting branch of a spruce a grosbeak lifts up its voice in anthem so earnest and joyous that its influence is infectious.

The dawn of night is around us; swift-footed and silently she treads the lower valleys and her cool, balmy breath permeates the forest. The clamorous birds are hushed in her mysterious presence. She pauses a little in her upward flight, while the lingering sun throws a parting kiss to the eastern hills which blush, responsive, to the

greeting. The silence that invokes the children of imagination is over the landscape and the "peace which passeth all understanding" seems to enfold the hills. "The groves were God's first temples" is a sentiment written on every hill and whispered in every wandering breeze. What simplicity is here, where the whole world may come unquestioned and leave its burdens in God's own sanctuary. What glorious absence of narrow creeds, of pompous caste and petty cliques and all the empty formalities of fashionable devotions! No gloved and perfumed usher with scrutinizing glance suggestive of credentials. No salaried choir to taint the holy anthems with stains of commerce, and no ten-thousand-dollar exponent of humility to throw bouquets of empty rhetoric. No ostentatious appeals to God to manifest His divine presence are necessary.

He is here if anywhere and you know it. These are His temples and His silent sermons are written on every side. More masterful than the creations of men are these majestic columns and eternal naves. More beautiful than the frescoes of St. Peter are these cloud-swept vaults and glorious vistas. The grandest symphonies of the masters are not more acceptable to the human heart than the sweet anthems of the birds borne upon the deep, solemn strains of these mighty wind-harps. No one who exercises thought can pass a twilight in the impressive solemnity of these groves without imbibing in some degree the sentiment which impelled that broad-minded teacher of humanity and humility, of mercy and charity, to go alone into the solitudes to pray.

The day is nearly spent and night moves silently, while the evening star rises white over the spectral hills. The weird call of a creeper is still heard, like the mocking taunt of some woodland sprite, and as I move to go, a faint twitter comes from out the snowy plumes of the deer-brush, so soft, so ineffably sweet, that it seems a benediction to Nature's silent services. The day is dead.

"Night threw her sable mantle o'er the world,
And pinned it with a star."

J. M. W., Copperopolis, Cal.