

A Study of the Birds of Santiago Canyon.

MOLLIE BRYAN, ORANGE, CALIFORNIA.

Concluded.

I RETURN to the shade of the oaks and the hammock, and the scene is changed. The woodpecker and bluejay are busy stealing from the kettle of mush as it cools on the stove for the pack of fox hounds. The Lark Sparrow comes quietly into the basin under the vines for water. The Spurred Towhee is scratching among the leaves with its accustomed vigor. The California Thrasher comes at the call of "huita, huita" for its share of mush or bread crumbs, and lingers to dig with its long sickle-shaped bill, among the flower beds. A bluejay cocks up one eye and come to see what is in the hole, driving the thrasher away and digging in exact imitation of it. The day goes out with the sweet vesper song of the Lark Sparrow and the soft call of the Poor-will.

When October days have come the roadsides are bordered with the scarlet zanschneria, the yellow threads of the dodder are in a wild tangle over sumach and sages, the cliffs are gorgeous with brightening lichens and sycamore trees are turning to brown and gold. The Meadowlark whistles from the mesa, the Vesper Sparrow is in the dry washes by the roadside, and flocks of Horned Larks are feeding in the fields. The Mountain Bluebird flashes across the way like a bit of fallen sky, and the Roadrunner passes swiftly from our sight, as we drive on our way.

Let us, now, take another glimpse at our bird paradise. The White and Golden-crowned Sparrows and Audubon's Warbler have taken possession. The Wren-tit still rings out its clarion notes, the bluejay is as mischievous as before and the woodpecker is studying a piece of water-pipe left on the fence to see if it is a suitable place in which to store acorns. Life under the arbor is now something to be dreamed of. Tom, the Plain Titmouse, comes for the

melon seed he has learned to love, and that are scattered regularly for him. When gathered around the hospitable board, and with mountain appetites we pass our plates for a second helping, and are told "Wait till Tom gets his seed." Plates are held, forks suspended in the air while 'Tom' hops in between the chairs for his seed, then all breathe and eat again. We are up at five to catch the Lark Sparrow at his morning song. And we see that one by one, the ravens come from somewhere out from the face of the cliff across the canyon. What music in their harsh "caw, caw" to bird-crank ears, for it is a promise of days to come, when from a point of vantage gained by hard climbing, we will sit and spy on the family affairs of at least two households of ravens, one on a ledge of a cliff, the other in a tree hard by.

The hills about us echo with the call of the Valley Quail, for they have learned that only about here are they safe from the huntsman's gun. The robins and Western Bluebirds have come and are feeding on the California holly and mistletoe berries. A visit to the tank brings us face to face with other of our winter visitors. The Hermit Thrush is twitching wings and tail from every bush, and a flock of Townsend's Sparrows are chattering socially over not a cup of tea,—but a limpid pool of water. A number of Wren-Tits come to examine their visitor. One comes within two feet of my face, and finding me harmless, descends, twig by twig, to the pool below for a bath. It hops from a small overhanging bush above the water, daintily dips one toe in, and darts up in alarm. The second time it wet both feet before nervously flying up again. The third time it stepped in and gave a flutter with its wings, when back to shelter it went. It continued these vain attempts at a bath until the seventh, when it took a

thorough washing and I thought "like Naaman, it must dip seven times." But no. It returned again and again until at the fifteenth it considered itself completely cleansed. Then the long, elaborate toilet had to be made.

On slowly descending through the crack in our broken bowl, I discovered a flock of Plumed Quail dusting in the dry earth below me. One was walking about, plume erect, keeping guard while the others enjoyed *their* bath. What beautiful birds, and how seldom we see them so low in the mountains, but here at the foot of Santiago Peak they over-lap the range of the Valley Quail. The Canyon Wren is again peering among the rocks for its dinner, and the bushes are alive with other feathered forms. But it is the season when arbor days are past and four walls must be endured, that bird pans are placed before the window and a

feed board spread with corn meal, brings all the members of the sparrow family. Townsends, the Gambel's and Golden-crowned Sparrows, California and Spurred Towhees and juncos are all here. The first rain brought a pair of Varied Thrushes. In the midst of the downpour the male was seen taking a bath in a pool near the house.

In December come flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons and juncos are more plentiful. But this, like Tennyson's song of the brook, might go on forever. But the winter sun *will* set and the Gambel's and Golden-crowned Sparrows open their evening concert. The Valley Quail come whirring into the trees above the arbor for a safe retreat, and the night is ushered in by the clear sweet warble of the Lark Sparrow, that in the quiet spot seems to add a benediction to these days of bird study.



Echoes From the Field.

Western Evening Grosbeak Again. On April 29 at Angwin's Hotel near Saint Helena, Cal. I saw a flock of about thirty Western Evening Grosbeaks (*Coccothraustes v. montanus.*) They were observed the day following also. A Cassin's Vireo had built a nest in a walnut tree in front of the hotel. On April 20 I found a nest of the White-tailed Kite containing four eggs, incubation advanced. The nest was situated in a small live oak tree in a marsh, fourteen feet up.

F. C. CLARK, Napa, Cal.

Early Nesting of the Red-bellied Hawk. On March 22, 1901 I took a set of three finely-marked eggs of *Buteo lineatus elegans* from a nest in a blue-gum tree at 43 feet elevation. A set of two eggs had been taken from the same nest last year on April 15. The nest was made of small sticks and lined with willow twigs to which were attached the green leaves and blossoms. The nest also contained a few feathers from the parent bird. This, I believe is a very early nesting date for this species.

NELSON CARPENTER, Escondido, Cal.

Parasites in Birds. Judging from my experience, the Valley Partridge (*Lophortyx californicus vallicola*) is singularly free from parasites. I have taken the entrails from at least ten thousand of these birds which I have shot in many parts of California and Lower California without finding a worm of any kind in them. Hawks, owls and fish-eating birds are seldom free from worms. Of the latter the terns of the coast are more likely to be free from them than most other water birds, many of which are killed by worms, especially the Brown Pelican (*P. californicus.*) When preparing specimens I have often admired the wise discrimination of Moses in specifying the things that are clean and those that are unclean, though I could not see the necessity of prohibiting the eating of that which