

thicket near by. Coming close enough for a shot, I found it so dense that I could not see them, and they kept flying away until I thought that all had gone. Just then a thrush with a long curved bill flew into the same thicket, but nearly on the opposite side from me. A glimpse of something through the thick foliage, followed by a quick shot, and then comes a hunt for my bird which I may have killed or not. I had to go around the clump of mesquite, breaking my way through a dense tangle of wiry bushes, and at length find a place where I can "crawl under." Judge of my surprise when I found, not only a nice male Crissal Thrasher, but three fine male Gambel's Partridge within three feet of each other. The fine dust had found them and killed all so dead that I had not heard a flutter.

The last mentioned thrush is quite common, and Bendire's is by no means rare, while Leconte's is also often seen. Palmer's Thrasher I feel sure I saw but did not take it. Here now we may find all the birds already mentioned, and many others, such as Abert's Towhee, Green-tailed Towhee, Chaparral Cock, Gilded flicker, Plumbeous Bush Tit, and many other species.

(To be continued.)

---

THE NESTING OF THE BLUE-HEADED VIREO,  
AT FITCHBURG, MASS.

(*Vireo solitarius*.)

BY I. C. GREENE.

Previous to 1890 the nest and eggs of the Blue-headed Vireo were not known to the ornithologists in this vicinity. On May 2, when I was on one of my collecting trips, and in the deep solitudes of a thick pine wood, in a beautiful valley through which a sparkling brook of some size followed its winding course among the rocks, my eye caught sight of a small nest suspended from one of the dead limbs of a pine tree. I approached the spot and found that the nest was one of a Blue-headed Vireo.

The two birds were engaged in finishing the nest. After

watching them a short time I proceeded on my way. On May 13, I again visited the spot and found the female upon the nest. After trying for some time to frighten her from it, without success, I was obliged to climb the tree; but as the nest was out some distance from the trunk and about 10 feet from the ground, I could not get at it without cutting off the limb.

On account of the bird sitting so closely, I thought the set must be complete, so cut the limb off with my pocket saw. Through all of this disturbance, and the breaking off of several small branches, she still remained motionless, protecting her eggs. I brought the nest up close to me and tried in vain to drive her off. I stroked her head and at last took her by the bill and removed her from the nest; upon which she at once flew away, not making a sound nor showing the first signs of defense, anger, or grief; but upon alighting in the top of a tree she gave one loud, clear, call-note, which quickly brought her mate to the scene. But what was my disappointment upon looking into the nest, to find that it contained but one egg. I thought all was lost; but as this was the first nest of the kind I had ever seen, I determined to replace it if possible, and try to persuade the female to complete the set. So I took from my pocket some common white string and tied the limb back as well as could be done without a ladder. The white string was quite conspicuous, as it was necessary to suspend the broken branch from limbs above in order to have it somewhere near the original position. By this time the male had arrived and the female kept flying from tree to tree, every now and then coming very near to me, to see what I was doing. She uttered a few very soft, plaintive notes and appeared so humble, that I could but think of her grief at seeing her home disturbed. I left the tree and watched the little innocent creature approach her nest. She first flew to the branch over the place where the nest was originally, which appeared to be her accustomed way of going to the nest, and dropping down as though she expected to alight in it, fluttered a moment, then returned to the tree.

After uttering a soft cry of disappointment, she again approached her nest. This time lighting upon a branch near by. She carefully examined the nest and string, then chirping a few syllables to her mate, entered the nest, although somewhat dissatisfied with it. Her mate remained near by, flying from branch to branch over head, and expressing his sympathy in a few soft notes. At length, as if to cheer her, he perched himself upon a twig over head, and in the midst of that lonely wood, pealed forth a clear, sweet song, making the whole scene very pathetic. From their meek and innocent conduct, and from the gratitude expressed by the song of the male upon finding that the little home had not been altogether destroyed, it somewhat moved my pity for having caused these beautiful little creatures this needless distress. Had they been defiant as a Kingbird or the like, one would not be moved by the same sense of compassion.

On May 17, I again visited the Vireo's nest and found four eggs, which I took. The nest was placed in a pine tree, as above stated, on a dead, horizontal limb, about ten feet from the ground and six feet from the trunk. It was suspended by the brim from a forked branch, and was fastened to it by fine strips of fibrous bark and cobwebs. It was rather light colored, composed of fine bark fiber, mostly of the inner bark, intermingled with plant down and spider's webs; on one side was interwoven quite a piece of newspaper, also several strips of the thin outer bark of the white birch. The nest was well made and strongly attached to the limb. It was lined with pine needles and very fine dried grass.

The eggs were of a light creamy color, with numerous small chestnut-colored spots around the large end, in the form of a wreath, some mingling into blotches. The central area was marked with fine specks of dark brown, almost black. A second nest was found on May 23. This nest was likewise in a solitary, though beautiful spot in the deep woods, and was suspended from the branch of a tall laurel bush over a bed of green ferns growing around a

large boulder, making a most beautiful scene, lighted up by the beams of bright sunlight let in through the tops of the tall pine trees.

This nest contained two eggs of the Cowbird, one of which was under the lining of the nest, as the birds had re-lined it in order to destroy the Cowbird's egg. But this was in vain, for the scamp deposited a second one when the set was half completed. This set, when complete, contained four eggs of a pure white color with spots of chestnut evenly distributed about the larger end, and not distinctly wreathed as those of the first set. A few blotches were present. The nest was not as well proportioned as the first, but was well made and of a dark color. It was composed of about the same substance as the other, and oddly enough, a piece of newspaper was conspicuously interwoven as in the other one, though they were found more than three miles apart. These nests were not ornamented at all with lichens, as is often reported to be the case.

The nest of the Blue-headed Vireo measures as follows: Diameter, outside, 3 to 4 inches; inside,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  to  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches. Depth, outside,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches; inside,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The variations in the measurements of the egg are: .71 x .56 inches; .75 x .57 inches; .73 x .58 inches.

The Blue-headed Vireo arrives here from the South as early as April 22, and during the migration is to be found abundantly in the woods, but not found as common, if at all, near the houses or about the trees in the streets. They pass northward, and by the last of May become very rare in this locality. They return again in September and linger until October.

---

## BIRDS OF HILLSBORO COUNTY, FLORIDA.

BY WILLARD ELIOT.

---

IN THE VICINITY OF LAKE THONOTOSASSA.

1. **Podilymbus podiceps.** PIED-BILLED GREBE.—Resident, common, breeds.
2. **Sterna antillarum.** LEAST TERN.—In the years from 1870 to 1888