

of the American Titlark that I could find, and nowhere could I find a description of the male bird as having the breast unspotted until finally in a volume of the Catalogue of Birds of the British Museum (Vol. X, page 597) I found a very accurate account of this plumage, with the following interesting note: "The adult bird in full grey-and-vinous plumage, is seldom seen in collections; it is figured by Swainson in the 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,' but the only specimen I have seen was one in the Selater collection from Western Mexico, probably shot in full plumage just before its departure for its breeding haunts. All the other specimens collected in northern latitudes are more brown on the upper surface and show more or less spotting on the breast, which is a dull fawn-buff. It may be surmised therefore that only very old males gain the uniform vinous-breasted dress, and the females in all probability are always spotted on the breast." I hunted carefully for Titlarks for some time after I shot these birds, but only succeeded in getting one other, a female, before they had all left. I saw one as late as May 1st, but did not secure it.

The first week in April, 1900, I commenced looking for them again, but the majority had left already, and I could only find a few scattered birds, until, on April 10, when I ran across several flocks in a field I had not yet examined. The birds stuck to this one field pretty closely, and although there were large stretches of country on all sides apparently exactly similar, they were found in this one field and nowhere else. I saw them there several times, the last time being April 20, when they were still quite abundant but extremely shy and difficult to approach. On April 30th I visited the place again and searched carefully but the Titlarks were all gone, I did not see a single one. In all I secured eighteen birds, and three the year before making twenty-one all together. Of these nine were males and twelve females. Of the nine males only

two were in the unspotted grey-and-vinous plumage; all the others are more or less spotted underneath, although some are spotted very lightly; all the males are much more greyish above than the females.

The twelve females are all rather heavily spotted underneath, and lack the rich vinous tints of the males. This interesting plumage of the Titlark may not be as new to many members of the Cooper Club as it is to myself, but as I believe that the latest date on which this bird has been taken in Los Angeles County heretofore was April 3, and as it is improbable that any specimens should have finished their spring moult at that time, I believed that an account of this plumage might not prove uninteresting. It would seem besides that the old males in the most perfect plumage are quite rare and difficult to secure, at least in this locality.

H. S. SWARTH.

*Los Angeles, Cal.*



### The Evening Grosbeak as a Pet.

PERHAPS almost every wild bird has been made a pet of at some time or other, but the Western Evening Grosbeak is least often seen in captivity. Six years ago in August our bird was found here at Webber lake, 6,800 feet altitude, a tiny, featherless creature that had evidently gotten tipped out of the nest before the time had come for him to leave it. We did not know what the bird was, but put him in a cage and fed him moistened crackers and boiled eggs, liberally sprinkled with red pepper. He seemed to thrive on this diet and became fully grown before he would eat anything else. Finally he became fond of canary seed and now lives upon it. He eats also a great deal of fruit, preferring that grown in warm climates, such as oranges, and bananas. Green peppers are his special delight and he eats a whole one in a day, devouring it eagerly, even to the seed and core.

When he is caged he likes to have people about him and will be quite happy for hours, whistling or singing to any one who will answer him. When he is left alone he calls out vigorously and tries hard to follow; and when allowed he follows us about the house or goes about on our shoulders. One winter he made his home in a small evergreen tree fastened in one corner of a room and was allowed to fly about at will. He would perch on our shoulders and pull at our hair, and if we objected we got a sharp tweak on the ear. Our two setters had been taught to be very careful of him, and he would alight on their backs or hop about them pecking at their feet and noses. When out in a room he is very mischievous and will pounce upon a pin-cushion full of pins and scatter them in all directions. Small articles on a shelf always attract him and he will pull and tug until they are on the edge and then lean over and watch them fall.

His voice is very harsh and discordant and his efforts to imitate the musical calls of other birds are very ludicrous. On several occasions he has escaped and as soon as he reaches a tree the wild birds collect and pursue him. I have never noticed that they fought him but he seems to fear them. After he has been out a few hours he is very happy to be back in his cage. One

morning he got out and after a long search his calls led us to some trees a distance from home. Our neighbors had found out that "Johnnie" was lost and they, especially the children, all followed us about looking for him. When we found him he answered our calls and whistled and hopped down to the lower branches, but could not be induced to come to us. After waiting an hour or two, our friends' patience gave out and they went away one by one. When we were alone my sister sat down and poured some seed into her lap. At once he flew down and began to eat eagerly, chattering noisily the while. Then he allowed himself to be put into the cage.

Our bird does not seem to be at all affected by the severity of the mountain winters, although the wild grosbeaks always migrate. They remain in the mountains only during the summer, while they rear their young. Their nests are built very high and are hard to find, for when the old birds leave the ground they rise straight into the air to a great height before turning to their nest. Our bird's brilliant plumage makes him a coveted pet in this latitude, and his unusual bird-intelligence has won him a high place in our household.

MISS ESTELLE C. BURTON.

*Truckee, Cal.*



### Notes on Some Birds of Cape Nome, Alaska

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL

THE ten weeks from July 20 until October 2, 1899, I spent in the vicinity of Cape Nome, Alaska, now notorious as the latest mecca of the gold-hunter. The previous year I had passed further north, in the Kotzebue sound region, during which time I could collect and study birds at pleasure. But when we reached Nome all our attention was centered on mining and prospecting. I therefore had no time for outside matters and not a single skin was

saved, though I couldn't help seeing what birds happened within eye shot range. But, as all the species here recorded had been familiar to me during the previous year, I am confident of their proper identity. Birds in general were far less numerous than on Kotzebue Sound, the sea coast in the vicinity of Cape Nome being much more barren of vegetation.

Our first base of operations was on some beach claims about seven miles