

BIRD
STORIES,
Old and New,
told in
Pictures and Prose.



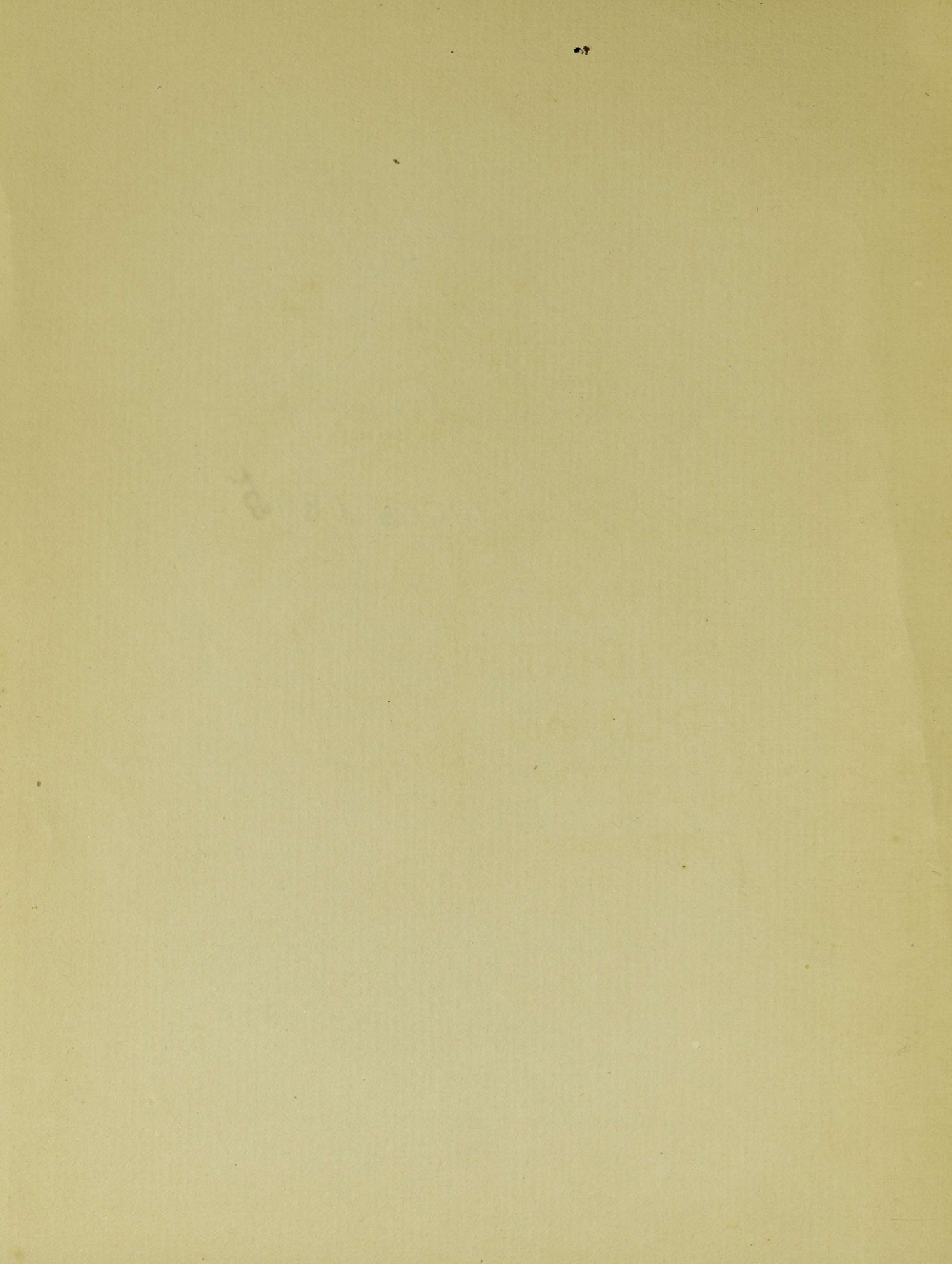
by Harrison Weir.

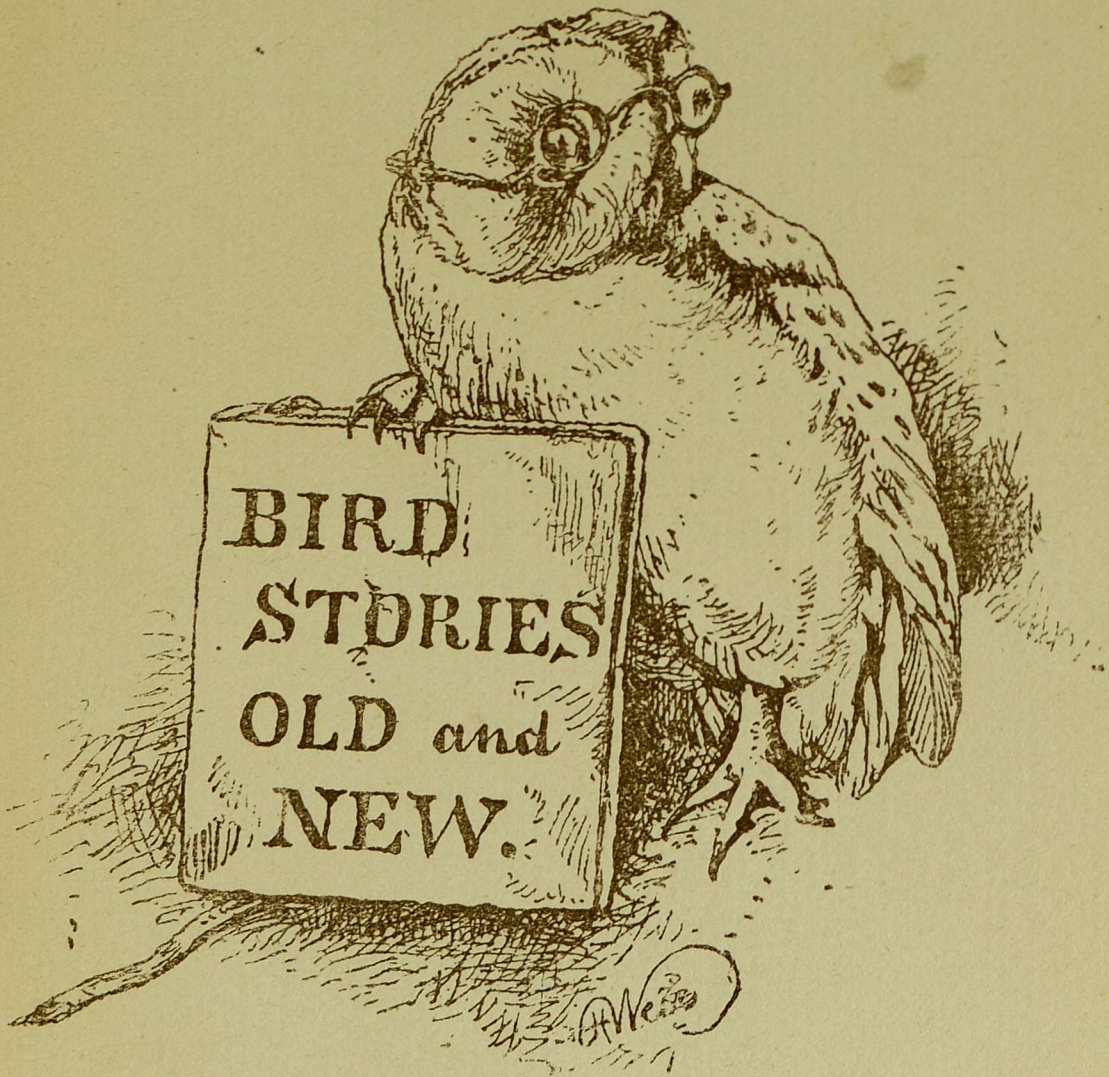
LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C. ;
43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C. ;
26, ST. GEORGE'S PLACE, HYDE PARK CORNER, S.W.
BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.
NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

JACOBSEN
32 LOWTHER AVE.
TORONTO

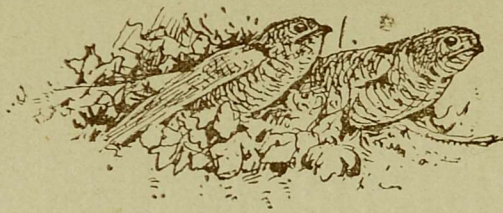
Dorothy M. Caudler

Christmas 1895.





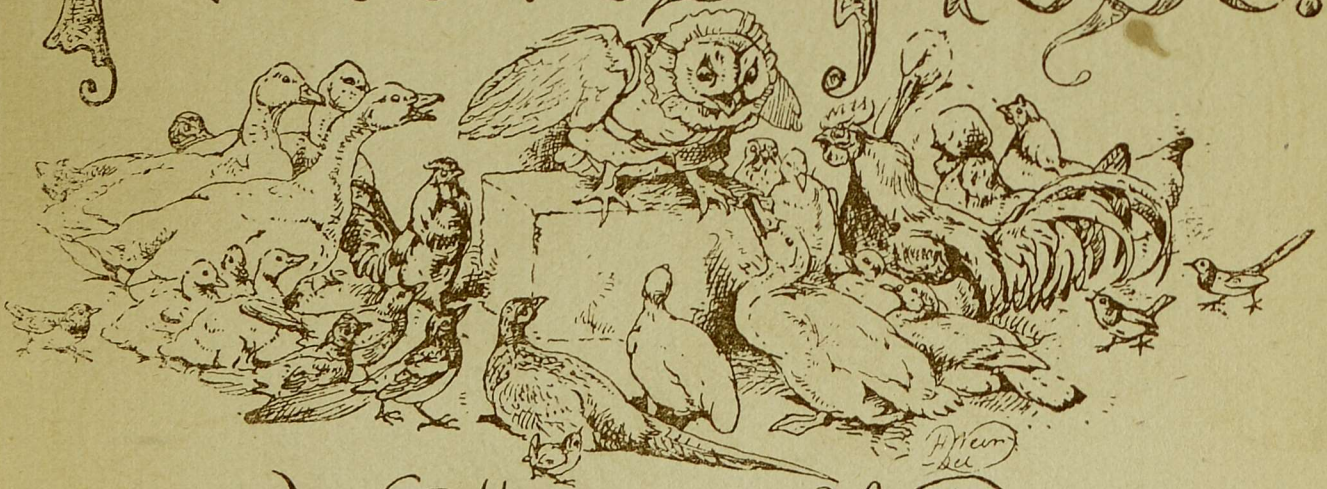
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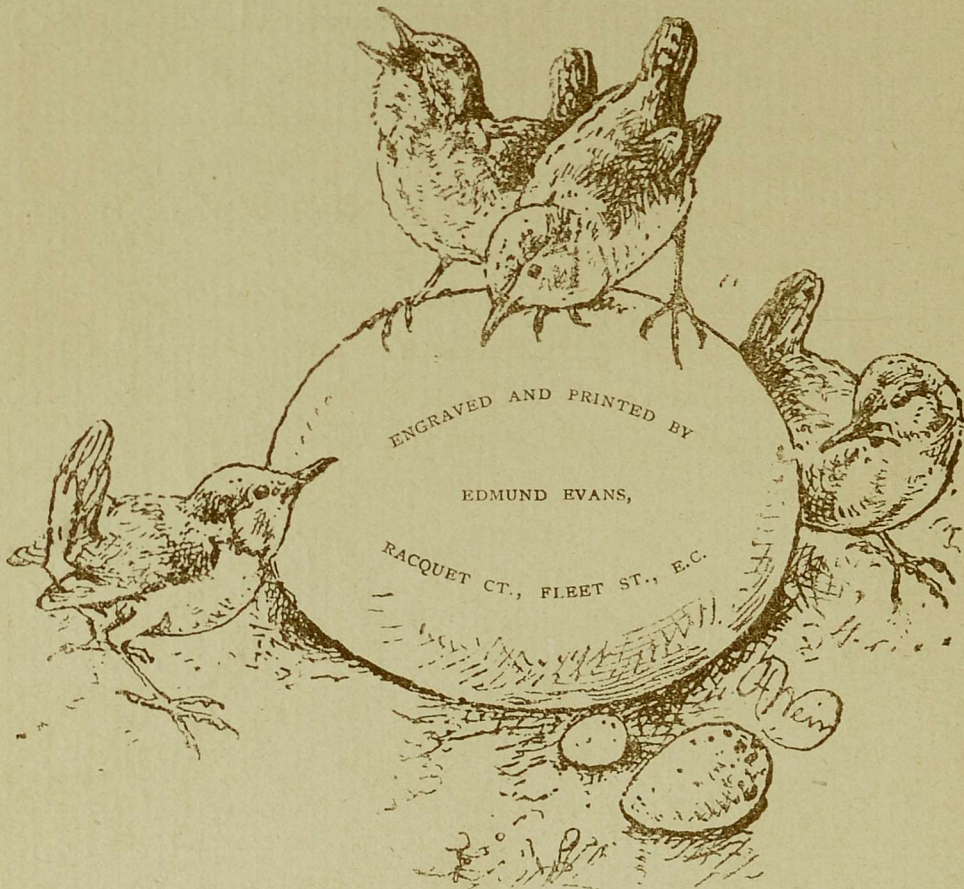
Harris Weir
1885

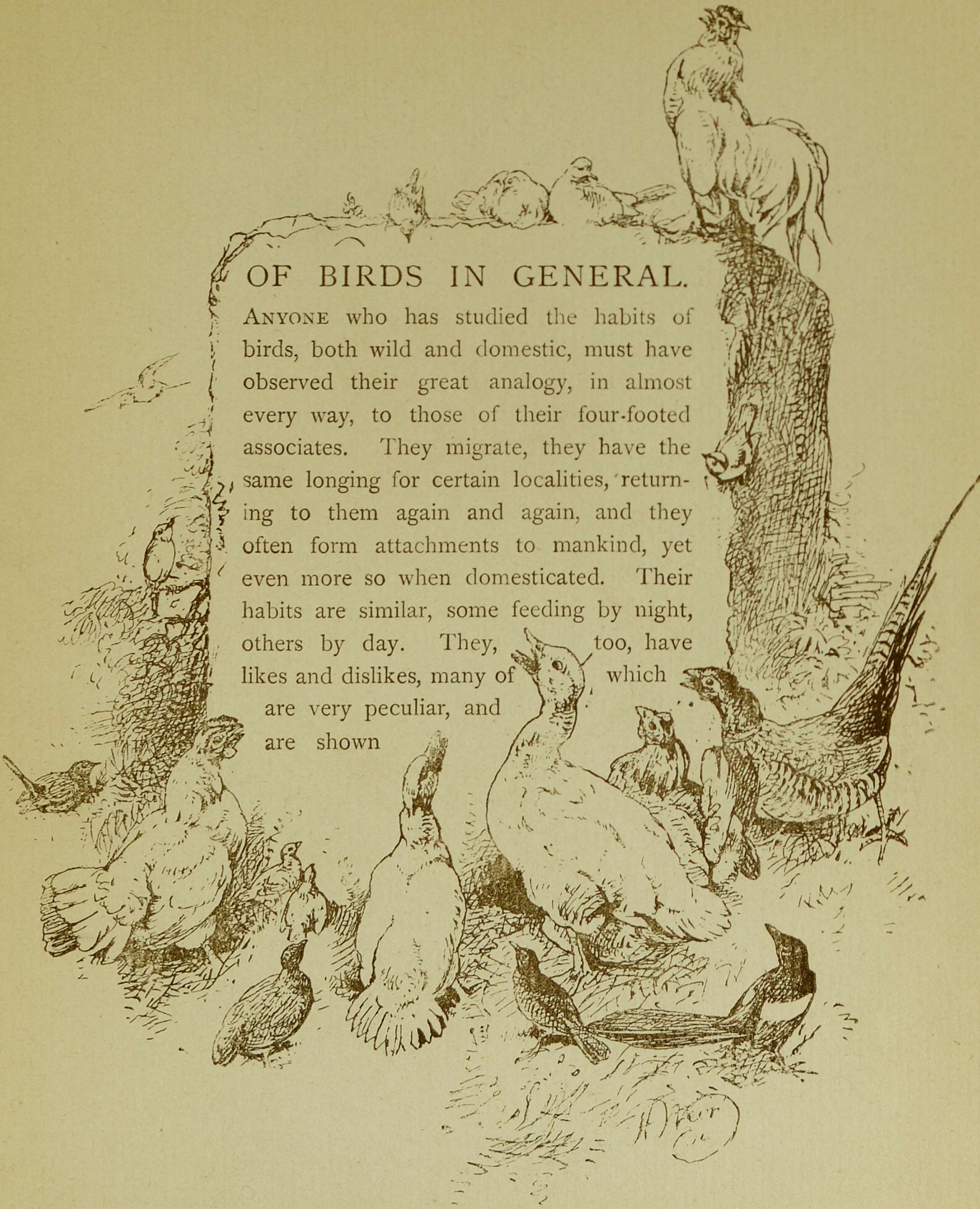
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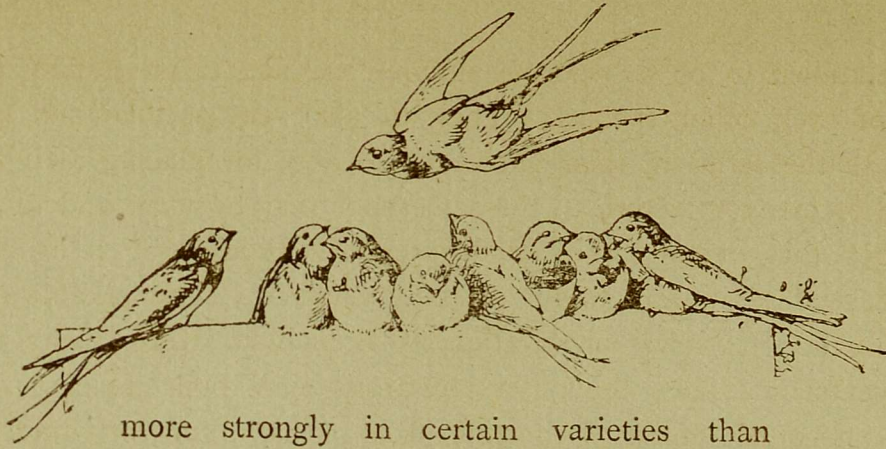
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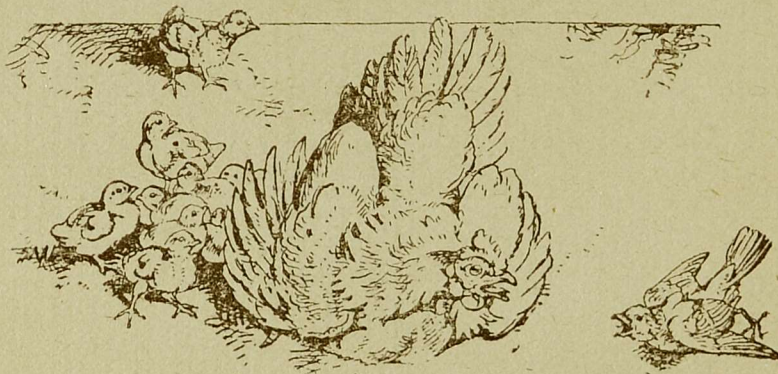
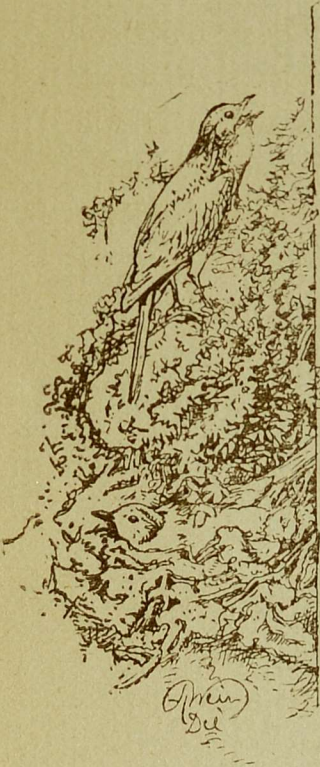


OF BIRDS IN GENERAL.

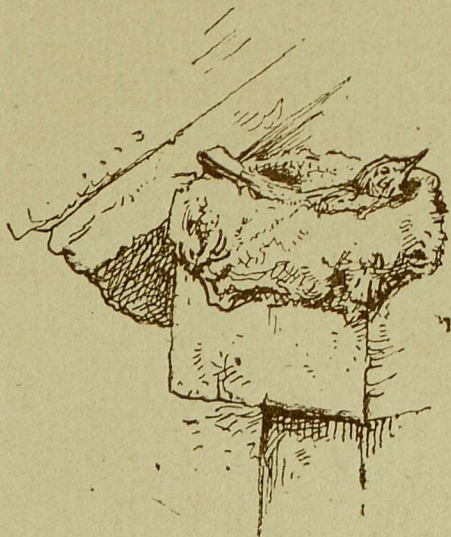
ANYONE who has studied the habits of birds, both wild and domestic, must have observed their great analogy, in almost every way, to those of their four-footed associates. They migrate, they have the same longing for certain localities, returning to them again and again, and they often form attachments to mankind, yet even more so when domesticated. Their habits are similar, some feeding by night, others by day. They, too, have likes and dislikes, many of which are very peculiar, and are shown



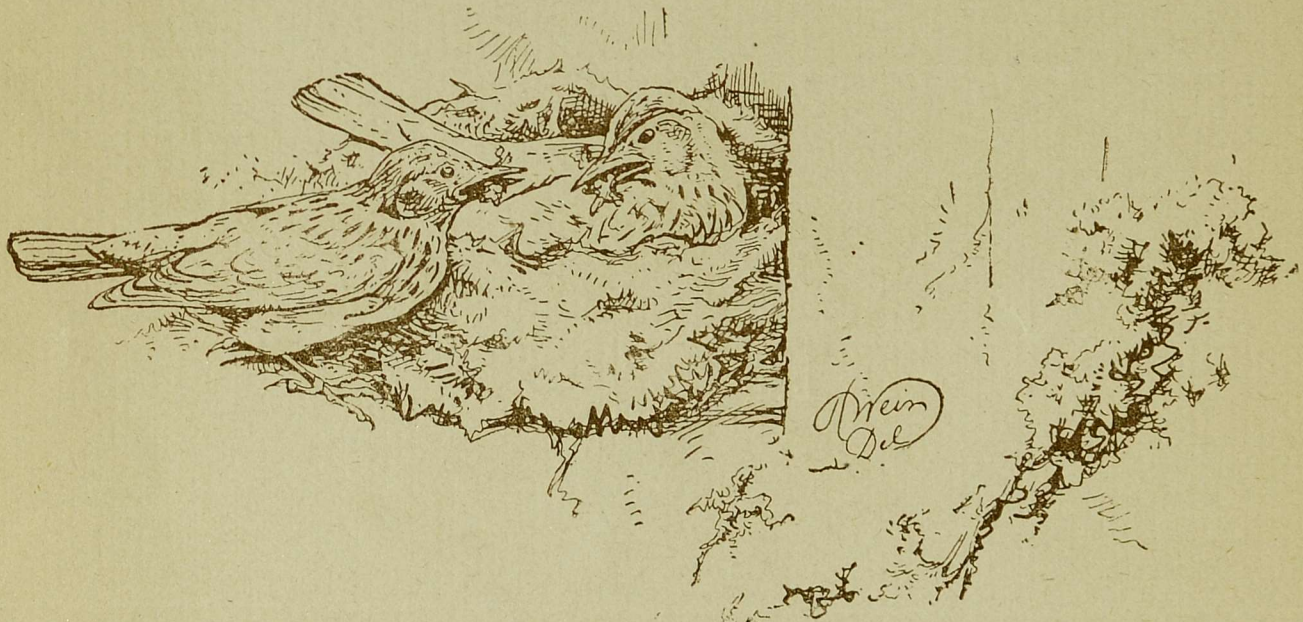
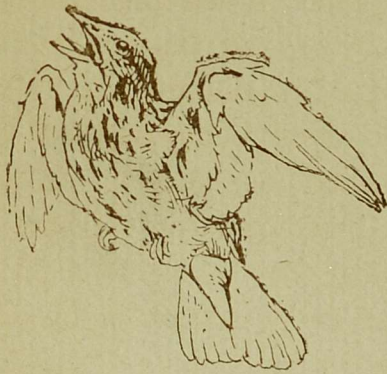
more strongly in certain varieties than others. Some are bold and fearless, seeking the society of man; others are by nature timid and shy, yet under certain conditions often prove otherwise, displaying a decided antipathy to certain human beings, and yet to others a large amount of affection, following them from place to place, regardless of danger to themselves. Of their passions, I think the most remarkable is that of jealousy. This I have noted, both in the wild, domestic, and also among caged birds. It will be found on reflection that it is this feeling which generally is the primary cause of nearly all their quarrels; so powerful is it with some, that it is often the cause of their destruction, and as often of their capture by others, to whom they are a necessity as food; also by man, for not only will they attack a live enemy, or a supposed

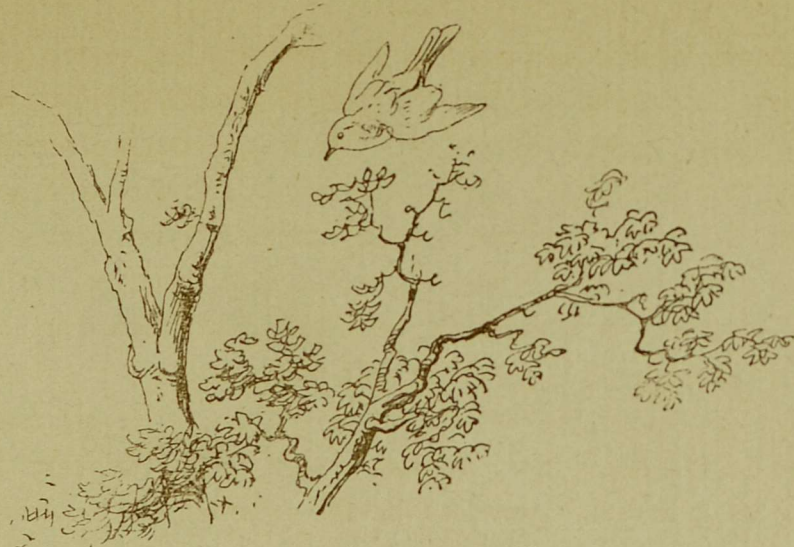


one, but are known to be as vigorous in their onslaughts on stuffed specimens of their own, or even other species. They are also very peculiar and fastidious (if I may so use the term) in their choice of locality for placing their nests; it is the practice of many to return to the same spot year by year, and to such length of time does this extend, as I shall presently show, that it is obvious the offspring succeed as it were to the "family estate." A remarkable case of this kind came under my own observation at Brenchley, Kent, being that of the Spotted Flycatcher. This, though a migratory bird, built its nest—or rather a nest—on a piece of timber projecting from a barn, for forty-three successive years, and possibly may continue to do so, as but a short time ago I saw a nest at the old spot. In some localities this is called the "Post Bird," or "Beam Bird," on account of its frequently choosing projecting pieces of wood, ledges, angles, even the top of a gate-*post*, on which to place its nest. It will be readily seen that such selections are often very unsuitable, and the nests are thus liable to destruction, for I have known a nest to be many times blown from its resting-place, and as many times renewed.

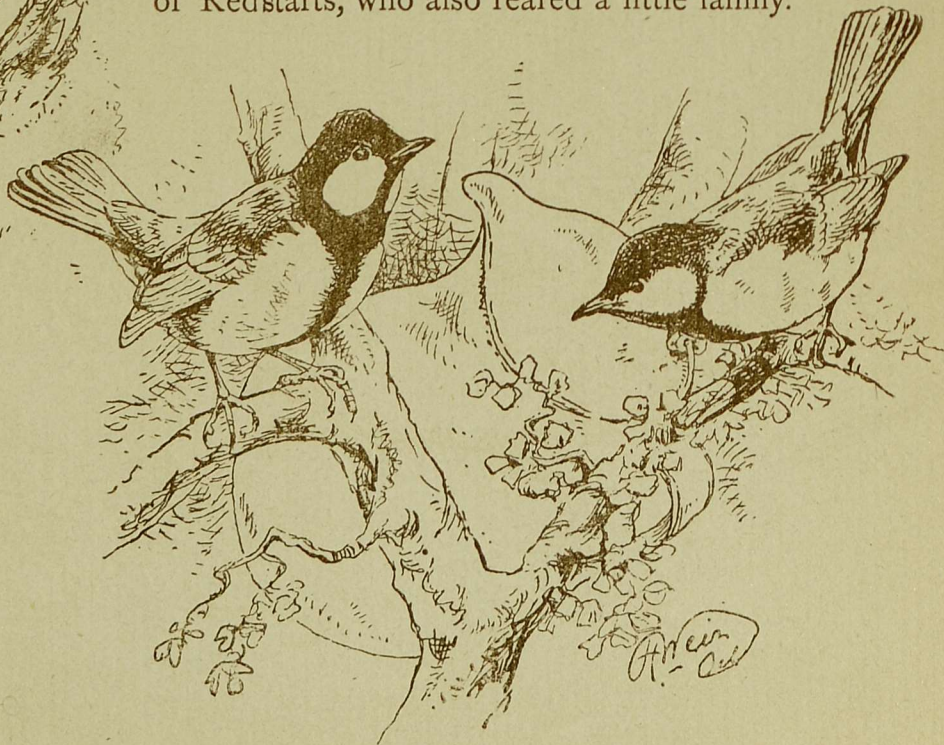
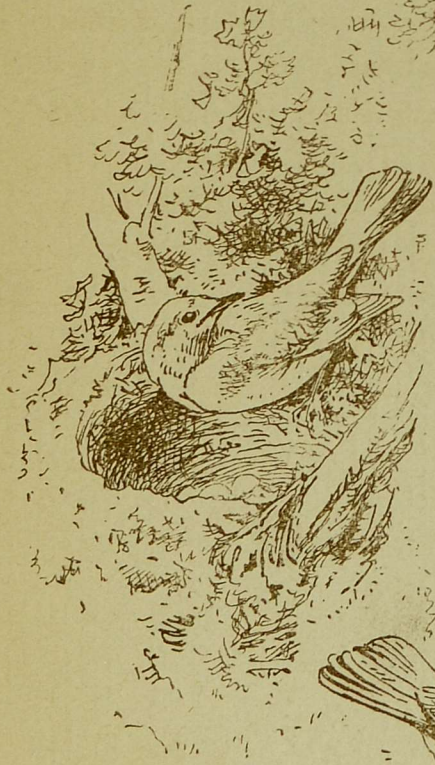


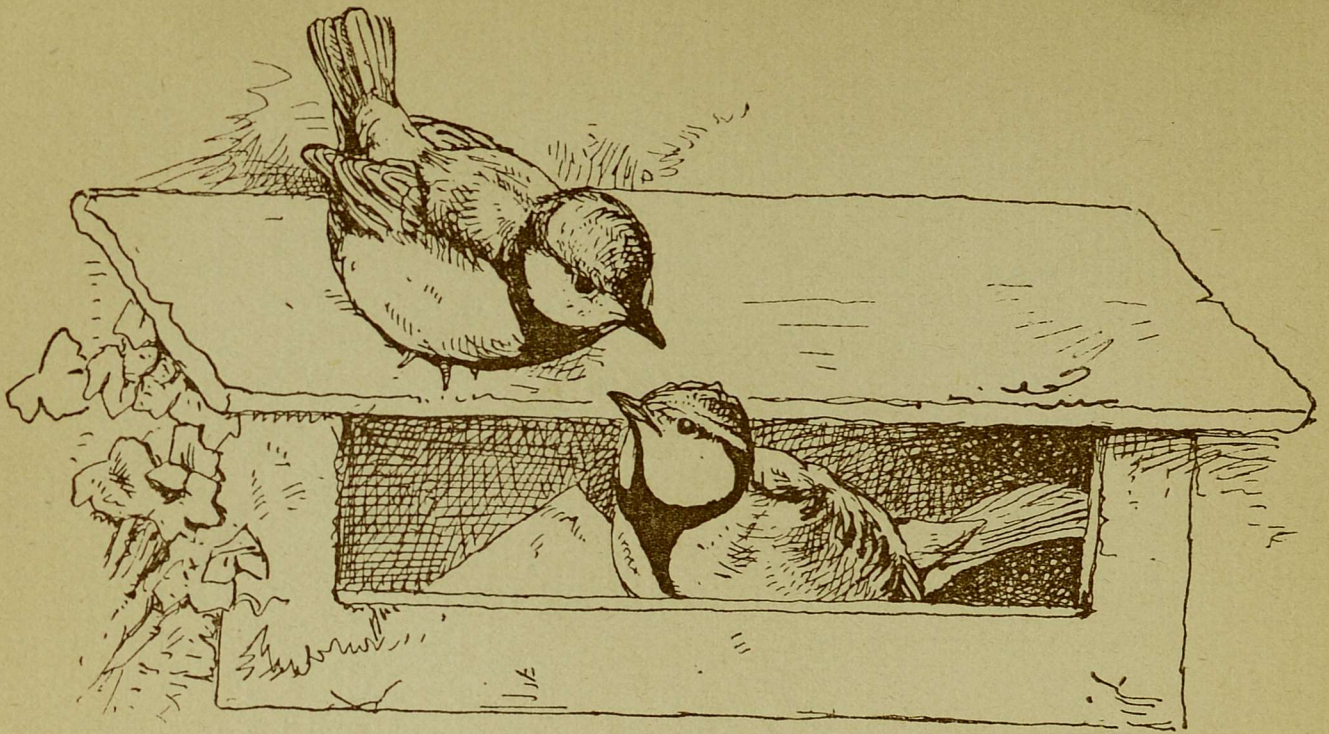
An instance of this occurred in my own garden in the year 1884. A pair of Flycatchers built their nest on the sill of a small window of an out-building. After a few days it was blown off. It was promptly renewed; again it was blown away, yet again and again replaced. Still the wind was the conqueror, until at last the poor hard-working flycatching pair "gave in," and sought a more favourable corner, but where I could not discover. It is not always thus with the Flycatcher, as sometimes he seeks the hollow part of a tree, and that generally in an orchard or garden; yet when once the selected spot is found to be tolerably favourable, or so much so that they are enabled to rear their young, then it becomes their annual resort. The Flycatcher is not alone in this respect, as it is well known to be the practice of Swallows, Martins, Rooks, Starlings, and many others. In some cases one species of bird will build its nest inside that of another. Thus, I have found that of the Sparrow Hawk, the Kestrel, and the Crow made in that of an old and disused abode of a Magpie, the Robin in that of the Blackbird, Blackbird in that of the Thrush, Sparrows in Swallows' and Martins', and oft-times in that of the Starling.



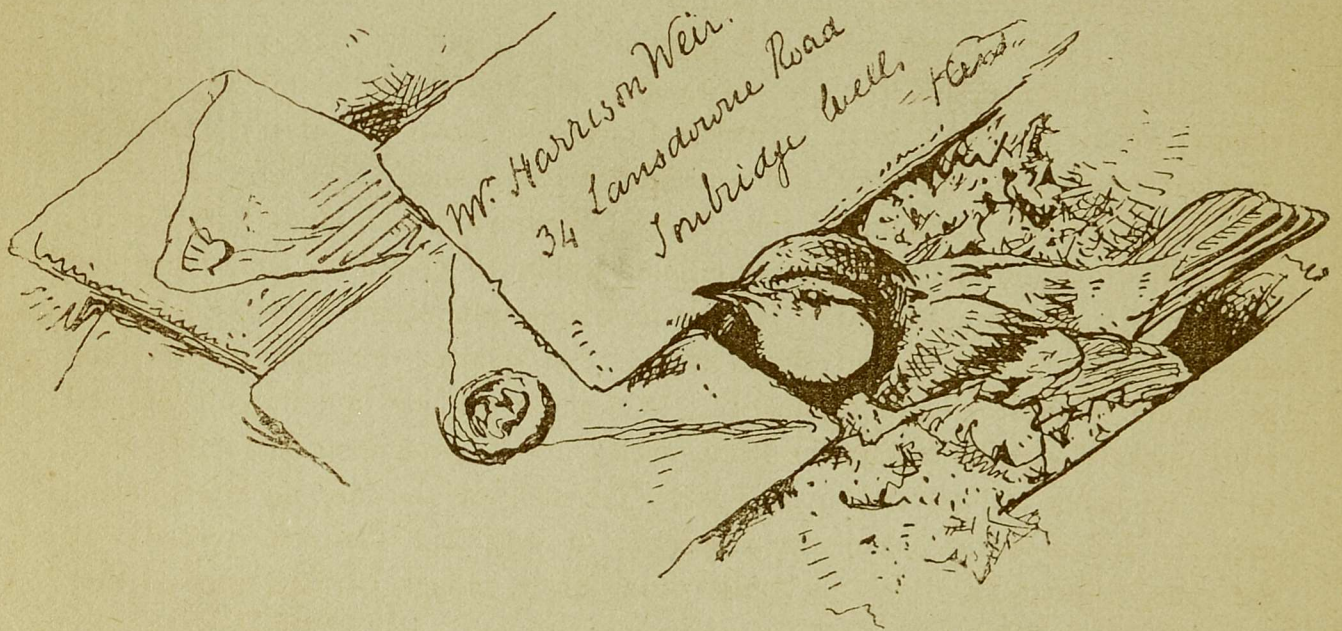


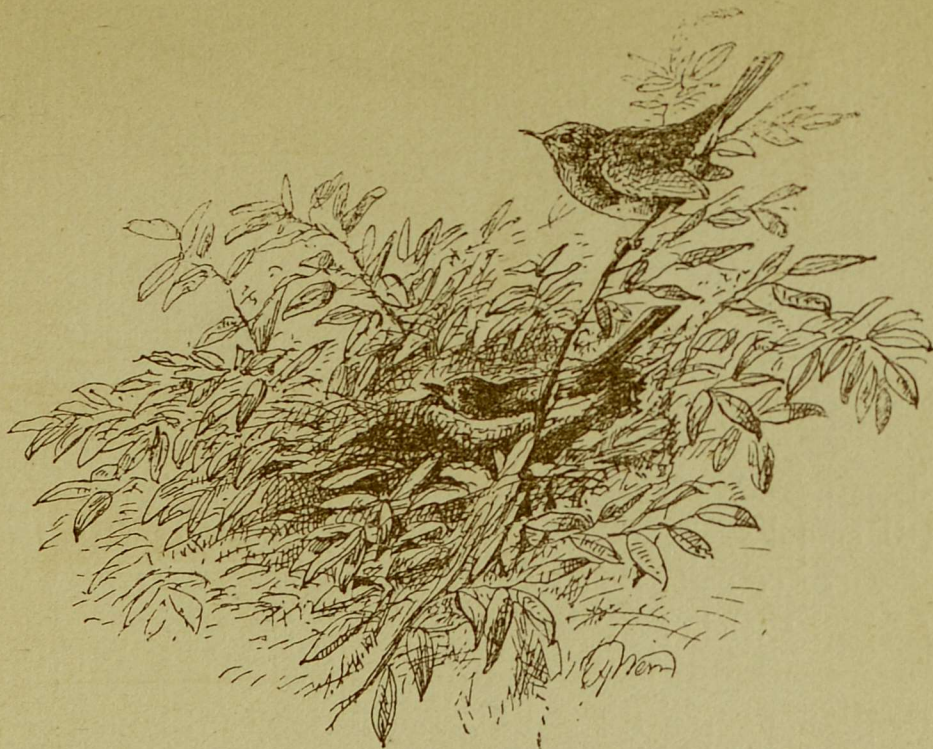
That excellent naturalist, Mr. Hiam, of Redditch, noting the peculiarities of birds in selecting places for their homes, placed mugs, jugs, old tea-pots, and old boots about trees in his garden, and the results were soon apparent by each receptacle being occupied by a loving pair about to commence housekeeping. Nor did it end by simply one pair breeding in an old boot, but on the young of some Great Tits taking to flight, the agreeable habitation was taken possession of by a pair of Redstarts, who also reared a little family.





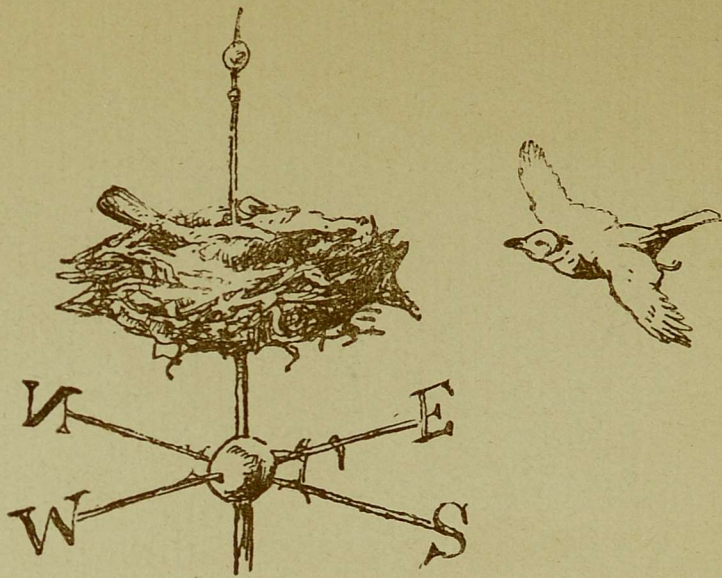
Letter-boxes are not unusual places of resort. A singular case is recorded of a pair of Blue Tits, which took possession of a letter-box, where they not only built their nest, but went so far as to pull some of the letters to pieces, amongst which was one that contained a five-pound note, with which, mixed with feathers, wool, and horsehair, they had carefully lined their nest, quite undisturbed by other letters falling on them when placed in the box.





The Robin is, without doubt, one of the most venturesome of our wild birds. Some few years ago, on going to my vinery, in which I also kept a number of plants, I noticed a Robin inside. As the lights were open, I thought he could escape when he chose, so I took no further notice, yet day after day he was there, and also another. I left them in peace, and undisturbed, as they did much good by eating the insects; but when I attempted to move out an azalea that stood in a corner, I found to my surprise among its branches a Robin's nest, with five eggs in it. I put it back in its place; the Robins returned, and brought up their young, and the little sprightly spotted things became so tame that they would scarcely move out of my way when engaged in arranging and varying the positions of my plants.

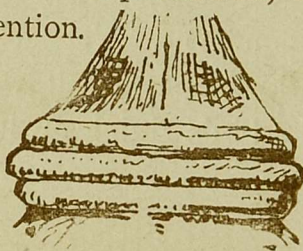
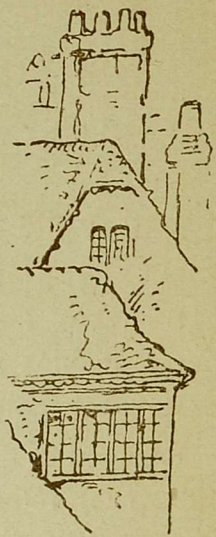
On removing the Statue of the Duke of Wellington from Hyde Park Corner, several Starling and Sparrow nests were found within it; one of the latter contained five young ones, nearly fledged. Judging from appearances, the nooks and corners inside the "Iron Duke" had made comfortable quarters for many a preceding generation of those still in occupation. Yet more singular and improbable, and more unlikely, was the case of the Rooks who chose to place their nest on the vane of the Exchange at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Yet such was the case, my father having seen it; and a further peculiarity respecting it was, that the nest turned with the vane, without disturbing the birds sitting on it, though perhaps after all they

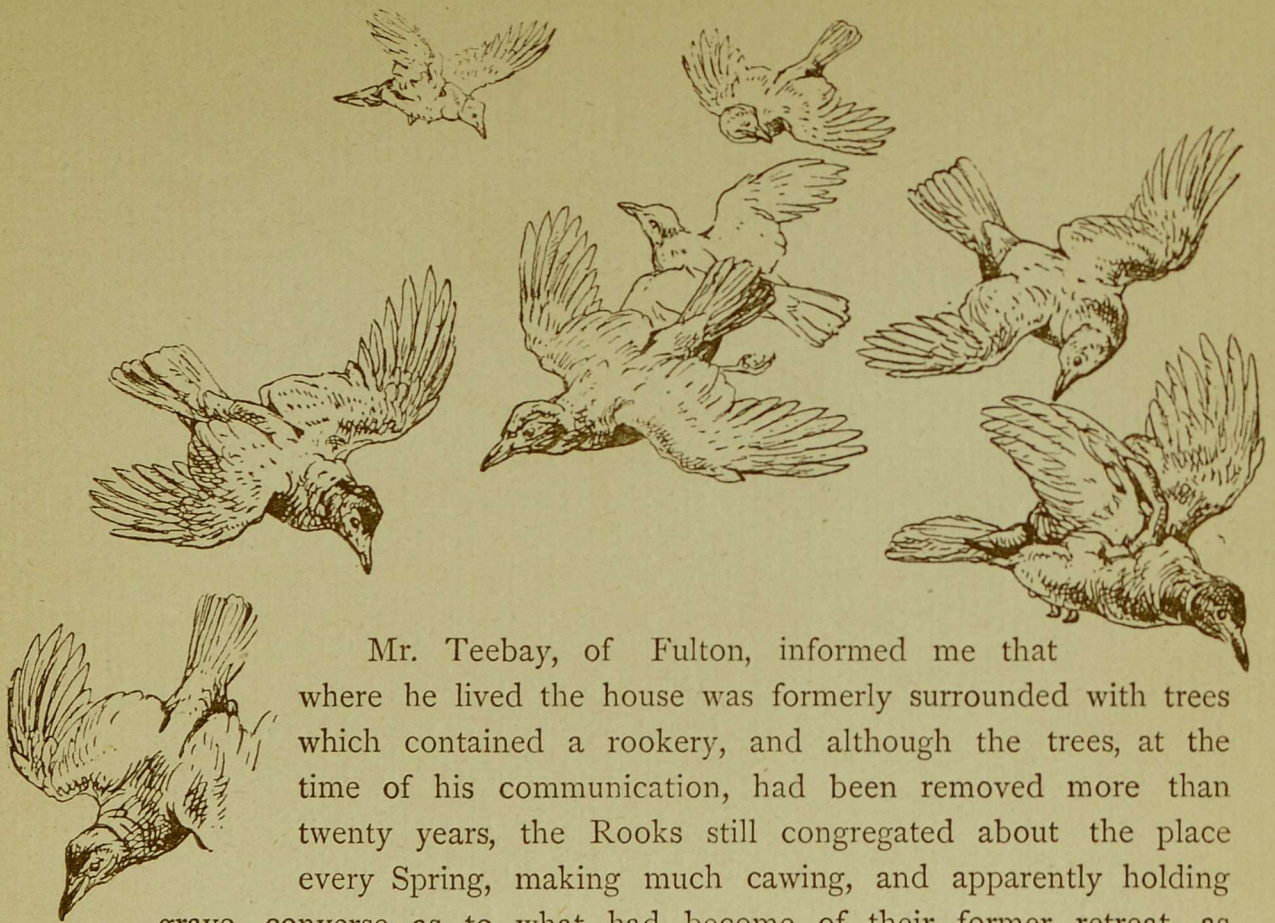


really liked the position the more on that account. The nest remained for many years, indeed, until the spire was taken down. Nor is this, as might be supposed, a solitary instance of nests built so high and shelterless amid the wind, rain, or sunshine, for Mr. Yarrel, in his excellent and truthful history of British Birds, records

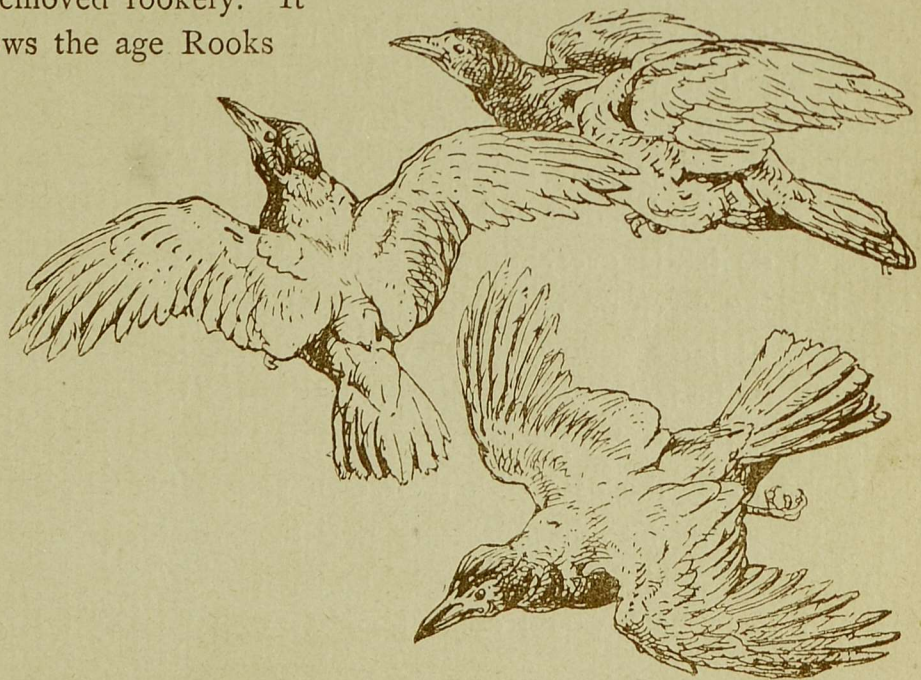
the fact that in the Spring of 1838, a pair of Rooks began to build their nest on the crown which surmounts the vane of St. Olave's Church, Crutched Friars; a few years since a pair built their nest between the wings of the dragon vane of Bow Church, and remained there until the steeple required repairs. What makes these and other nests which have been built from time to time—not only in the centre of London, but in the heart of other large towns—more notable is, the distance that the material for making the structure would have to be brought, as also the food for the young when hatched. In many

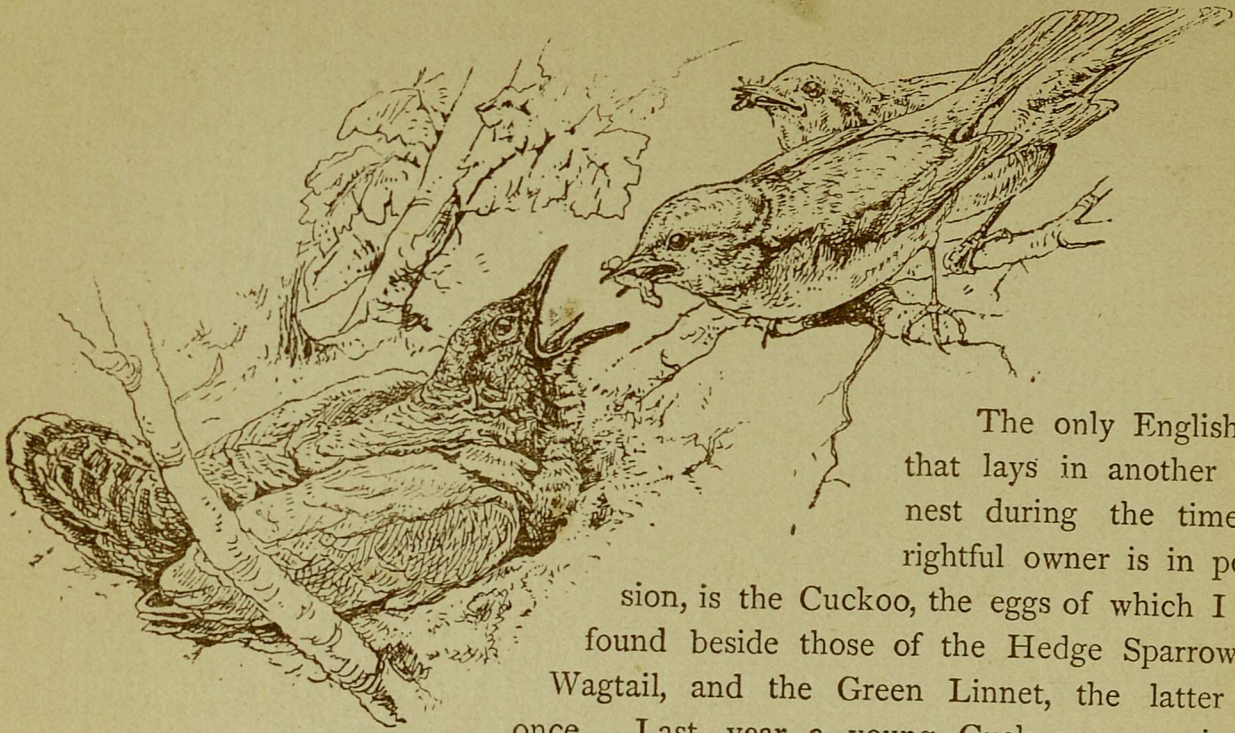
cases, one pair of birds will take to their old nest of the past year. As an instance, with the Starling it is by no means uncommon, but when this is the case, and the nests, if left, are under timber, they will visit the same the following year or years, and fully repair, and again use as before, and in some cases the young brood return for the purpose of roosting within, at night-time, *during the Autumn*. I have also found the Blackbird in the early-forsaken nest of the Thrush, having remodelled and lined it to make it suitable for his own requirements, and so it has been with many other birds too numerous to mention.





Mr. Teebay, of Fulton, informed me that where he lived the house was formerly surrounded with trees which contained a rookery, and although the trees, at the time of his communication, had been removed more than twenty years, the Rooks still congregated about the place every Spring, making much cawing, and apparently holding grave converse as to what had become of their former retreat, as though they would like to re-occupy their long-lost home. This seems to me clearly to show a sense of memory in the Rook, for it seems probable that at least some of the visitors were former occupiers of the removed rookery. It also shows the age Rooks live to.

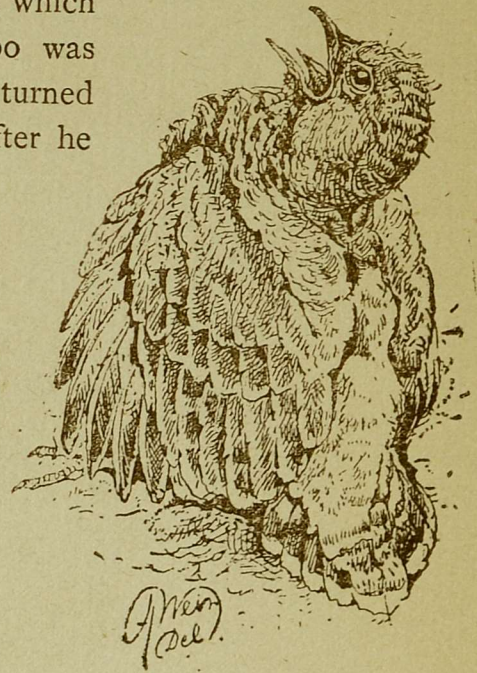




The only English bird that lays in another bird's nest during the time the rightful owner is in possession,

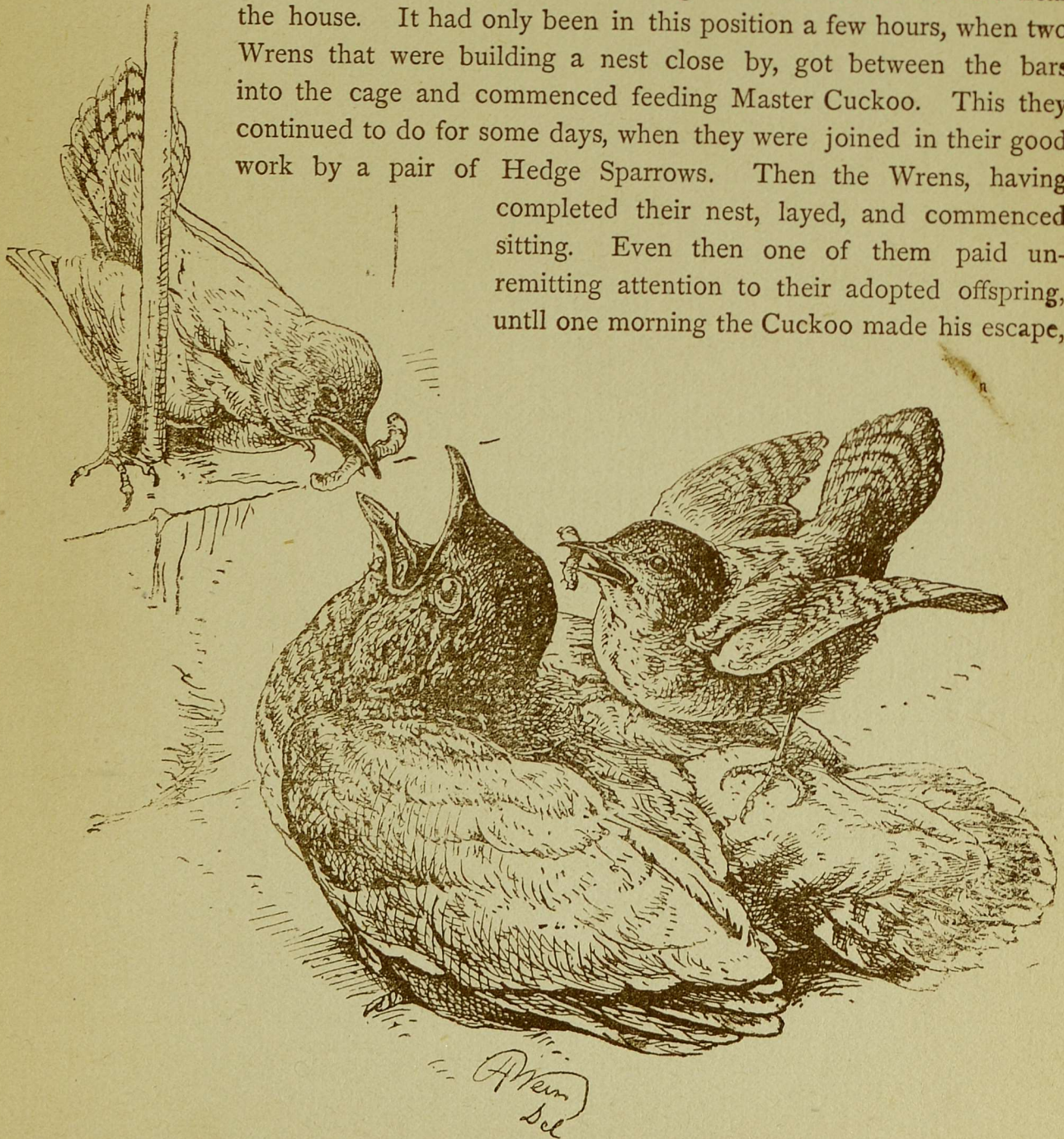
is the Cuckoo, the eggs of which I have found beside those of the Hedge Sparrow, the Wagtail, and the Green Linnet, the latter only once. Last year a young Cuckoo was raised in

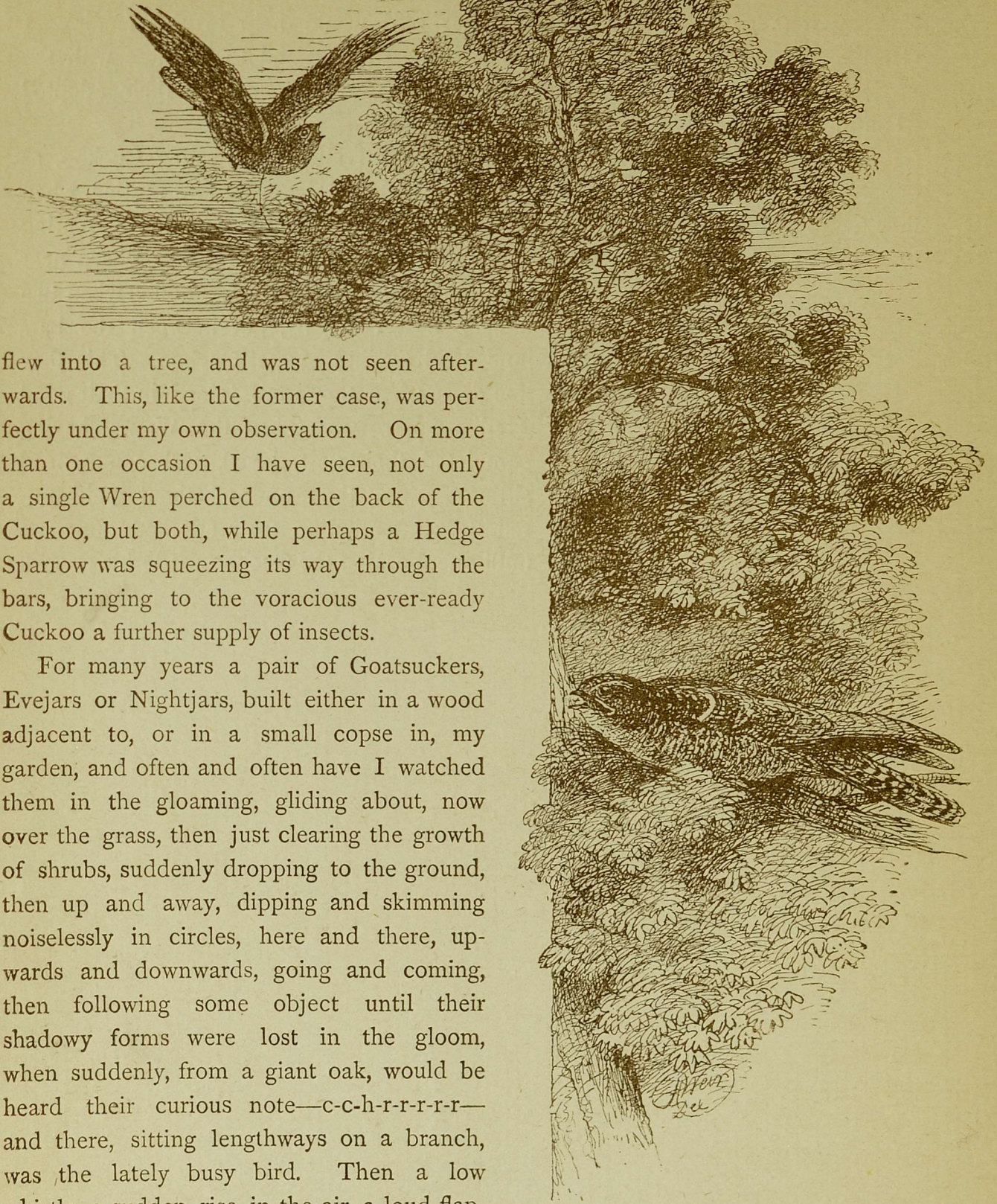
my garden, in the nest of a pair of Hedge Sparrows, which they had built in a gueldre rose tree. The Cuckoo was hatched before the Hedge Sparrows, and he evidently turned their eggs out, for on going to look the morning after he was hatched, I found them all lying on the ground broken. The young Cuckoo grew amazingly. In two days it was nearly double in size, and it grew so rapidly, that the nest soon became far too small to contain it, and by the time it was nearly fledged, the structure was nothing else but a mere platform on which it stood, and from which it endeavoured to do battle every time I approached, its wings hanging down on each side, its head thrown back, and its large yellow mouth widely extended. At such times its foster-parents came boldly forward, and in a much more determined manner than I have ever found to be the case with their own young. It was curious to watch them feeding the young intruder, for, work how they would, he always seemed perfectly ready for more. At times they would mount on his back, and so feed from above. Now and again both would come together with food, yet he would swallow the



whole in one gulp. Occasionally another bird would help in the feeding—a Greenfinch, apparently a hen—though it in no way seemed to interfere with the Hedge Sparrows, which continued to attend to the wants of their adopted “bantling” many days after he had left the nest.

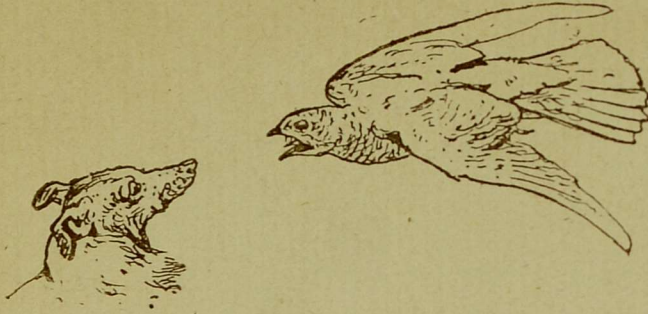
There appears to be some natural fascination about the young Cuckoo, as possibly the following will show. Some boys at Brenchley were bird-nesting, when they found a young Cuckoo, which they brought home with the intention of rearing it. It was put into a Parrot’s cage, which was hung on a tree in the orchard near the house. It had only been in this position a few hours, when two Wrens that were building a nest close by, got between the bars into the cage and commenced feeding Master Cuckoo. This they continued to do for some days, when they were joined in their good work by a pair of Hedge Sparrows. Then the Wrens, having completed their nest, layed, and commenced sitting. Even then one of them paid unremitting attention to their adopted offspring, until one morning the Cuckoo made his escape,



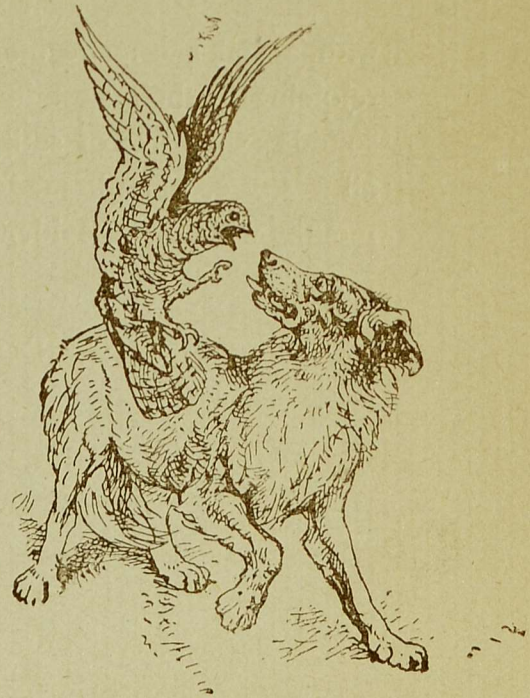
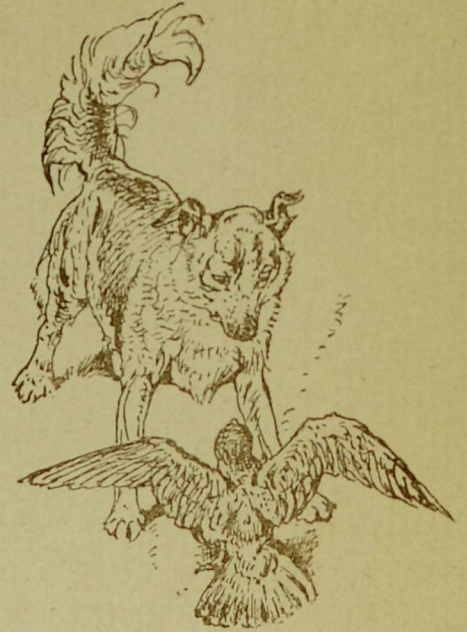


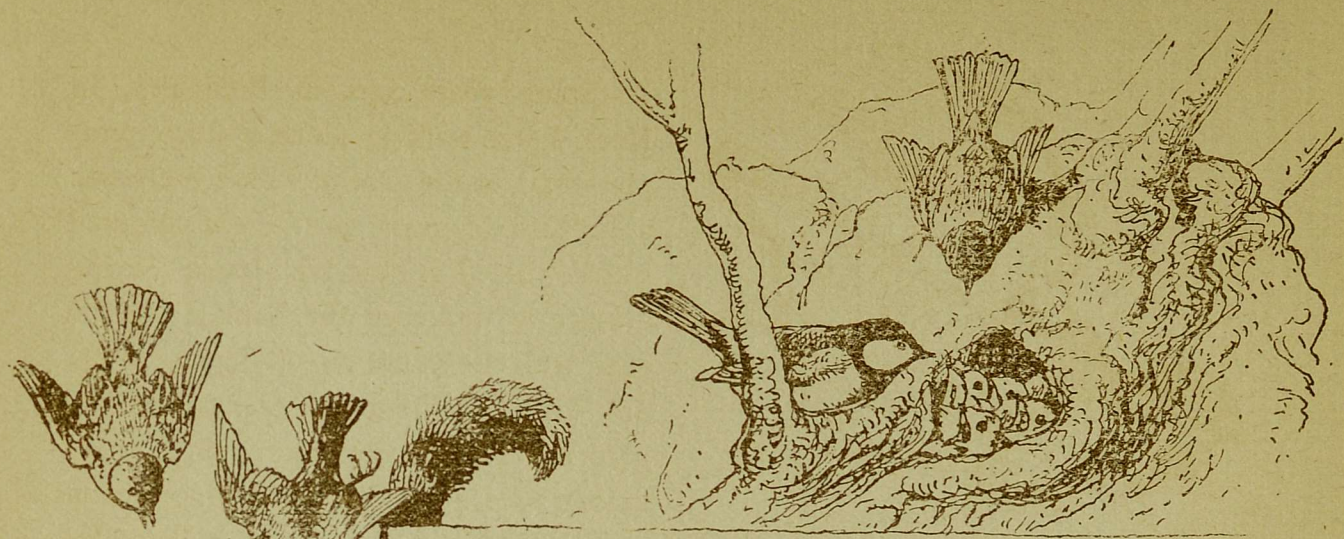
flew into a tree, and was not seen afterwards. This, like the former case, was perfectly under my own observation. On more than one occasion I have seen, not only a single Wren perched on the back of the Cuckoo, but both, while perhaps a Hedge Sparrow was squeezing its way through the bars, bringing to the voracious ever-ready Cuckoo a further supply of insects.

For many years a pair of Goatsuckers, Evejars or Nightjars, built either in a wood adjacent to, or in a small copse in, my garden, and often and often have I watched them in the gloaming, gliding about, now over the grass, then just clearing the growth of shrubs, suddenly dropping to the ground, then up and away, dipping and skimming noiselessly in circles, here and there, upwards and downwards, going and coming, then following some object until their shadowy forms were lost in the gloom, when suddenly, from a giant oak, would be heard their curious note—c-c-h-r-r-r-r—and there, sitting lengthways on a branch, was the lately busy bird. Then a low whistle, a sudden rise in the air, a loud flapping of wings, and the scene was repeated.



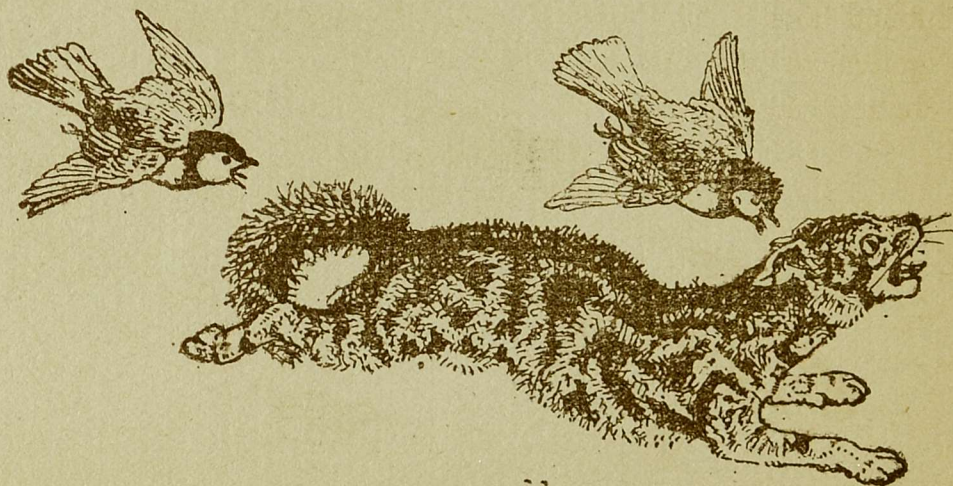
One evening, walking along a path in my garden with my collie "Rover" a little in front of me, a Nightjar settled just before him. The dog stopped and looked at it. Instantly the Nightjar spread out its wings, shuffled a little, and then lay as if dead. The dog crept slowly up, but just when he was nearly within reach of the bird, it rolled over and over; the dog made a dart; the bird rose and buffeted his face, and then actually perched on his back. Up and down flew the bird, and round and round went the collie, when suddenly another Nightjar came and dashed into the fray. As I was now afraid the dog might injure one or other of the combatants, I advanced, when immediately one of the birds dashed at my face, settling on my head, and getting round to the back of my neck, scratched and flapped its wings fiercely about my ears. I beat a hasty retreat, calling my dog; when, in turning round, I noticed two young Nightjars sitting in a low lilac bush, not more than six feet away. This at once accounted for the impetuous assault that I and my poor dog had so unwittingly provoked. For many an evening afterwards, sitting in the shadow of an old oak tree, "Rover" and I saw the Nightjars, old and young, haunting the meadow in happy unity.

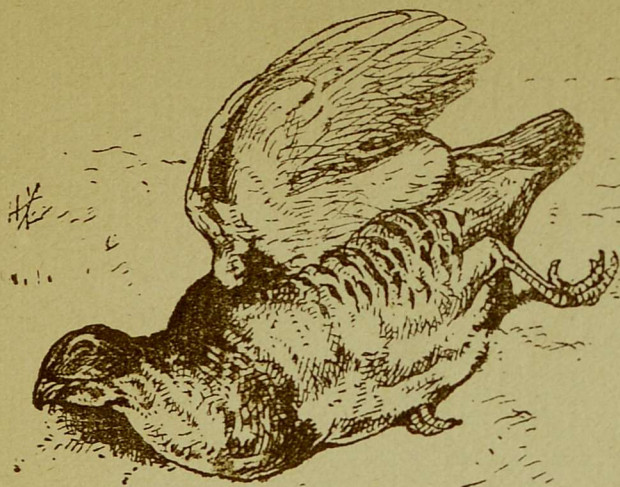




Cases are related of serious injury being done to both men and animals by birds of prey. There was once a shepherd, who lost his eyesight from the attack of Eagle Owls, through taking their young. Even the smaller birds show great intrepidity in defence of their offspring and nest. I once saw a cat pursued and buffeted by a pair of Great Tits, and although pussy made every attempt in her power to catch her assailants, she was quite unsuccessful. They were "here and there and everywhere." Sometimes on her head, then on her back, darting down and pecking at her so quickly and so sharply, and so fiercely, that at last,

with a yell, she made off as fast as she could, and the triumphant Tits returned rejoicing to their nest in the old ash stump, and with much twittering and other sounds expressive of satisfaction, they both peeped in, one after the other, to see if all was safe, when immediately there showed at the opening a cluster of little yellow mouths wide open, evidently hoping for a supply of food.

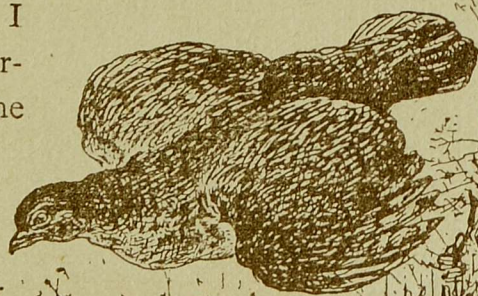


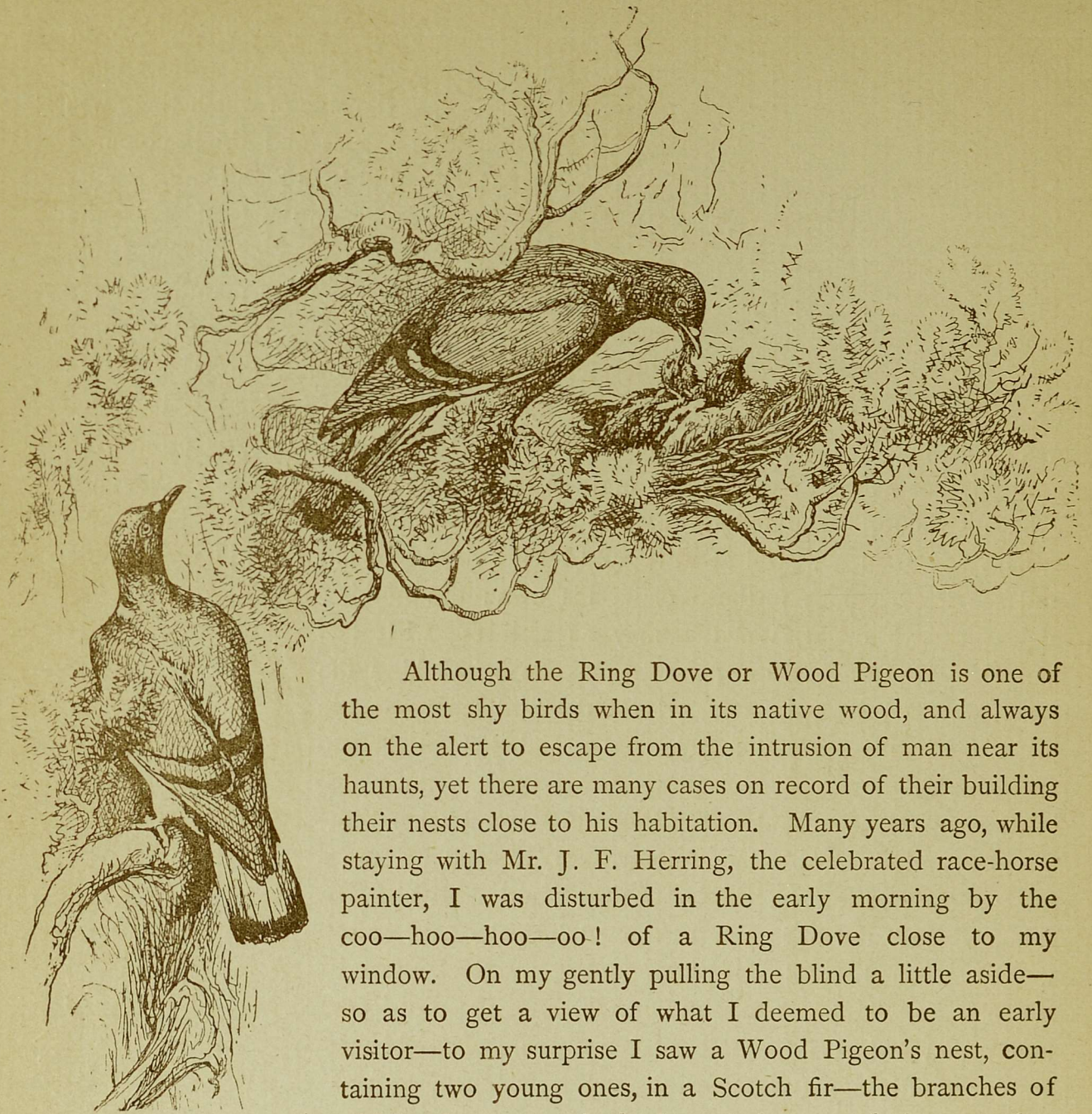


Some years ago, at Brenchley, in Kent, I was walking along a dusty turnpike road, at the side of which there was a breadth of grass and bright-coloured weeds, closed in by a high bank. Seeing a butterfly orchis on the bank, I left the road with the intention of digging it up, and taking it home for planting in my garden. I had scarcely gone three paces among the grass and flowering plants

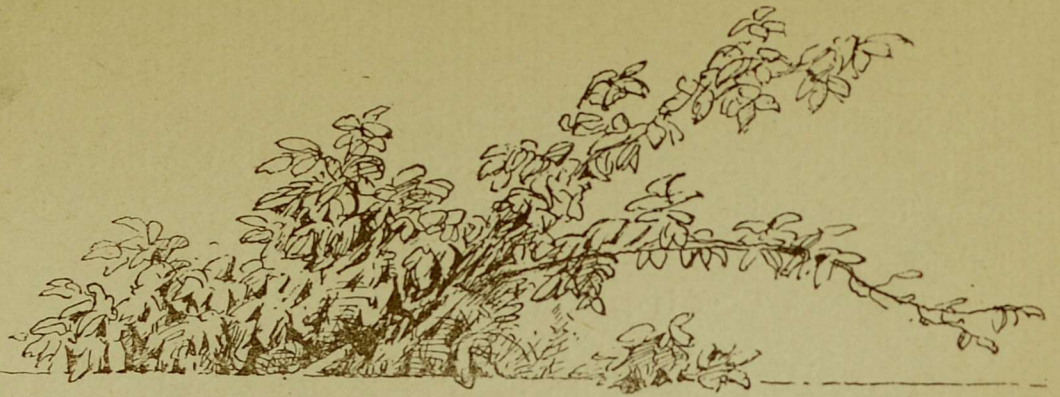
when there was a movement round about, and a little way in front, a Partridge was struggling on the ground, sometimes on her back, then rolling over and over, until she got as far as the middle of the road, where, after one or two apparently exhaustive efforts, she fell down, and then lay, as it were—dead. Now, said I, here has been a weazel at work, and I have disturbed him; I will wait awhile, and see if he comes forth to claim his own; but nothing appearing, I thought, Well! I may as well see what has happened, so I went on for the purpose of picking the Partridge up. As I drew near, I saw the bird open one eye just a little. I stopped and looked round, just in time to see three or four little ones disappearing through the hedge at the top of the bank. On again turning my head, my crippled and dead object in front of me, jumped up, ran a few paces, rose on its wings, and with a loud whirr, skimmed over the hedge, and dropped into the field of waving oats beyond.

When I got home, I found that I had forgotten to dig up the butterfly orchis.



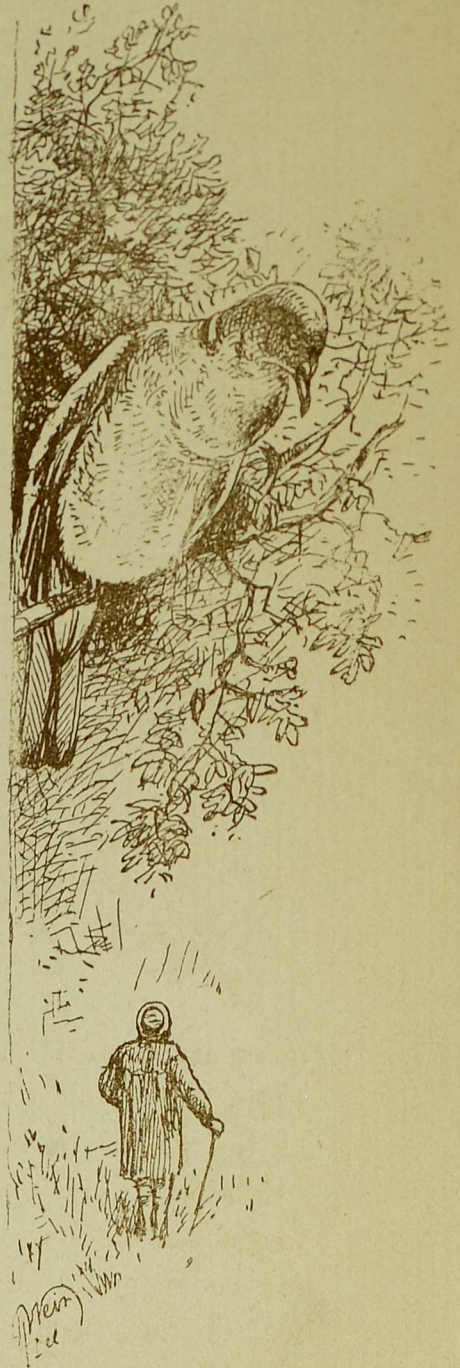


Although the Ring Dove or Wood Pigeon is one of the most shy birds when in its native wood, and always on the alert to escape from the intrusion of man near its haunts, yet there are many cases on record of their building their nests close to his habitation. Many years ago, while staying with Mr. J. F. Herring, the celebrated race-horse painter, I was disturbed in the early morning by the coo—hoo—hoo—oo! of a Ring Dove close to my window. On my gently pulling the blind a little aside—so as to get a view of what I deemed to be an early visitor—to my surprise I saw a Wood Pigeon's nest, containing two young ones, in a Scotch fir—the branches of which almost touched the window; and just at that moment the hen bird came to her little ones to give them an early breakfast. From behind the blind for many a morning I noted the outgoings and incomings of the parent birds, and the rapid growth and feathering of those under their tender care. As they were left undisturbed they quickly fledged, and then took to the surrounding trees, where they generally roosted. Another pair bred in a red cedar not a stone's throw from the front door, and would often come to feed on the gravel walk if wheat was thrown down.



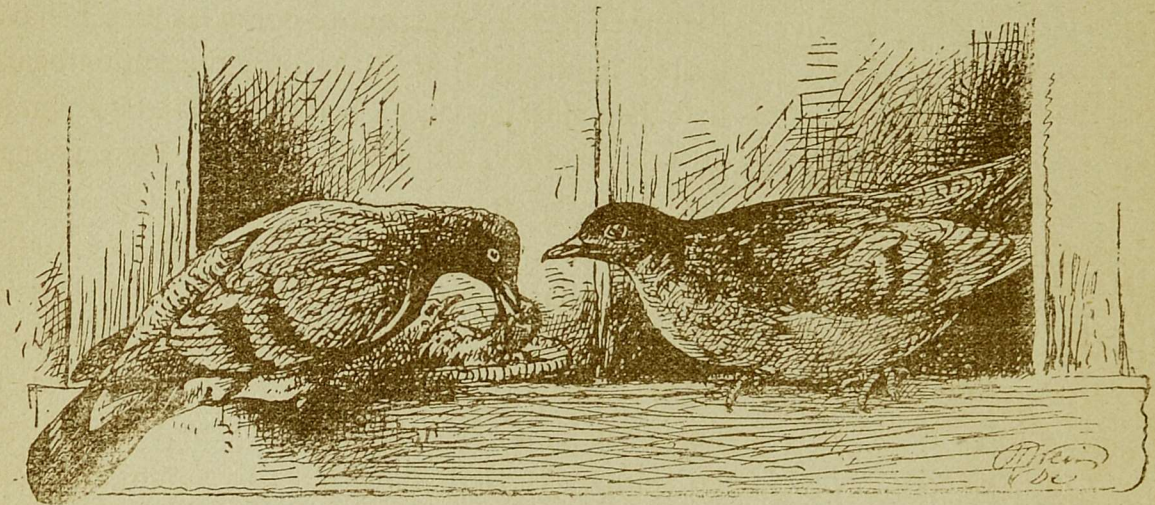
Although I have had several pairs of Wood Pigeons which were reared from the nest, I never found they evinced any decided attachment either to myself or to those about them or to each other.

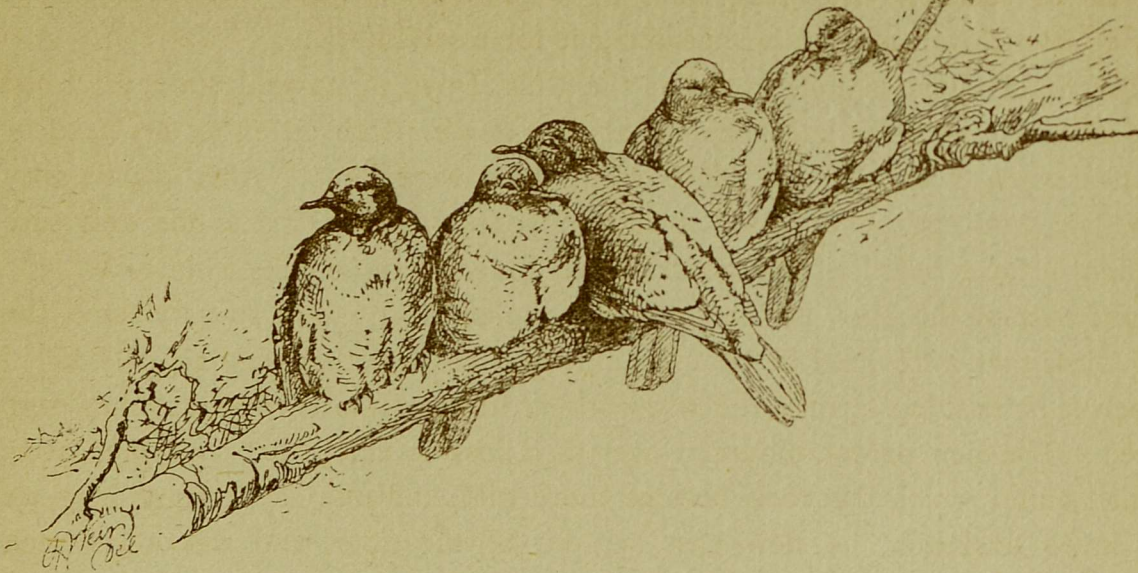
And this leads me to the remembrance of a most extraordinary case of attachment in the Wood Pigeon to a farmer I knew when I was a boy. His name was Larking, and he lived near Matfield, in Kent. On going home one evening he found a young Wood Pigeon that had fallen from a nest. It was alive, but cold, and nearly dead. He took it up, opened his waistcoat, and putting his pocket handkerchief inside, laid the little one on it next his flesh. On reaching home he found it much revived. He then got some wheat, and after masticating it a little while, put the beak of the young bird in his mouth, and so fed it. He varied the food day by day, and day by day it grew, until it was able to fly. It was never confined, but flew about, and would come to his call and be fed. It followed him from



field to field, flying from tree to tree, sometimes settling either on his shoulder or his head. On one occasion it followed him nearly five miles. Unfortunately it came to an untimely end, being shot by a game-keeper one day while it was following its beloved master, he mistaking it for a wild bird.

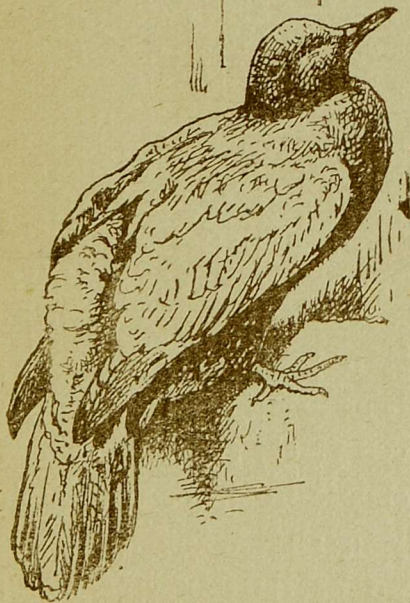
The Stock Dove is quite as shy as the Ring Dove in its wild state, yet I had a pair that were so remarkably tame that they *would* perch on either my head or shoulders when I entered the place where they were kept. After awhile they paired, laid two eggs, and reared a pair of young ones. This is the only case of which I have heard of the Stock Dove breeding in confinement. Yet the strangest part of the case is, that although the old birds were so very tame, the young birds that were bred in confinement were so wild that they actually killed themselves by dashing against the wirework in front of the shed where they were hatched. The hen parent mourned over their loss so much that she pined away and died; after which the cock became more wild, and one day, on my daughter going in to feed him, he flew past her out of the door, and was never seen afterwards.





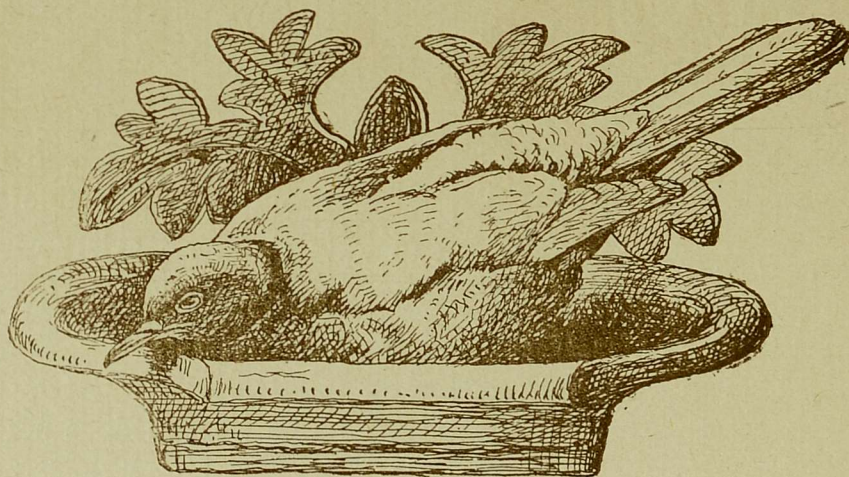
From time to time I have had Doves. Years ago I kept them among my Pigeons. Compared with them they were much more sociable and trusting. All fear disappeared, and it was difficult to walk about my aviary without treading on them—so persistent were they in walking close to my feet; often they would perch on my head or on my shoulders, running down my arm to feed from my hand, when I held it out with some wheat.

This particular tameness of the Ring-necked Barbary Dove does not forsake them if allowed a free range out-of-doors, as they behave exactly in the same way, the only precaution being that they must be caged before the migratory time arrives, or they will disappear with their young, bound for foreign climes.



At present I have but one, and this has a most peculiar attachment for an old Swiss carved oak inkstand. During the time his cage is being cleaned in the morning, he is set at liberty, when he generally flies about the kitchen. Sometimes he settles near a looking-glass to admire himself, cooing lustily to his reflected self in the glass, then stopping to again admire himself. When he does not wish to return to his cage, as is often the

case, the easiest, quickest, and most successful way of getting him to do so is to hold out the old inkstand, when he immediately flies to it, nestles down, laughing and cooing all the time, in a soft and soothing tone, evidently pleased beyond measure. He is then carried to his cage, when he hops off the inkstand with a seeming regret, casting many "a longing lingering look behind." I have known a similar case of a Pigeon which took a fancy to an old wooden bowl.



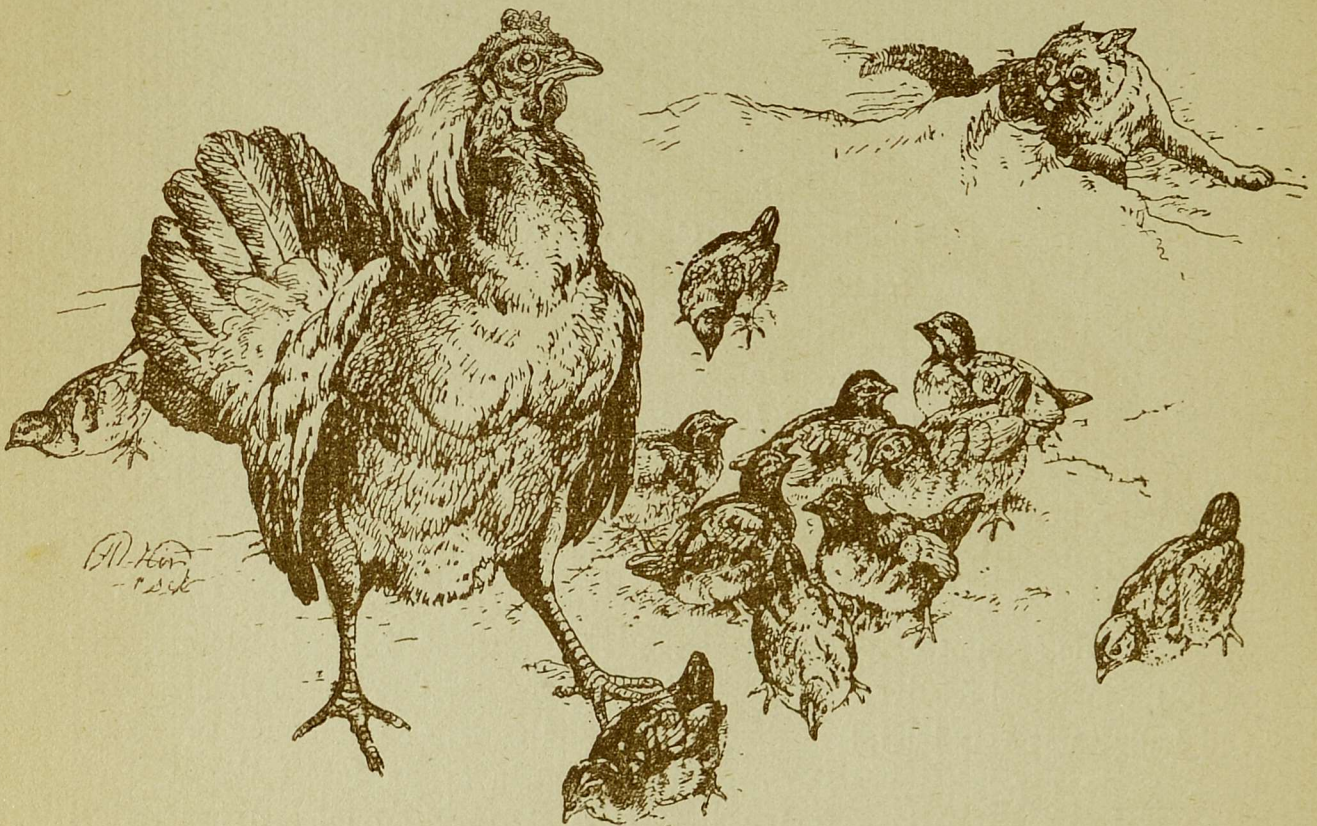
It is not always that the propensity for fighting is strong in the Domestic Cock; occasionally, instead of being warlike, he is a peace-maker. A short time since, while staying with friends, I went with them to inspect their Poultry. In a small piece of scrub, or undergrowth, on a green patch, under some trees, were the old Cock and the Cockerels set apart to choose from, for the ensuing season. There might have been eighteen or twenty in all. While looking on two gay Cockerels commenced a battle. After two or three "turns about"



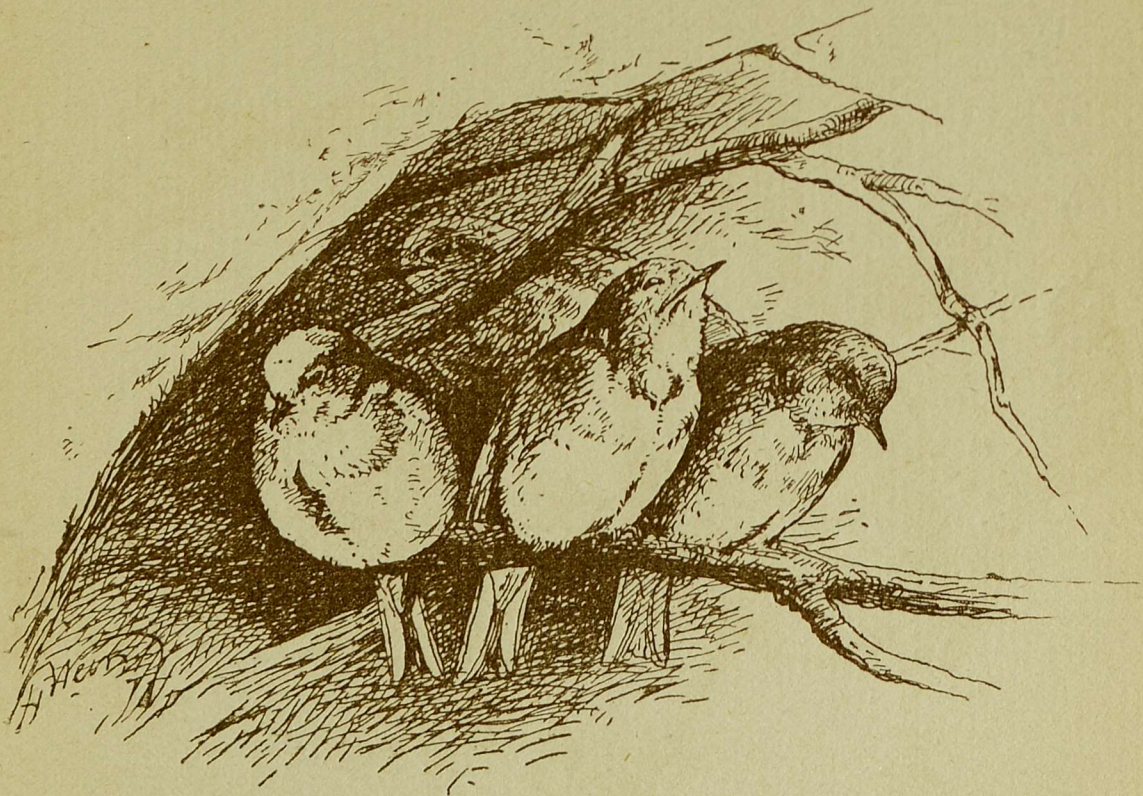
they faced up again for another spar. On seeing which, the old Cock rushed up and dashed them asunder, and then stood between. I shall never forget the way he looked first at one and then the other. His look of reproach was almost human. He then turned to walk away. Immediately they made an attempt to renew the engagement. Again he turned, and drove one off to a considerable distance, and so entirely put an end to the quarrel, if there was one. It might have been play, and, perhaps, he disliked anything frivolous.

Passing through a farm-yard many years since, I observed a Hen and Chickens, the last not very small, but just feathering, therefore strong enough to take some little amount of care of themselves ; consequently they did not keep so near to the maternal relative as they would have done had they been younger. The "Old Lady" was very busy, scratching among the straw, ever and anon calling her little ones to her, whenever she discovered a grain or an insect that made a suitable repast. Four or five baby-chicks were clustered around her head, when

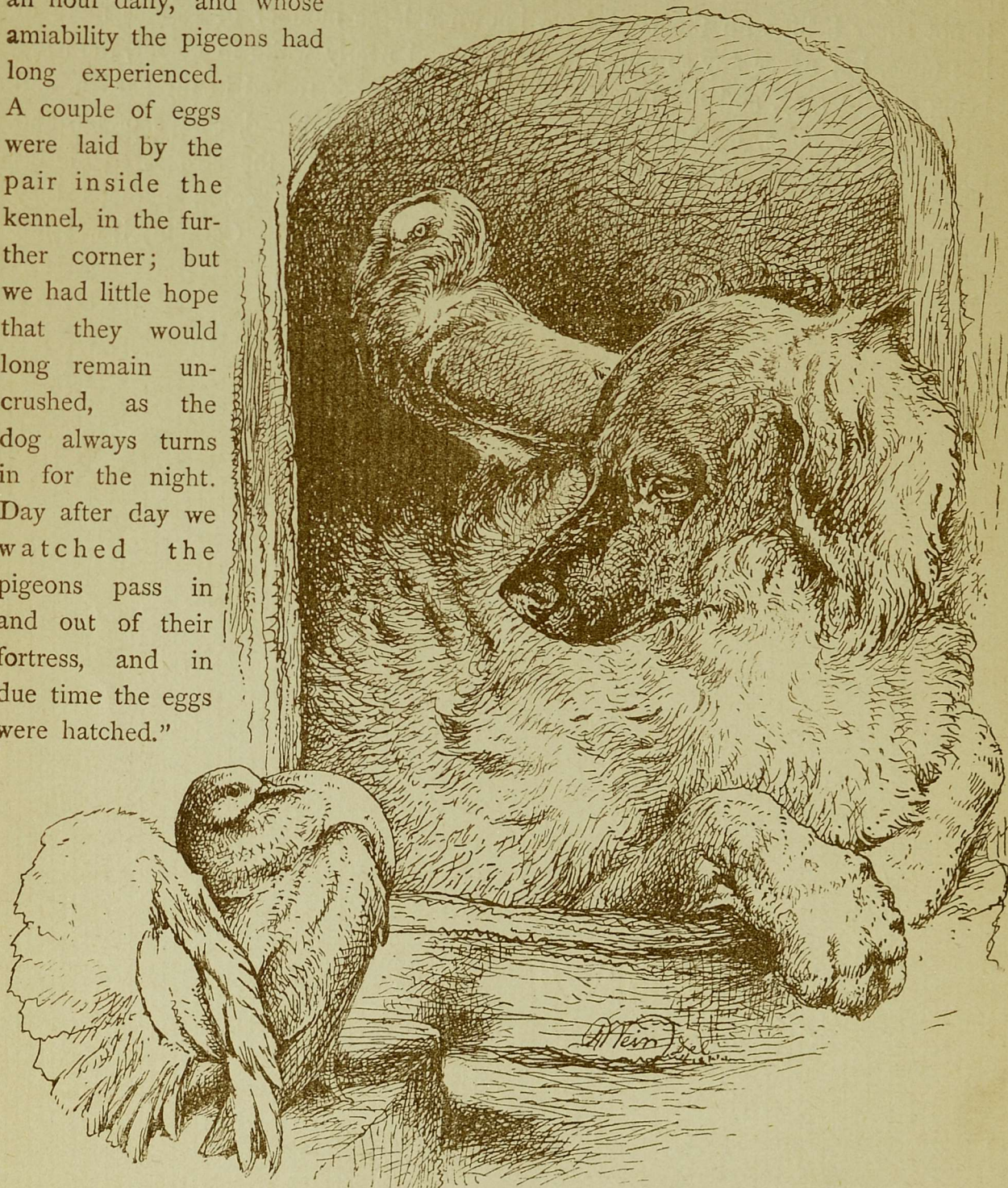
a few yards away I noticed a cat creeping along, taking advantage of any little hillocks of straw. As it seemed, by accident, the Hen just then raised her head somewhat higher than usual. She saw the cat; she sprang into the air; the cat darted at a near-by Chick, and missed it. Then a combat began. The cat fought—turned, and ran, fought and turned, but the Hen was always at her; while at a few paces away stood a piping pack of little frightened Chickens. But the fight had scarcely begun, and long before either side was vanquished, there was a flapping of wings, a shriek or two, and a large Dorking Cock appeared on the wall surrounding the yard. Again more flapping of wings; and he had flown to the rescue. Pussy recognized the situation at a glance, and fled; but not soon enough, for the vengeful Chanticleer had pounced on her, and the last I saw of him, he was riding and spurring on the back of poor "Tommy" as he jumped over the wall, both disappearing together.

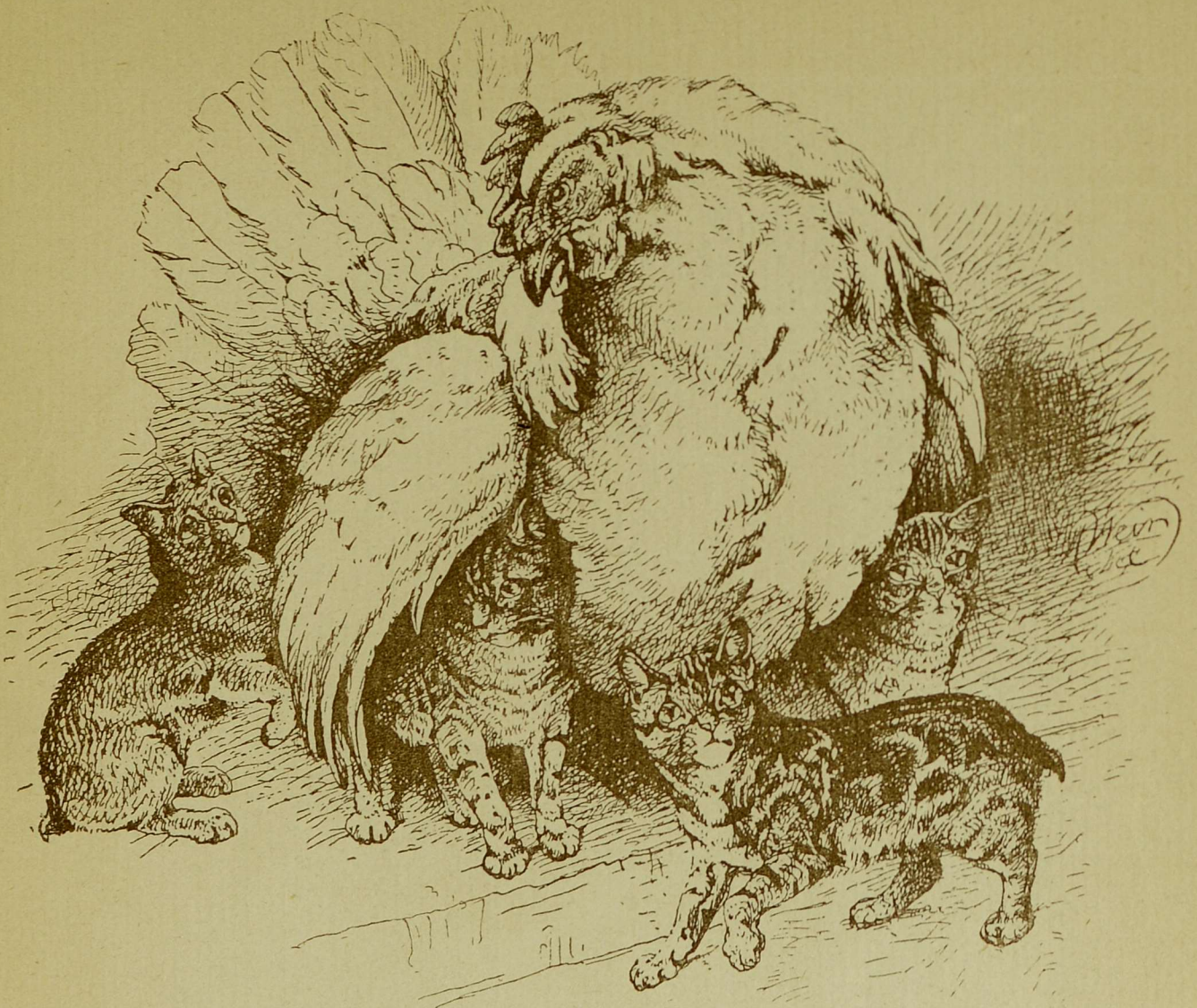


Birds, both wild and domesticated, often attach themselves to individuals, also to animals, and other birds not of their own species. Although the Robin, for example, is stated to be one of those that mostly likes to consort with mankind, still be it observed that it is not *all* Robins that have such friendly ways, and it is not sheer habit with them. I have known a large number of Robins more or less tame, but never any so much so, as a brood nearly white in colour, the back being a light grey, and the breast yellow. These were reared in my garden, and were all very tame, taking worms from my hand, also bread, scraps of fat, and cheese, and frequently getting on my shoes, pecking at the strings. Unfortunately they all perished in the Winter, I believe from the cold; perhaps they were more delicate than is generally the case with Robins. Certainly it was not from want of food, for I fed them daily and often.



Mr. Henry Attwell tells the following curious story of a Fantail Pigeon:—
“A few weeks ago the ‘Duchess,’ as we call the lame white Fantail Pigeon, mated with a Jacobin; and my children observed that they paid frequent visits to the kennel of ‘Carlo,’ a half-bred retriever, who is rarely loose for more than an hour daily, and whose amiability the pigeons had long experienced. A couple of eggs were laid by the pair inside the kennel, in the further corner; but we had little hope that they would long remain uncrushed, as the dog always turns in for the night. Day after day we watched the pigeons pass in and out of their fortress, and in due time the eggs were hatched.”



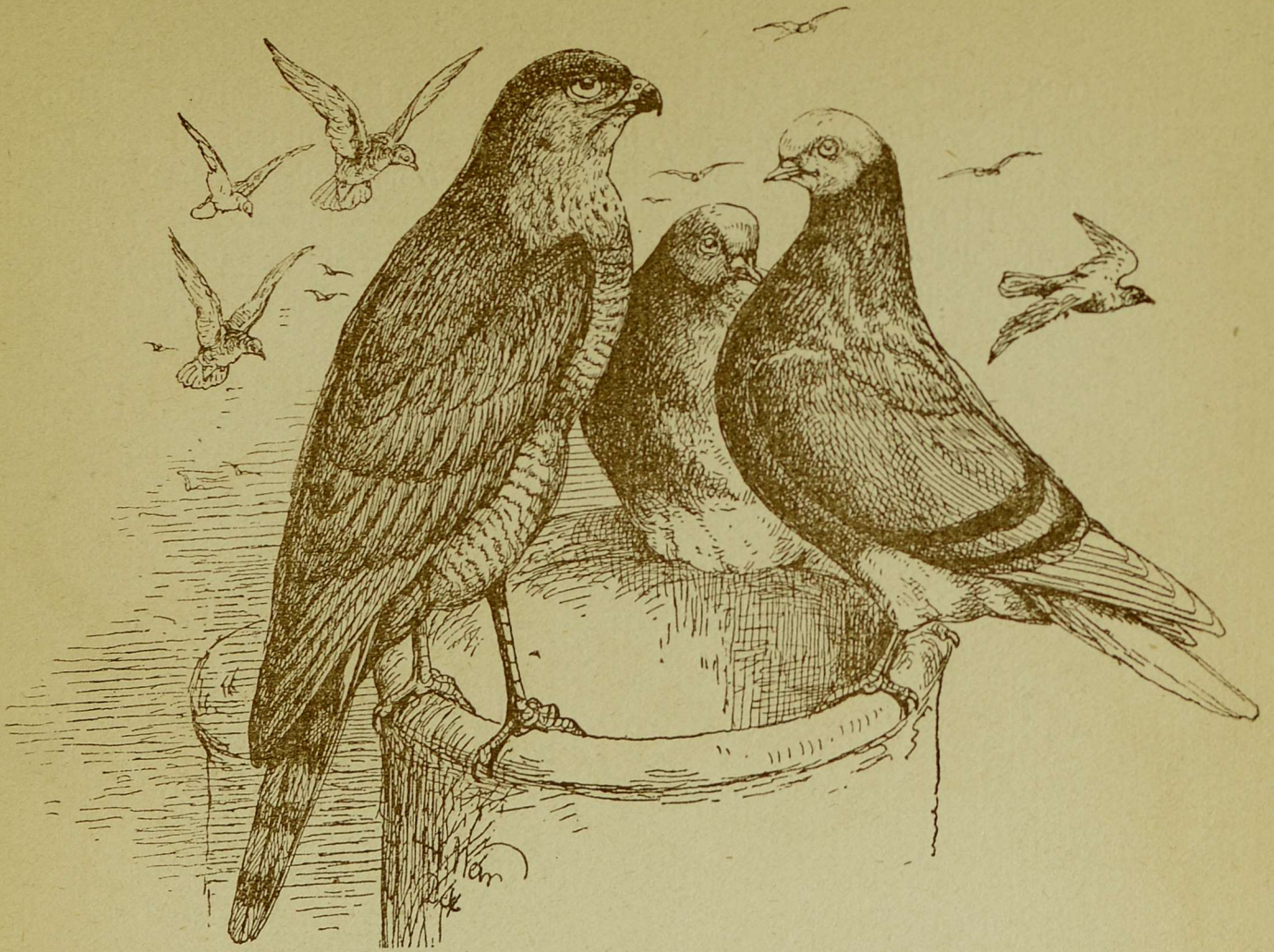


A pretty sight might lately have been witnessed on the farm of Mr. Muggeridge, near Pulborough, where four little Manx kittens might have been seen nestling under the soft warm feathers of a hen in a barn. Their mother shirks her responsibilities, and prefers scampering about the farm to being indoors; but no sooner has she departed than the "kits" creep under the hen, who *will* sit, as hens do at times, although deprived of their eggs. Puss exhibits no jealousy, and seems quite willing to have her cares shared. The kittens are now beginning to leave the barn, but are still friendly with the hen, although they are very wild and difficult to catch; they dart about and jerk out the hind legs, after the manner of rabbits, which they much resemble, with their tiny tufts in lieu of a tail.



Some years ago the following strange case was recorded in a country newspaper (*Surrey Standard*, 1870):—

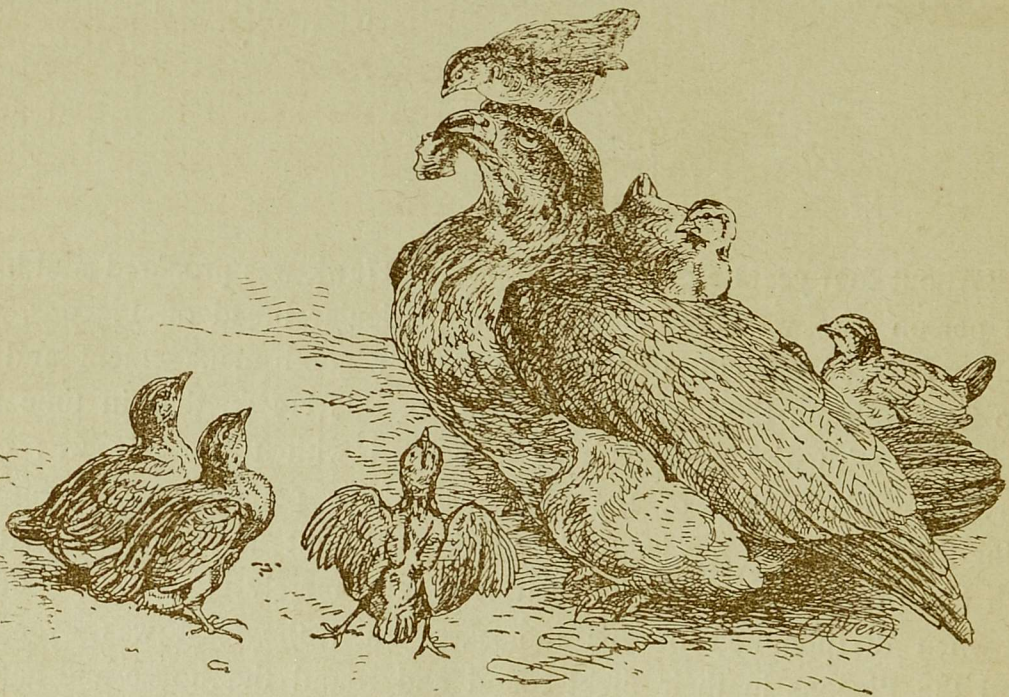
“An extraordinary freak of nature can be seen at the keeper’s kennels at Stanmer Park, the seat of the Earl of Chichester. A common domestic hen, two years old, has been in the habit of laying her eggs in a dog kennel in which a beagle bitch has a litter of six puppies not six weeks old. She wanted to sit; she was shut up for ten days. Now let loose, she has gone to the kennels again, and taken charge of the pups as a mother would do with her chickens. She covers them with her wings; she scratches about as if to teach them to feed; she calls them, the puppies follow her, and she shows fight to any one that touches them.”

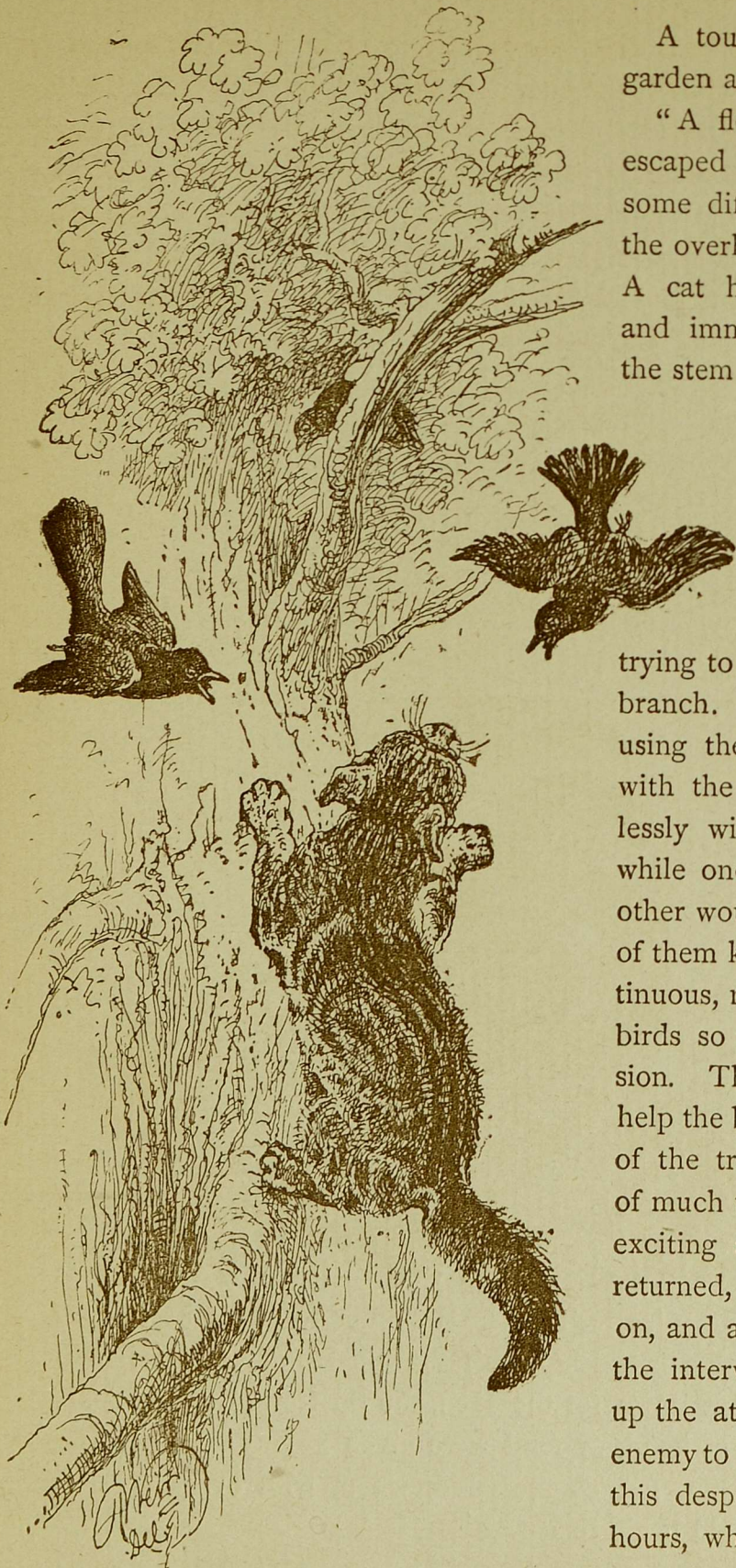


“About four years ago a young Sparrow Hawk was procured and brought up by a person who was fond of rearing a particular breed of Pigeons, which he greatly prized on account of their rarity. By good management and kindness he so far overcame the natural disposition of this Hawk, that in time it formed a friendship with the Pigeons and associated with them. It was curious to observe the playfulness of the Hawk, and his perfect good humour during feeding-time; for he received his portion without any of that ferocity with which birds of prey usually take their food, and merely uttered a cry of lamentation when disappointed of his morsel. When the feast was over he would attend the Pigeons in their flight round and round the house and gardens, and perch with them on the chimney-top or roof of the house. At night he retired and roosted with them in the dovecot; and though for some days after his first appearance he had it all to himself, the Pigeons not liking such an intruder, they shortly became good friends, and he was never known even to touch a young one, unfledged, helpless, and tempting as they must have been.”*

* Flenlay's "History of Birds."

In the course of 1833 a Hawk, which we believe to be of a similar species to that domesticated in Turkey, namely, the common Buzzard, not only sat upon the eggs of a common barn-door Fowl, but instead of devouring them when hatched, according to its natural habit, actually paid them considerable attention as long as they were allowed to remain in the place where they were hatched, though when removed to another more spacious enclosed situation, with the brood, notwithstanding she showed no inclination to kill them, she avoided them altogether, and incessantly struggled round the enclosure in hopes of escaping.





A touching scene was witnessed in a garden at Maldon :—

“A fledgling Blackbird, evidently just escaped from its nest close by, had with some difficulty fluttered from a fence into the overhanging branches of a lime tree. A cat had observed the young ‘flyer,’ and immediately gave chase, rushing up the stem of the tree with the intention of getting to the branch and obtaining her prey ; but meanwhile the parent birds had come upon the scene, and seeing the situation of their nestling, attacked the cat with the utmost bravery, trying to prevent her crawling on to the branch. They alternately flew at her, using their beaks and wings incessantly with the utmost fury, and getting fearlessly within range of her claws, and while one was pouncing at her head, the other would execute a ‘flank’ attack, both of them keeping up all the time that continuous, noisy, angry clatter which Blackbirds so well know how to make on occasion. The interested observer tried to help the birds, but, from the lower branches of the tree intervening, missiles were not of much use. He was obliged to leave the exciting scene, but after a long absence returned, and found the combat still going on, and a person who had watched during the interval said the poor birds had kept up the attack without ceasing, forcing the enemy to keep on the defensive only ; and this desperate struggle kept on for two hours, when pussy retreated.”

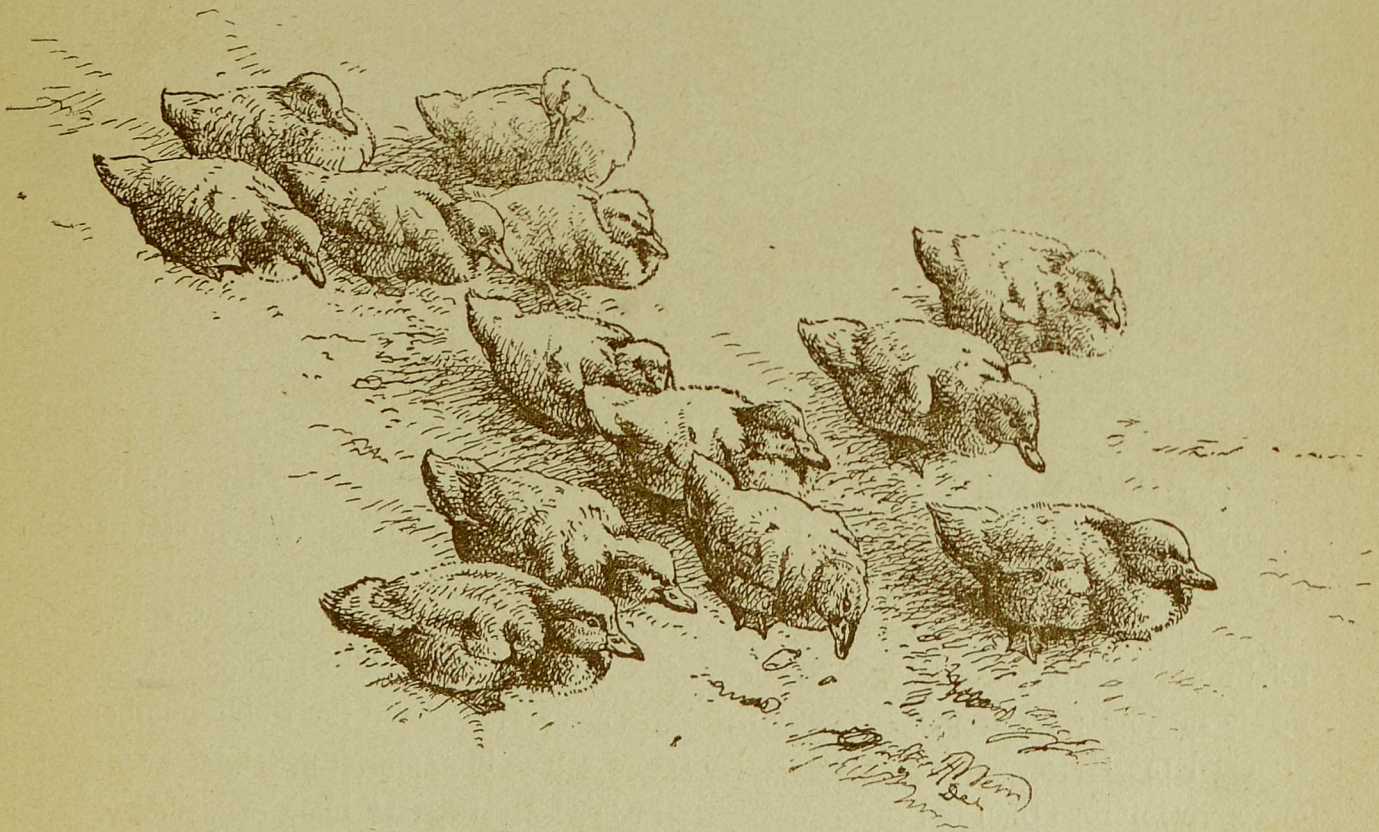


“A widow who had near her house a rather dull yard enclosed by a wall, kept a single Hen, which paid for its keep in fresh eggs. In order to make its solitary condition less irksome, it formed a friendship with the Sparrows of the neighbourhood, and when food was put down for the Hen, the Sparrows came to share it. If its companions were not at hand, or food were given at any unusual time, the Hen would call until its little friends appeared, when, with every possible demonstration of pleasure, it would begin to eat.”*

* Elberfeld Report of the S. P. C. A.

Dr. Macaulay, in his interesting book entitled *Mercy to Animals* quotes the following story :—

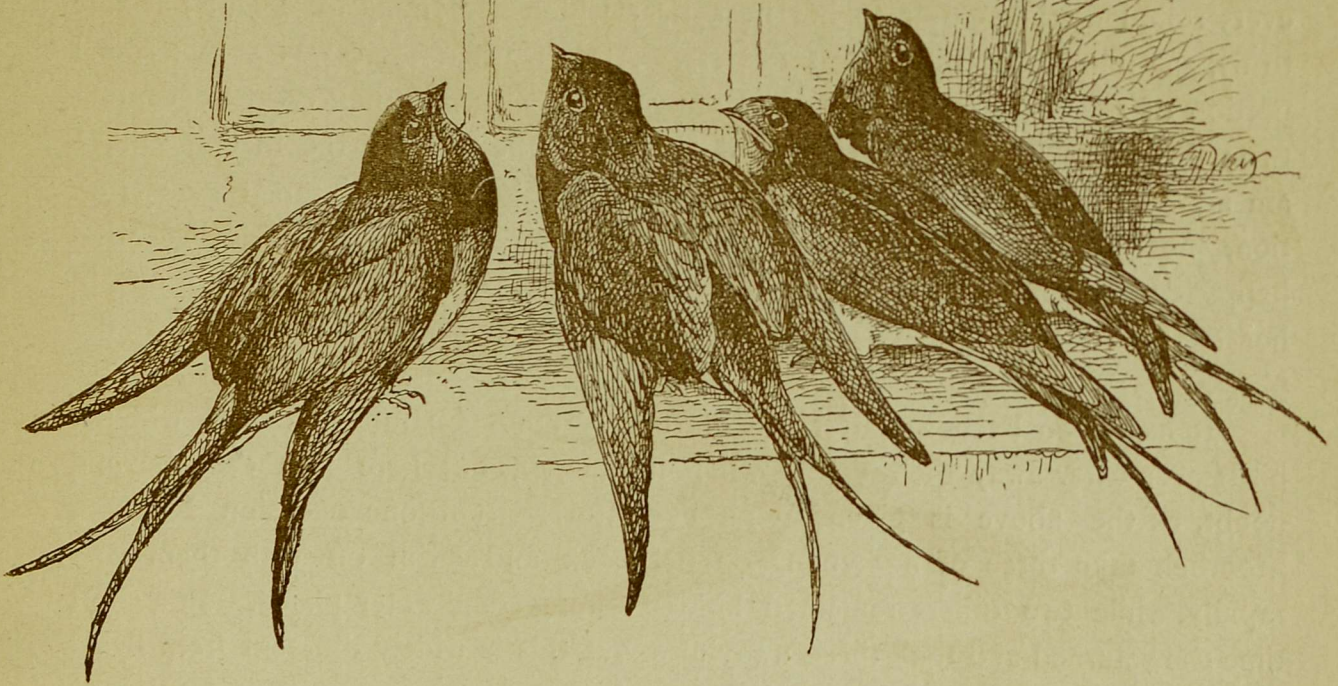
“I once purchased a brood of Ducklings about a month old, without the Hen that hatched them. I took them home, and placed them, as I thought, safely in a pig-pound. In the morning I found they were all gone, and I discovered them, snugly huddled together, at their old quarters at the other end of the village, in the nest in which they were hatched. A labourer told me he had met them in the street, homeward-bound, at four o'clock a.m., as he was going to work. This was the more remarkable, as the brood had never been so far from home before.”





The Cuckoo and the Hawk, are often followed by numbers of small birds, mostly Martins and Swallows; yet again they are just as often left unmolested. Why is this? Why some more than others?

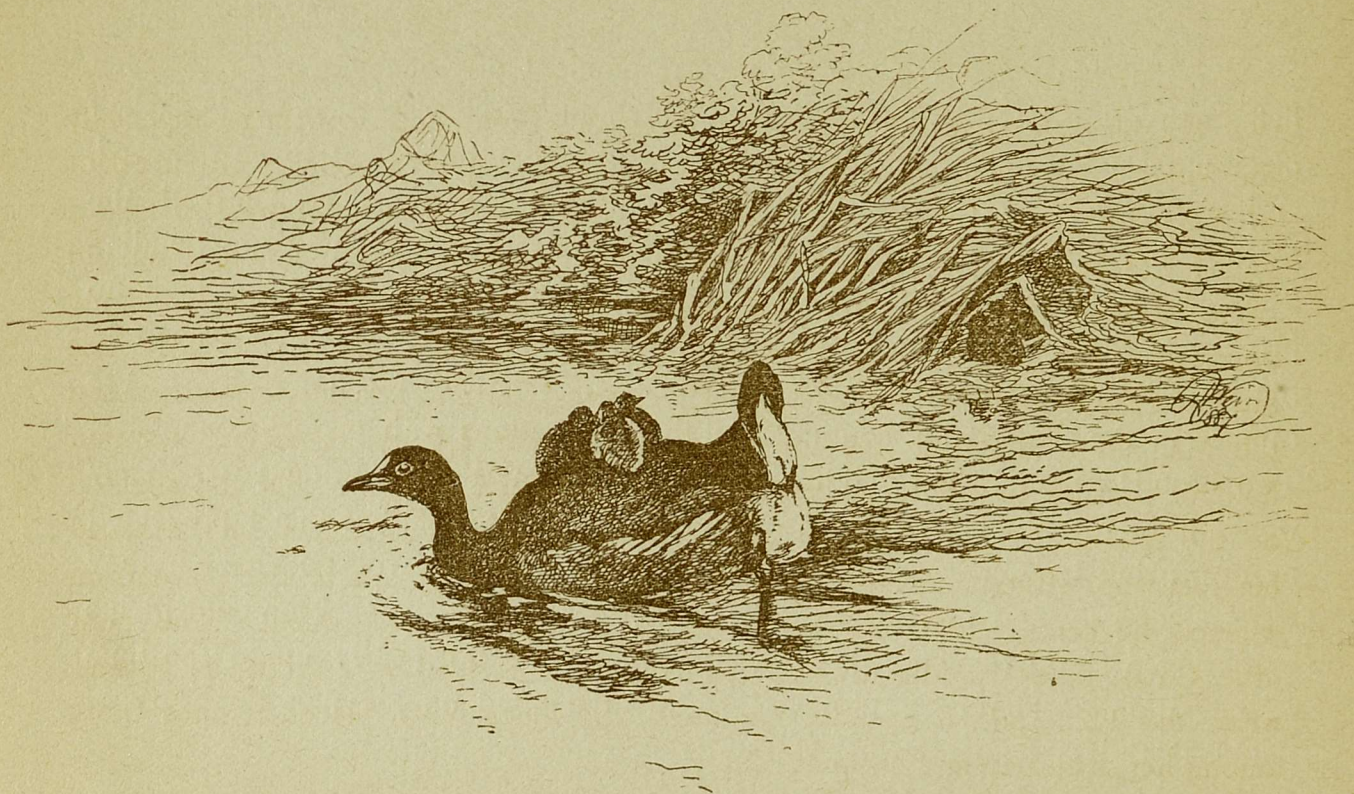
A number of Swallows were sitting on the roof of a farm-house in Kent, one bright warm summer evening. Suddenly a Sparrow Hawk dashed among them, nearly making a capture. Instantly there was a screaming, and the whole number attacked the Hawk, darting here and there, now above him, and now below. One more adventurous than the rest actually got on his back between his wings. Away flew the Sparrow Hawk; he fled with all the speed he could make. Still there were the Swallows. Away and away, and yet the Swallows pursuing, until distance made them invisible. After a while, back came the conquerors, and after circling the house a few times, again settled along the roof, apparently with the intention of discussing their late victory.

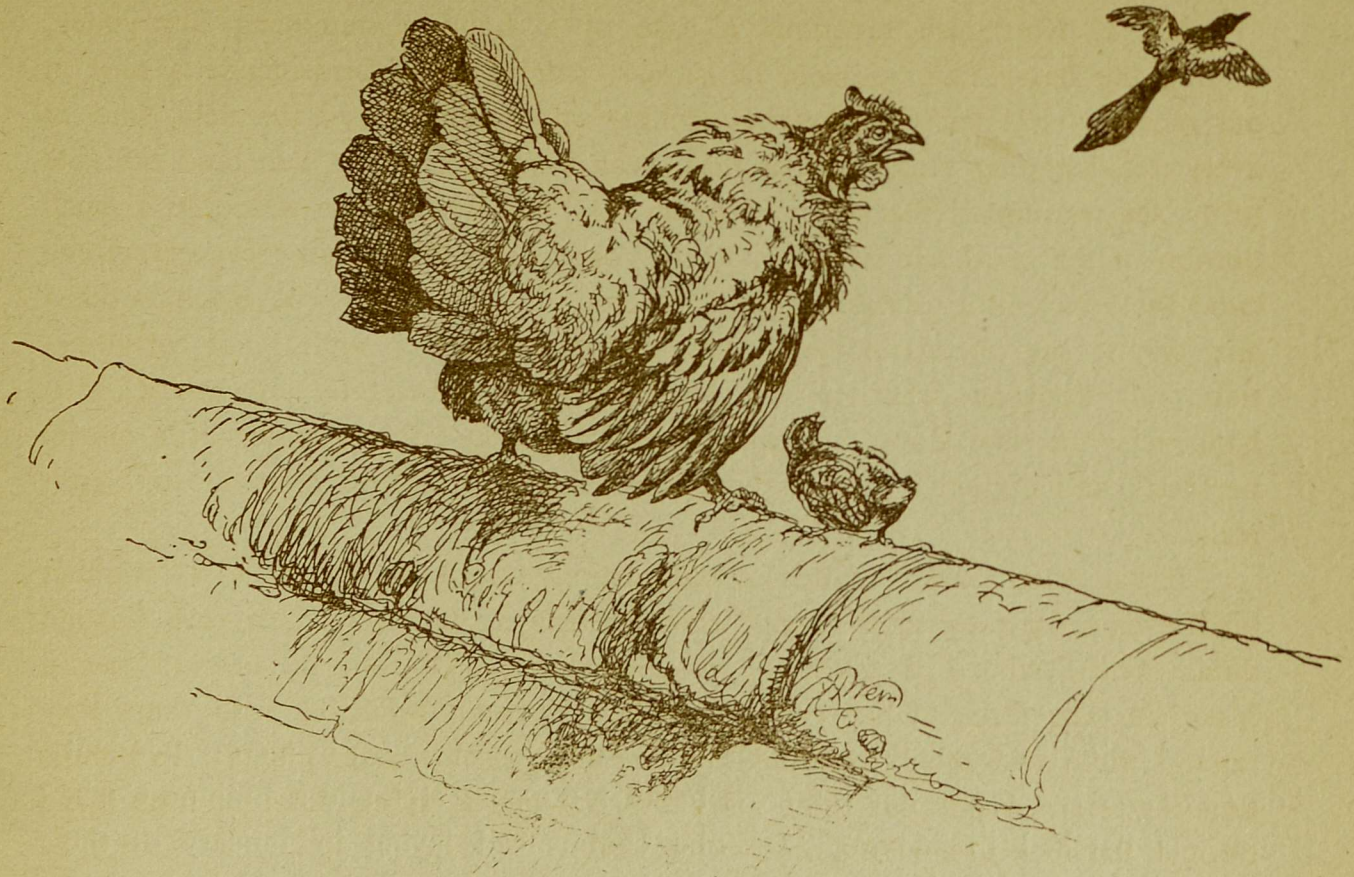


“About ten years ago,” writes a correspondent of *Land and Water*, “when living at Worton Rectory, in Oxfordshire, I found a Swallow’s nest in the bookshelf of an unoccupied bedroom. With much reluctance I ordered it to be removed, and cleared a space inside the north window, which was set open and the room left undisturbed for a few days. On re-entering, I found them building again, this time precisely where I had desired they should, on a bracket high up just inside the window. On my taking possession of the room they were not in the least disconcerted by my presence, or even by that of the housemaid or the candles in the evening, but continued all their operations with perfect confidence. Two broods were hatched and fledged, and the same the following year. They would have repaired the old nest and made it serve for all, but this I prevented by destroying it after every brood. They would return to roost long after they were able to fly, and the last brood of the year would come back on cold nights or during a storm (flapping at the window to be let in), nearly up to the time of migration. The cock bird was greatly delighted on his first discovery of the looking-glass, contemplating himself therein for a long time.”

Mr. T. Northgush mentions a case of a Landrail removing her young. During the hay-making season, he says, a pair of these birds made a nest in our meadow. When the mowing-machine was cutting round the field, and in every round getting closer to her nest, near which her young were, and not able to fly, she manifested the utmost distress. At last, when there was only a small portion of the grass left standing, all the young ones made their escape excepting two; these two little things continued to run in the front of the machine till, I am sorry to say, one was killed. The mother looked on with great consternation, not knowing what to do to save them. Instantly on seeing what happened, she flew down in despair, and caught up the remaining little one in her beak and carried it over three or four fields, depositing it unhurt in a safer place.

It has often been a matter of controversy among naturalists as to whether birds ever carry away their young when in danger, but here is a case beyond doubt, as the above is given by an eye-witness. On one occasion I saw a Moorhen take three of her young on her back and swim off with them very rapidly, while two others remained hidden among some water plants. In a short time she returned and took these away also, but this is widely different from flying through the air with her little ones in her beak.



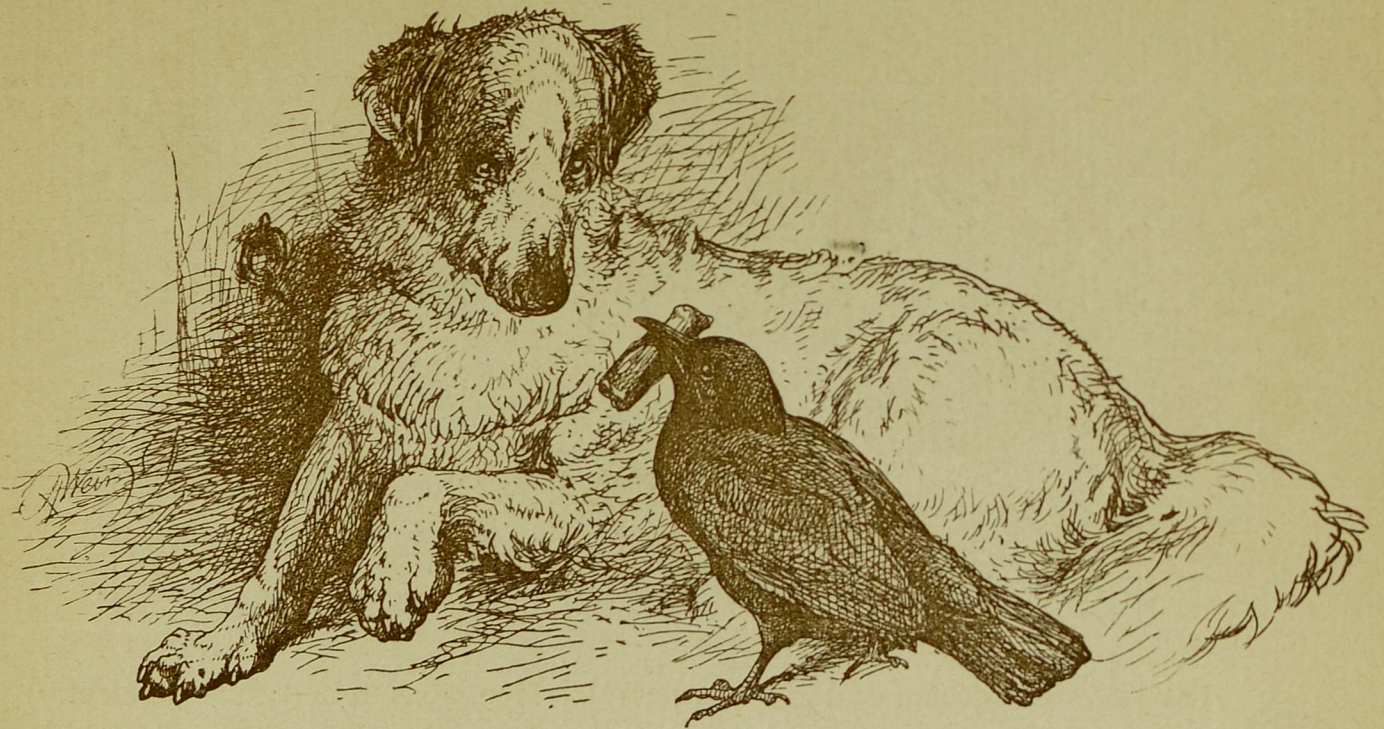


Magpies are particularly fond of young Chickens and Ducklings, especially the latter, often carrying away whole broods to their own young. An incident of this nature was noticed not long since, when a Magpie attempted to take a young Chicken away from the midst of a group under the protection of an old game Hen. When the Hen was looking another way the Magpie suddenly pounced down, seized a Chick, and flew off. The screams of the little one attracted the mother's attention. The Chick struggled, and struggled, which caused the Magpie to alight on the top of a house near by, so as to get a firmer hold, or possibly to kill it. But the Hen was too quick for him. She too alighted on the top of the house almost at the same time. In a moment she attacked her foe, who, without staying to contest for his prize, flew off to the place from whence he came, chattering loudly as he made his hasty retreat. The poor little Chick crept timidly towards its mother, half dead with fright as it was, when the Hen took it up with her beak, and flying down placed it once more among her disturbed and chirping family.



The following account of a rather remarkable Hen is given by a correspondent of *Land and Water*:—"She is a cross between a Game Hen and a Brahma Cock, and was hatched in May, 1882. She commenced laying in January of the following year, and laid 189 eggs within the 12 months. This year she has laid 156 eggs, and is still laying. I may add that she is quite a cockney, having lived on the leads of a public office for the last two years, her owner being the hall porter. She is very fond of lying before the fire, stretching herself like a dog. At meal times a chair is placed for her at the table, her food being moistened with a liberal supply of stout. Possibly it is the latter, combined with the warmth of her quarters, that has caused her to lay so well. The most curious thing is that a great number of the eggs have been laid in the lap of the porter's wife."

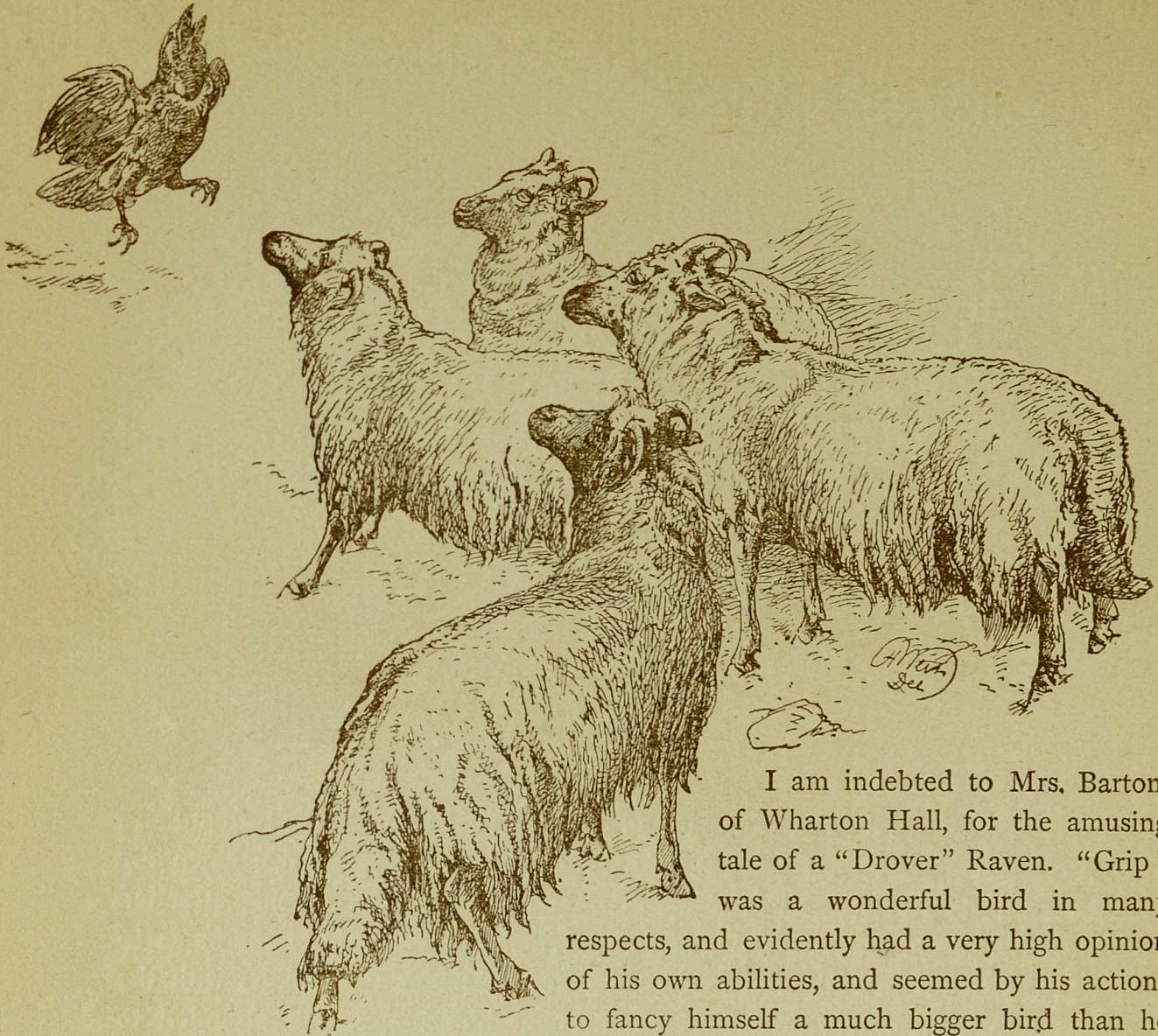
A very strange spectacle was witnessed at the railway station at Armagh, Ireland. Some men, it appears, were engaged in making some repairs in that building, and were eating their dinner, when they observed a very large rat come from behind a bench and proceed slowly to where some Hens were feeding near the door. One of them however quickly saw it, and immediately commenced a fierce onslaught on it with its beak and wings. The men did not interfere, but stood looking on at the extraordinary combat, which lasted for about five minutes, and at the end of that time the rat was lying dead, killed by its feathered opponent.



There is the story of a Raven that had been brought up with a Newfoundland dog. A chaise coming into the inn-yard of the "Red Lion," Hungerford, accidentally one of the wheels grazed the leg of the dog. While the dog was being attended to, "Ralph" the Raven looked on, and was evidently making his remarks as to what was doing, for the minute the dog was tied up under the manger with the horse, "Ralph" not only visited him, but brought him bones, and attended to him with particular marks of kindness. "Ralph's" friend, the dog, in the course of time had the misfortune to break his leg, and during the long period of his confinement the Raven waited on him, constantly carried him his provisions, and scarcely ever left him alone. One night by accident the stable door was shut, and "Ralph" had been deprived of his friend's company all night; but the ostler found in the morning that the door had been so pecked away that had it not been opened, in another hour the Raven would have made his own entrance.

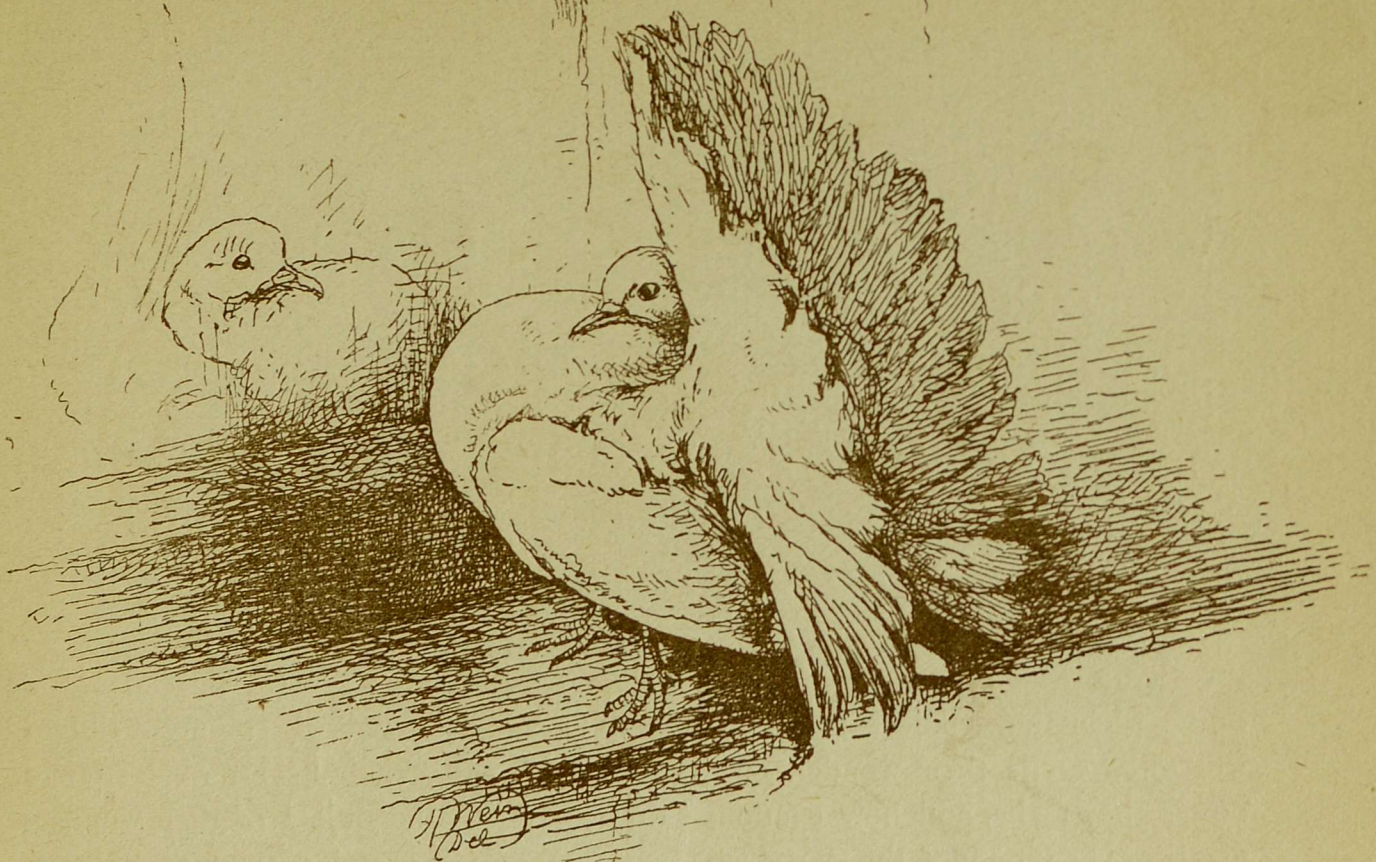
A gentleman's butler having missed a great many silver spoons and other articles without suspicion as to who might be the thief, at last observed a tame Raven with one in his mouth, and watching him to his hiding place, discovered near three dozen.*

* Stanley's "Natural History of Birds."



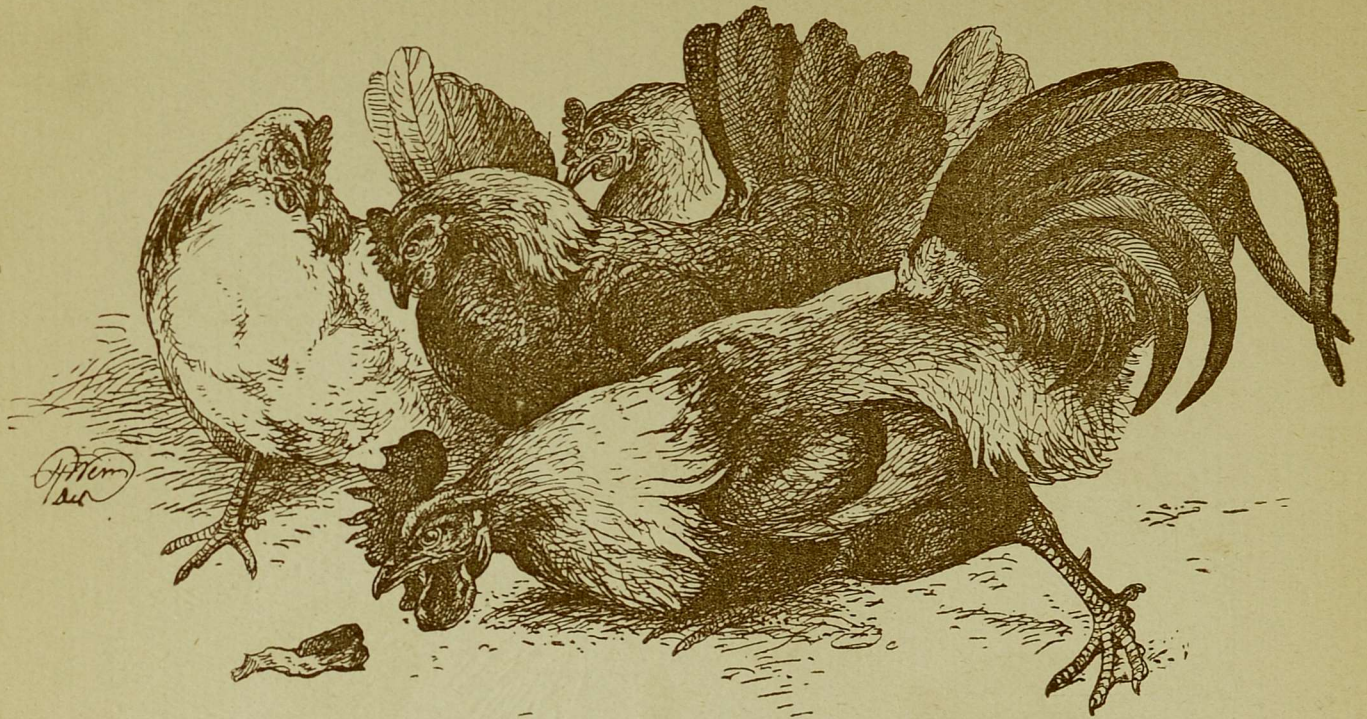
I am indebted to Mrs. Barton, of Wharton Hall, for the amusing tale of a "Drover" Raven. "Grip" was a wonderful bird in many respects, and evidently had a very high opinion of his own abilities, and seemed by his actions to fancy himself a much bigger bird than he was. One of his most favourite amusements was to go up to the cross roads, and there patiently await the coming of the droves of sheep from the north. On one appearing in sight he seemed almost frantic with delight. On their near approach he would plant himself in the middle of the road, croak, jump, flap his wings, and bark like a dog, shouting out "Hi! Hi! Hi!" and doing all in his power to turn the sheep off the main road. If he succeeded he danced off sidling and hopping and croaking, his whole demeanour showing great satisfaction. "Grip" fancied himself a *Drover*.

All birds have an instinctive knowledge of their way on the wing for long distances. A Raven in a state of domestication is said to have returned to its former home, a distance of fourteen miles.



A correspondent writing to the *Animal World* says he witnessed a touching scene of grief manifested by a Pigeon at the loss of its mate :—

Two beautiful white Pigeons were presented to my friend, Mr. M., who made a dove-cote for them in his barn, and they seemed to enjoy their new home. But one day the female was missing, and was supposed to have been carried away by a Hawk. The male bird was in great distress, and from morning to night it would fly from place to place calling for its mate. On a lovely morning it flew on the window-sill, and perceiving its own image clearly reflected by the glass, the poor little thing was at once thrown into a flutter of excitement. After cooing for some time on the outside, it flew into the house ; but failing to find the object of its search, it returned to the outside, then to their little house, where it continued for a long time cooing for the absent one. This has been repeated daily for more than three months. Then, ever and anon, it will try to flock with the chickens, and it perches with them on the roost. But the first thing in the morning it will return to the dove-cote, re-adjust the nest, and again repeat its plaintive cooing.



Some birds are more curious than others, and it is very amusing to watch Fowls when they come across anything unusual. A piece of coloured ribbon will often excite their wonderment. How they crane their necks, what strange noises they make, and how cautiously they approach the object of their wonderment. Then one of the party will venture nearer, and at last summon courage to peck at it, and then dash away, in a fancied fright; when, on finding it harmless, it is often caught up, run off with to a short distance, dropped, and all surprise ends.

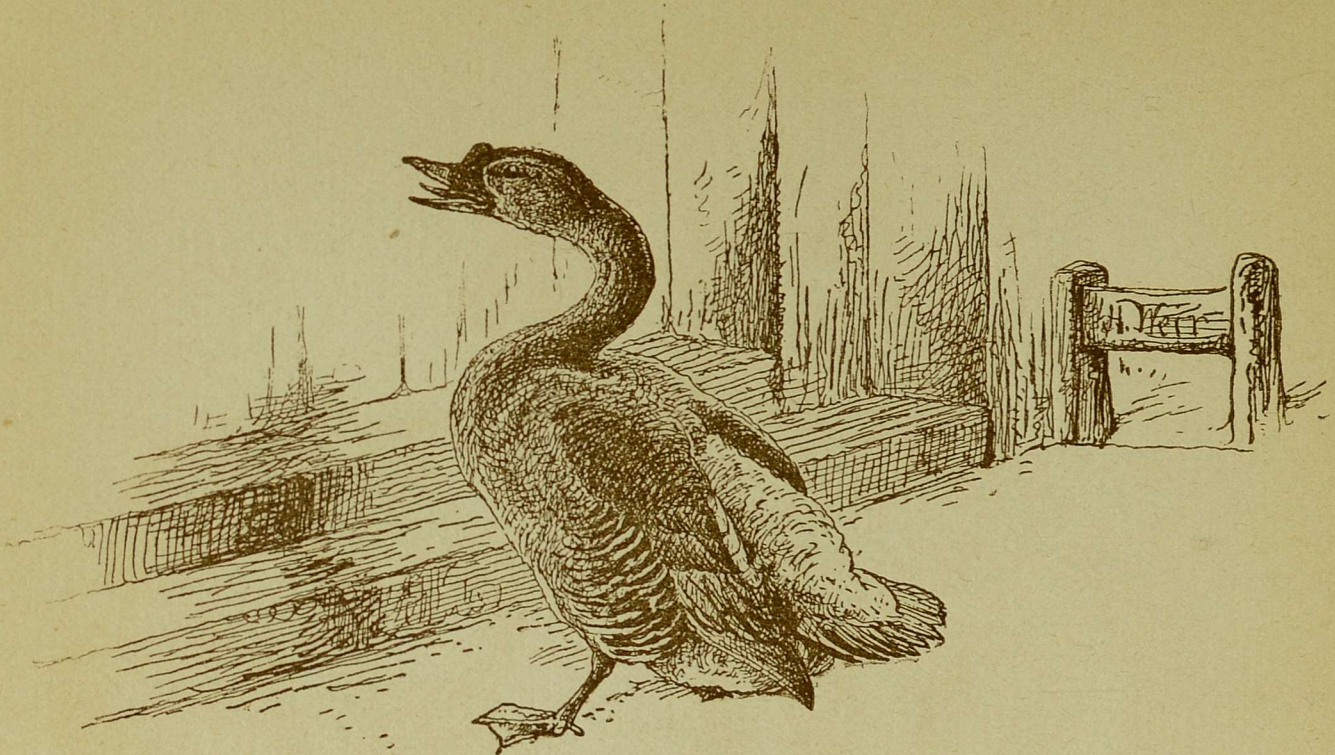
Some few years ago, the late Mr. Brock, of Crystal Palace celebrity, sent me as a present some Japanese Kites. My garden at this time was situated on a knoll, which commanded a view of the valley of the Medway. Below stretched far away woods and fields, and in the dim distance the chalk hills made a boundary to the scene. A scene beautiful alike in winter and summer; charming at all times to the artist and naturalist.

From this knoll I sent up one of the Japanese Kites. It was an art Kite, and represented a Japanese lady with her arms distended, and when in the air had a very unusual appearance, more especially among fields and hedgerows. When it had reached the height of about one hundred yards, I was much astonished to observe small birds coming towards it, some from a distance. Most of them were Larks. Up to the Kite they came, close to it, around, above, and below, dashing down, then skimming above, all twittering and showing evident

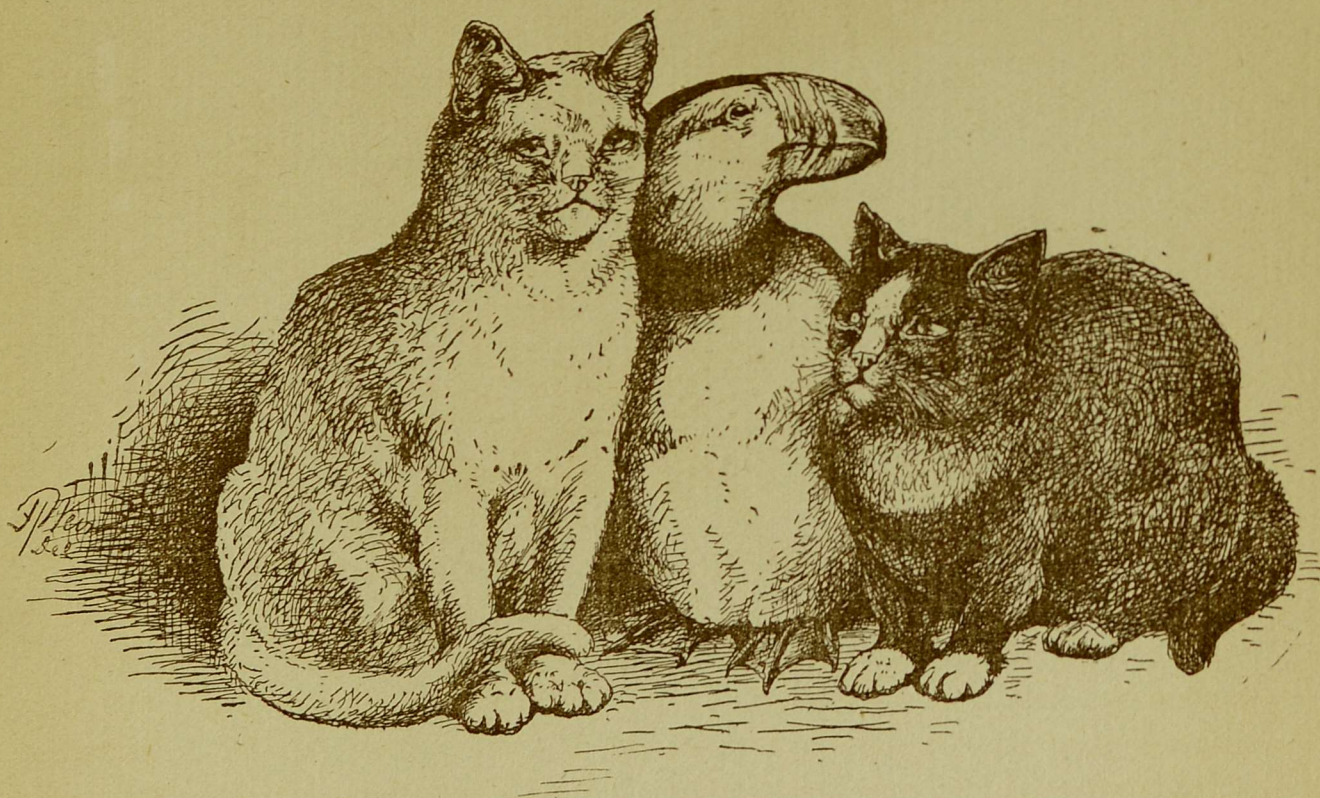


signs of astonishment. In ten minutes all were gone, not a bird came to look any longer. A week later some friends came. "Now," said I, "you shall observe the strange behaviour of birds, when they see an object they do not understand." I brought out my Kite. It rose higher and higher; I let out one hundred and fifty yards and lastly two hundred yards of string. The evening was fine and cloudless, but not a single bird came to look at it, not one; I was amazed. My friends grew somewhat jocular, and made rather pointed remarks, such as, "We see the Kite, but where are the birds?" At last they said, "Where is the joke?" I was obliged to tell the whole story. After this I tried two more kites, but no birds came. How was this? They had not only satisfied their own curiosity, but *must* have had some way of telling others that they had inspected it, and it was nothing worth troubling about; nothing to hurt and nothing to admire.

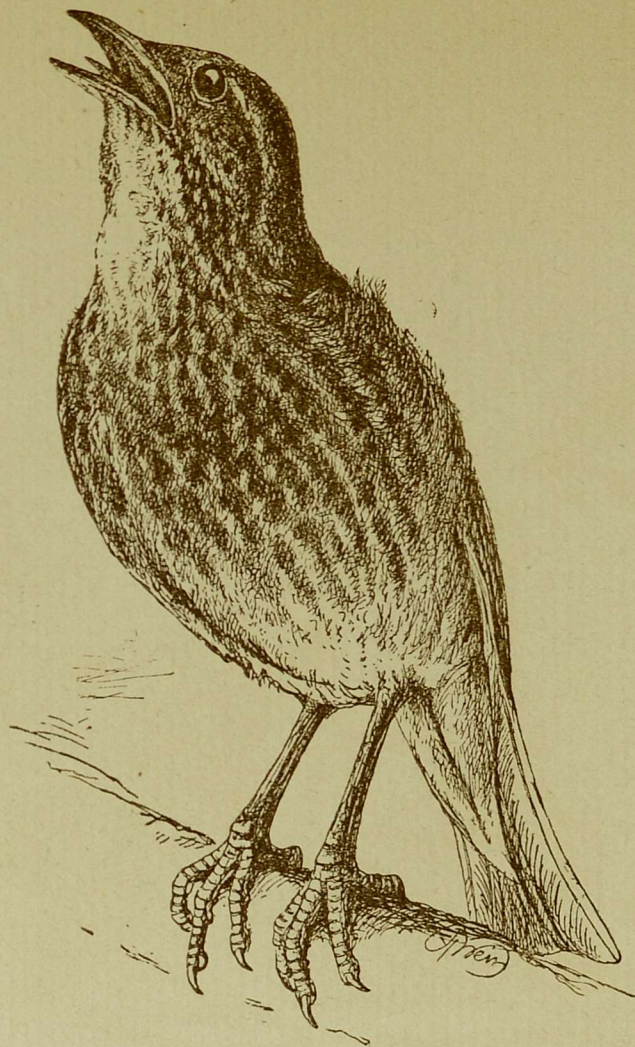
I have endeavoured to think the matter out many a time as to "the why and the wherefore," but the whole is still a mystery as to the first coming of the birds in such numbers, and then not one.



At Lewes, in Sussex, there is an ornamental piece of water called "The Pells," wherein are kept a number of Water-fowl at the Corporation's expense, and the observation of these birds proves a source of much pleasure to the inhabitants of the town. In 1877, a Chinese Goose laid five eggs, from which, unfortunately, only one Gosling was raised. The poor little thing appeared to feel its lonely condition very much, and for some time attached itself in the most friendly way to a small white Duck, and the two became inseparable. By accident the Duck was killed, and for some days the solitary Gosling again became very melancholy, his peaceful retreat in "The Pells" had no charm for him, and he refused to join the gay company in the more open waters. The attractions which maize ordinarily presents to his genus was lost on him; at barley he would not look, and he was rapidly becoming a misanthrope, when suddenly a wandering fit came on, and daily he was seen going down the streets nearest to the place of his nativity. He became a confirmed mendicant, and subsisted entirely by begging. His round was through Brook Street and Spring Gardens, though occasionally he got as far as "King's Stores" in North Street. His plan was to cackle softly outside the doors of his patrons; if no one appeared his summons was uttered more vigorously; and as a last resource he would tap vigorously at the door, and generally got a small piece of bread, of which he was very fond. Thus he went from door to door, and was a great pet with everybody.



A case of a tame Puffin is mentioned in the *Rhyl Journal*, 1883:—
“Some weeks ago a gentleman visitor caught one of these Water-fowls on our shore, and took it to his lodgings in Water Street. There it has been carefully looked after, and ‘brought up by the hand,’ as Mr. Pumblechook would have said. The bird was a young one, and has become very domesticated, daily to be found in the yard, and often enjoying the street sights. It has two cats for companions, and is fed chiefly on shell fish. At frequent intervals Mr. Puffin is taken for a walk as far as the sea, where he enjoys a little ‘ducking,’ afterwards following his custodian home, in preference to taking advantage of the liberty which he often has had the opportunity of regaining.”

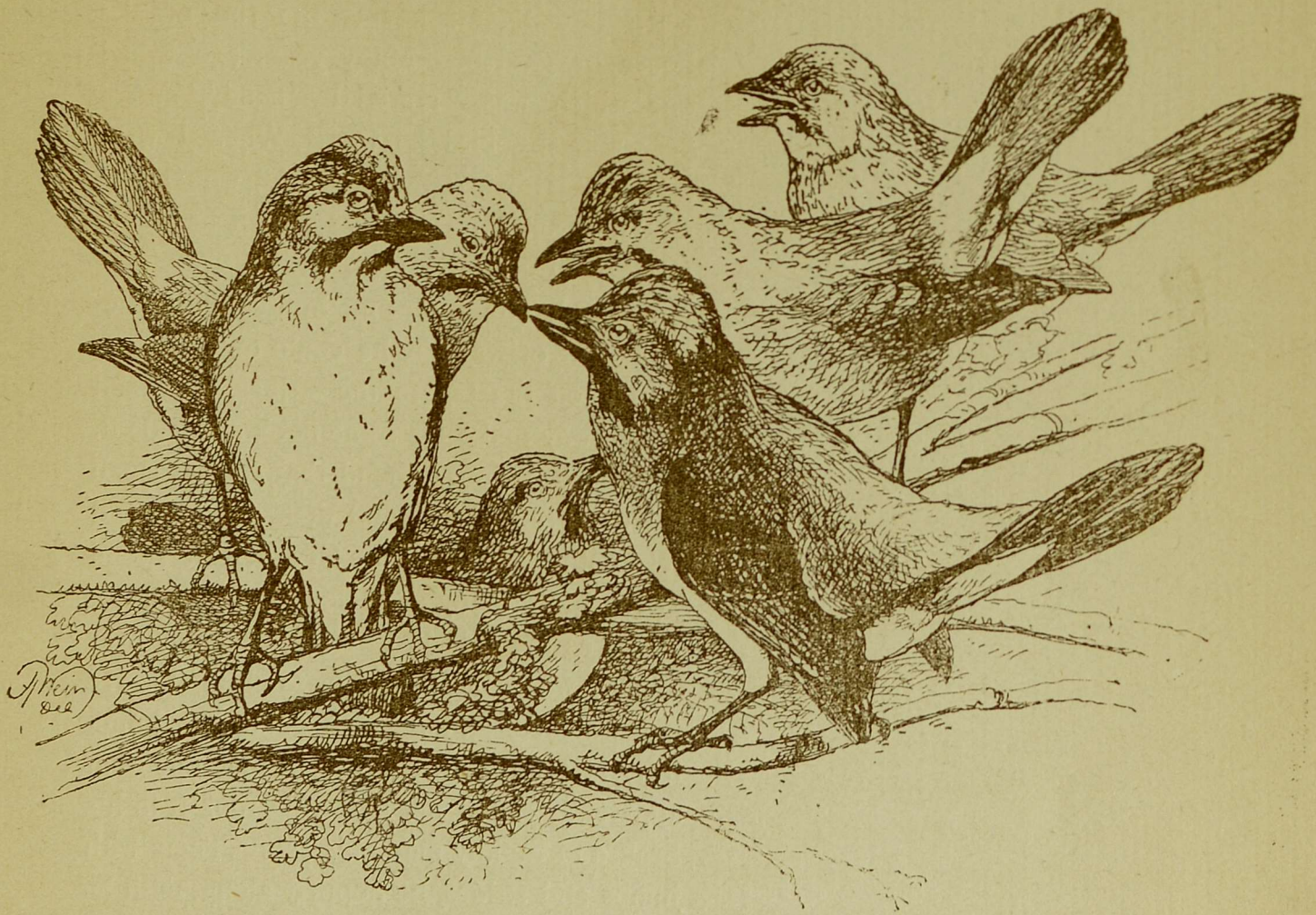


In the garden of a gentleman in Sussex, a Thrush had for some time perched itself on a particular spray, and made itself a great favourite, from its power of voice and constant singing; when one day it was observed by the gardener to drop from the bough in the midst of its song. He immediately ran to pick it up, but found it was quite dead, and, upon examination, discovered it had actually broken a blood-vessel by its exertions.*

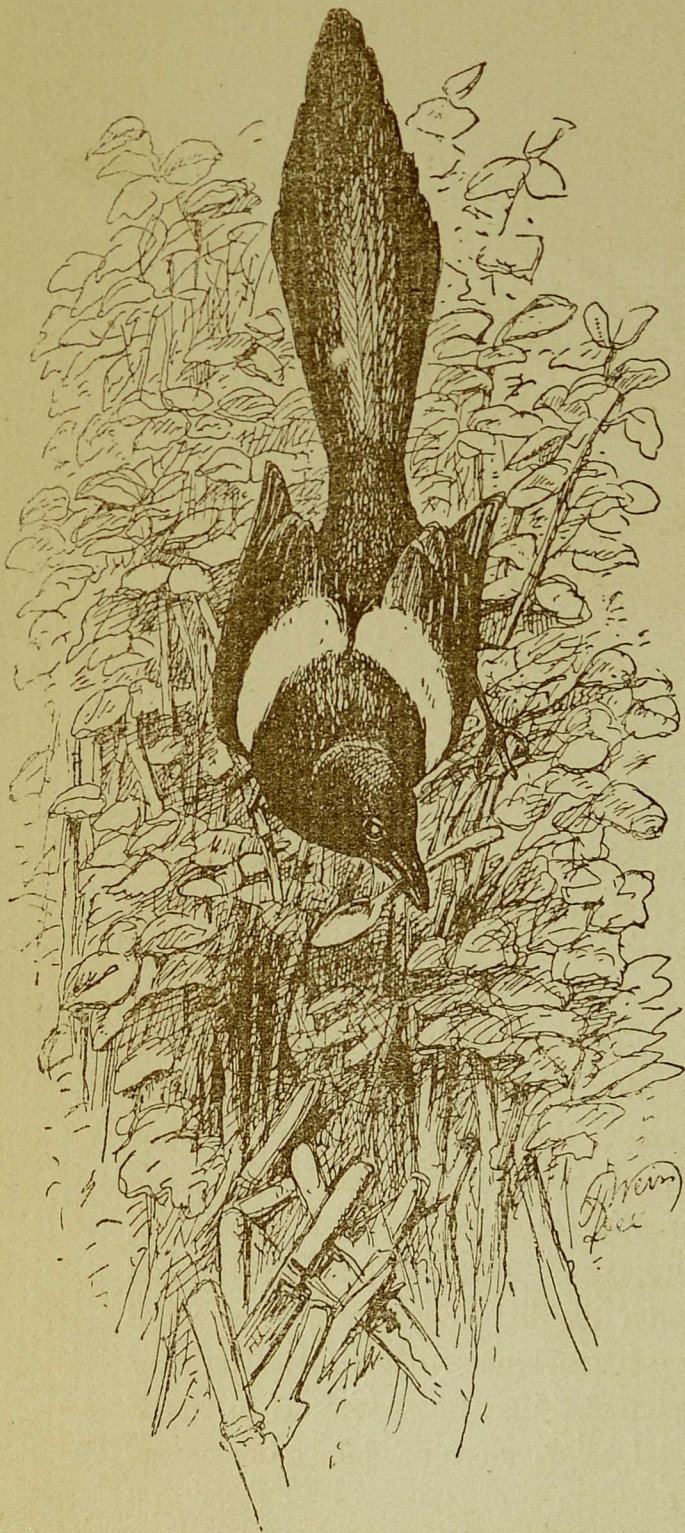
The Jay when sitting, or at the time when the young are newly hatched, always slips or glides away from its nest without a sound, as though it would not betray its locality, yet its noisiness at other times is proverbial.

Jays are remarkably quick of sight, and should any one approach the spot in a wood or copse where they and their newly-fledged young are feeding, they utter a short harsh cry, and there is a sudden departure, apparently in different directions, though if watched it will be seen that they all work round, and meet together at a not far distant spot, as though it was an understood thing, should any cause of alarm occur.

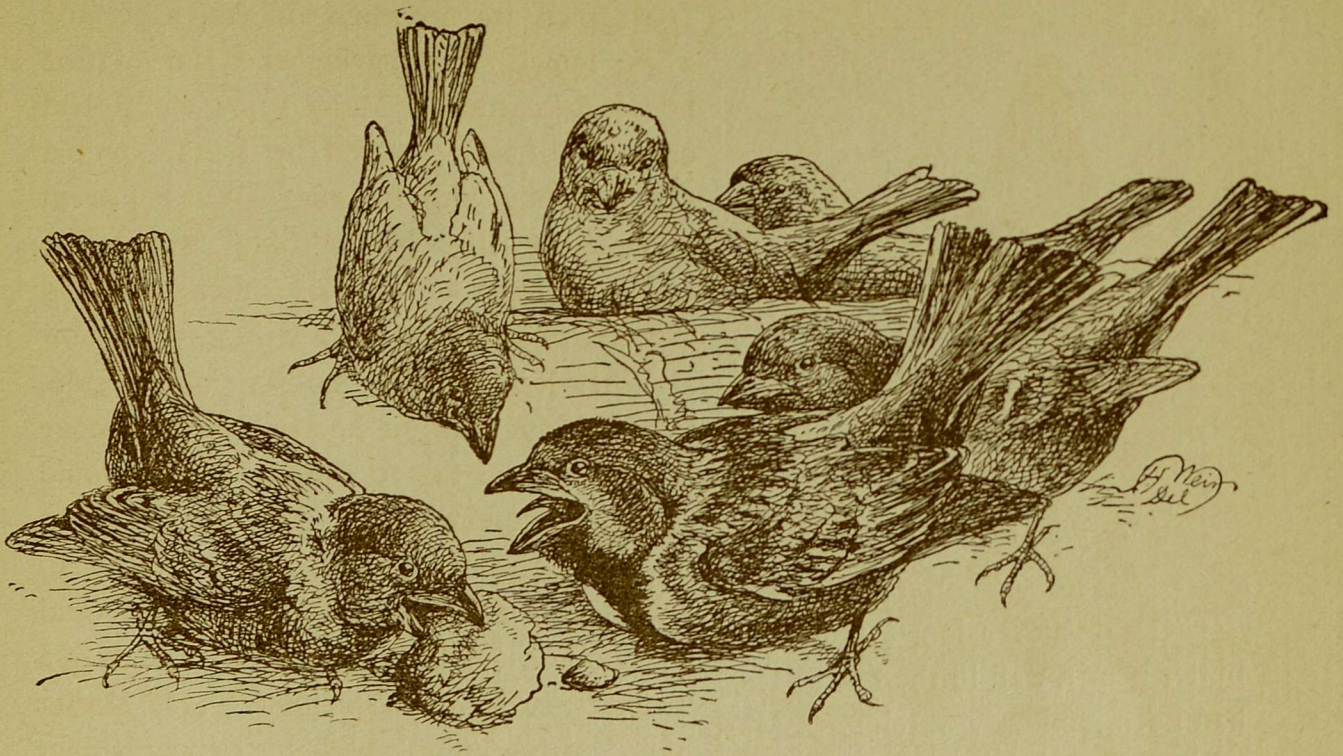
* Stanley's "Book of Birds,"



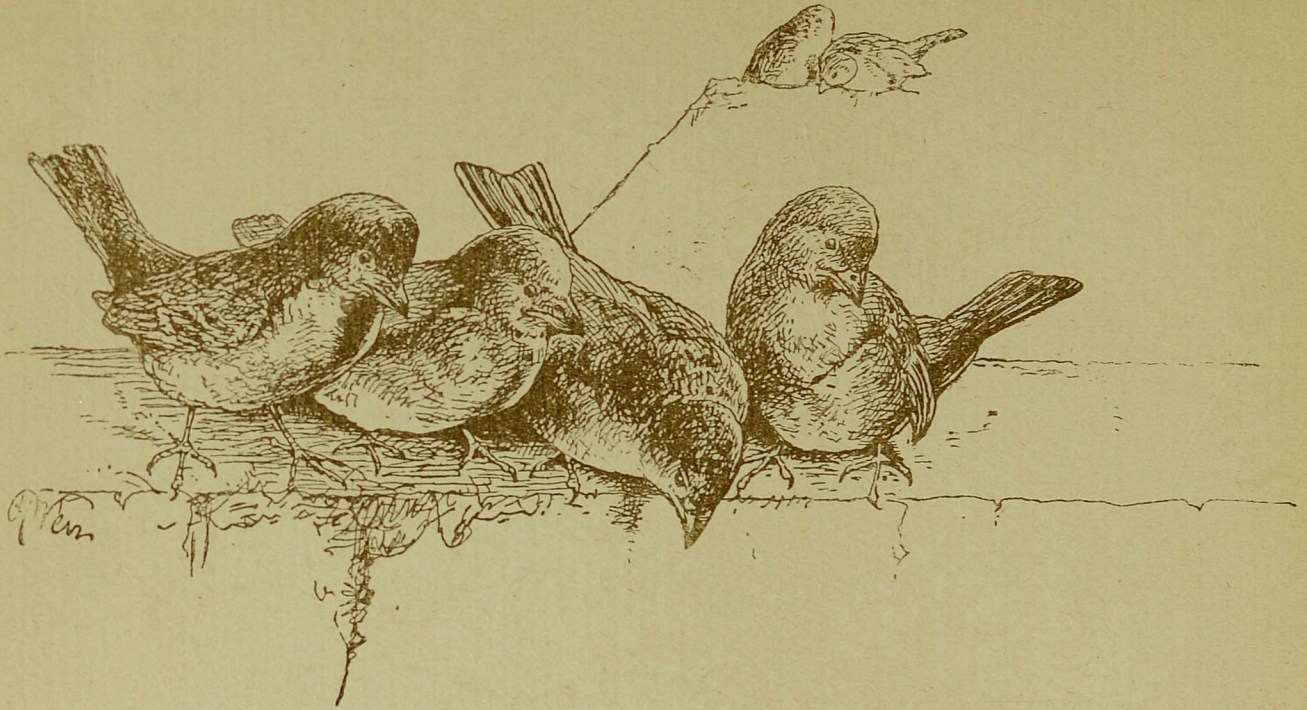
On one occasion I disturbed a number of Jays (two old birds and their young) as they were industriously shelling and devouring my peas, which were just ready to be gathered. With loud notes of alarm, they flew into the adjoining wood apparently in very diverse directions. Yet in a few minutes, when I crept stealthily among the bushes, I found them not far in, all sitting together in an oak, evidently planning another onslaught on my vegetable garden, for after a short converse they flew direct to where the peas were growing, but returned in haste on finding my gardener there with a gun.



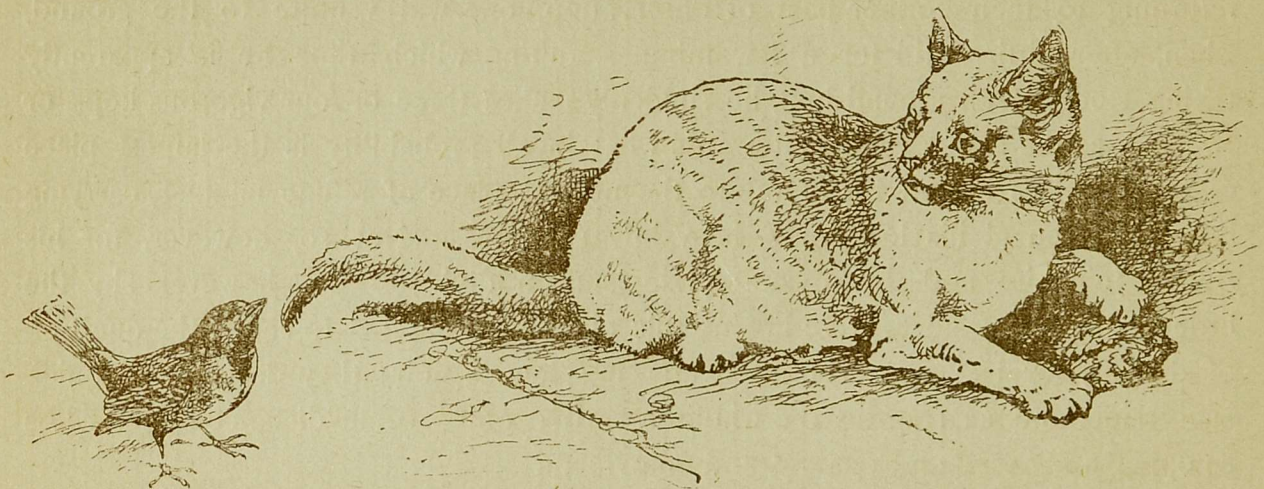
Magpies are notorious thieves, especially when tamed, and having the run of the house or garden. Many years ago I had one which was "reared by hand," and a very amusing bird he was. When I went into the garden, "Master Mag" would hop and walk until he got close, then he would proceed to untie my shoe strings, every now and then looking up at me in a comical side-long kind of way; if he could only manage to pull off the tag to the strings, he would straightway make for some nook and hide it. On one occasion I found that several small knives were missing, and then another, and yet another. At last a silver dessert spoon "went." Presently suspicion fell on "Master Mag" as the culprit, he being generally near at hand when the knives were cleaned. He was watched, and seen to go to the knife-tray, and after carefully selecting one that apparently suited his fancy, he took it in his beak and rapidly made his exit. Then, with jumps and strides, he hopped along, until he made a halt by a large lilac bush, that was full of suckers, and dense at the base. Up among the twigs stepped my young friend, until he reached a certain spot, when he turned, looked down, and dropped the knife amongst the suckers in the centre part of the bush. After taking several peeps at his treasure, "Master Mag" descended, and again made his way towards the knife-tray. The lilac bush was searched, and there were all the knives, the spoon, some meat-hooks, skewers, some bones, and a duster.

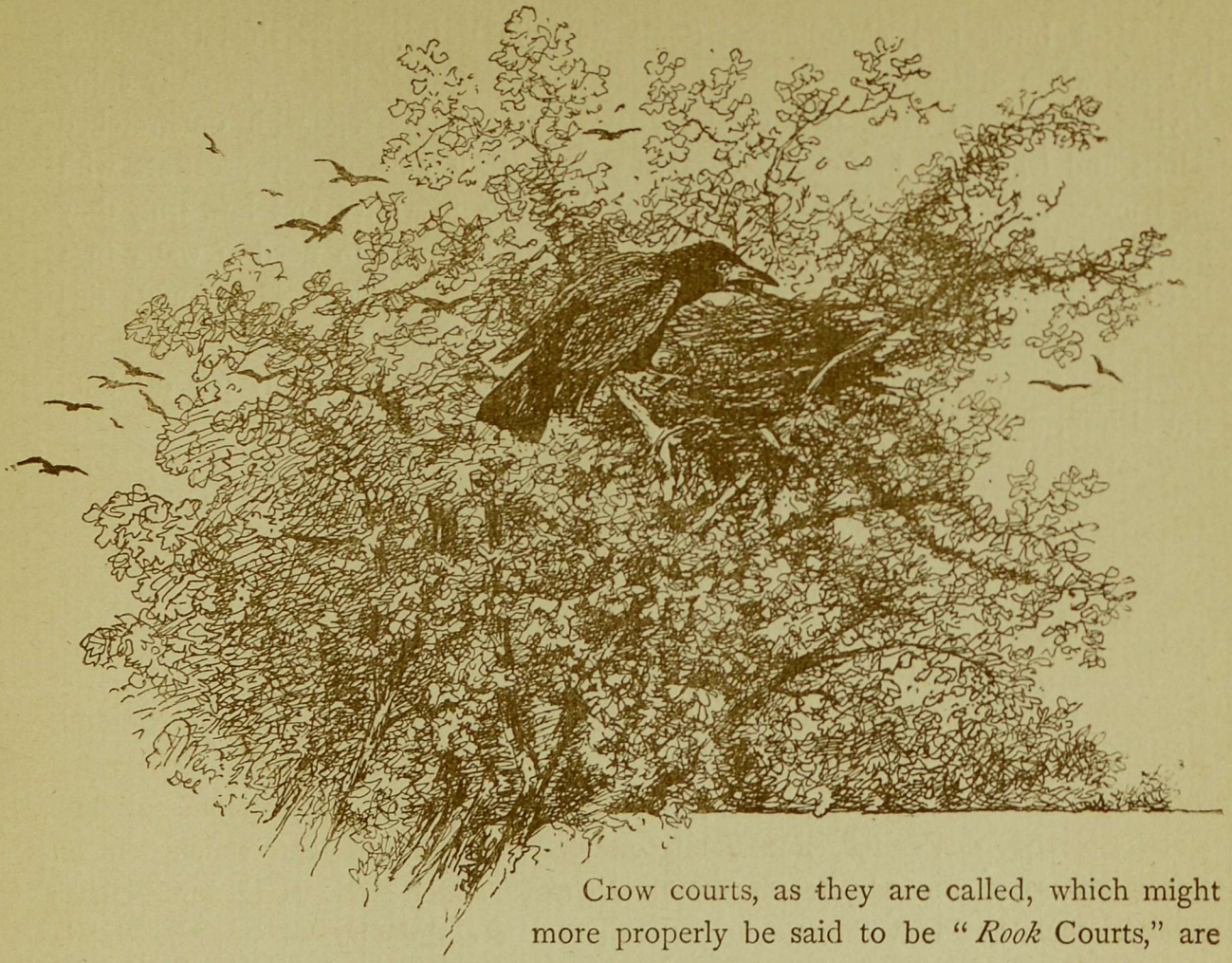


The devices of Sparrows to avoid the surprises of their enemy, the cat, are most amusing. Should a cat, or any other supposed danger be observable, they approach the food placed for them in the most cautious manner. Perhaps, after much chirping and flying towards it a short distance, and then as quickly returning to their former post of observation, one will venture to the ground, when, after sitting still for a few minutes, during which time he is apparently taking stock of all around him, he suddenly makes three or four vigorous hops, or as many as the case demands, towards what in all probability is the largest piece of bread, seizes it, and then away to the nearest place of refuge he flies, carrying it to be eaten at his leisure, as he vainly supposes. Not so, however, for his *friends* join him, and the coveted prize is soon divided. But however shy the little body of marauders were before, this one success seems to settle the question of danger, for leaving a sentinel at a conspicuous point they descend in quick succession, and as speedily the whole is carried off to some distance more or less as opportunity offers rest, safety, and enjoyment.



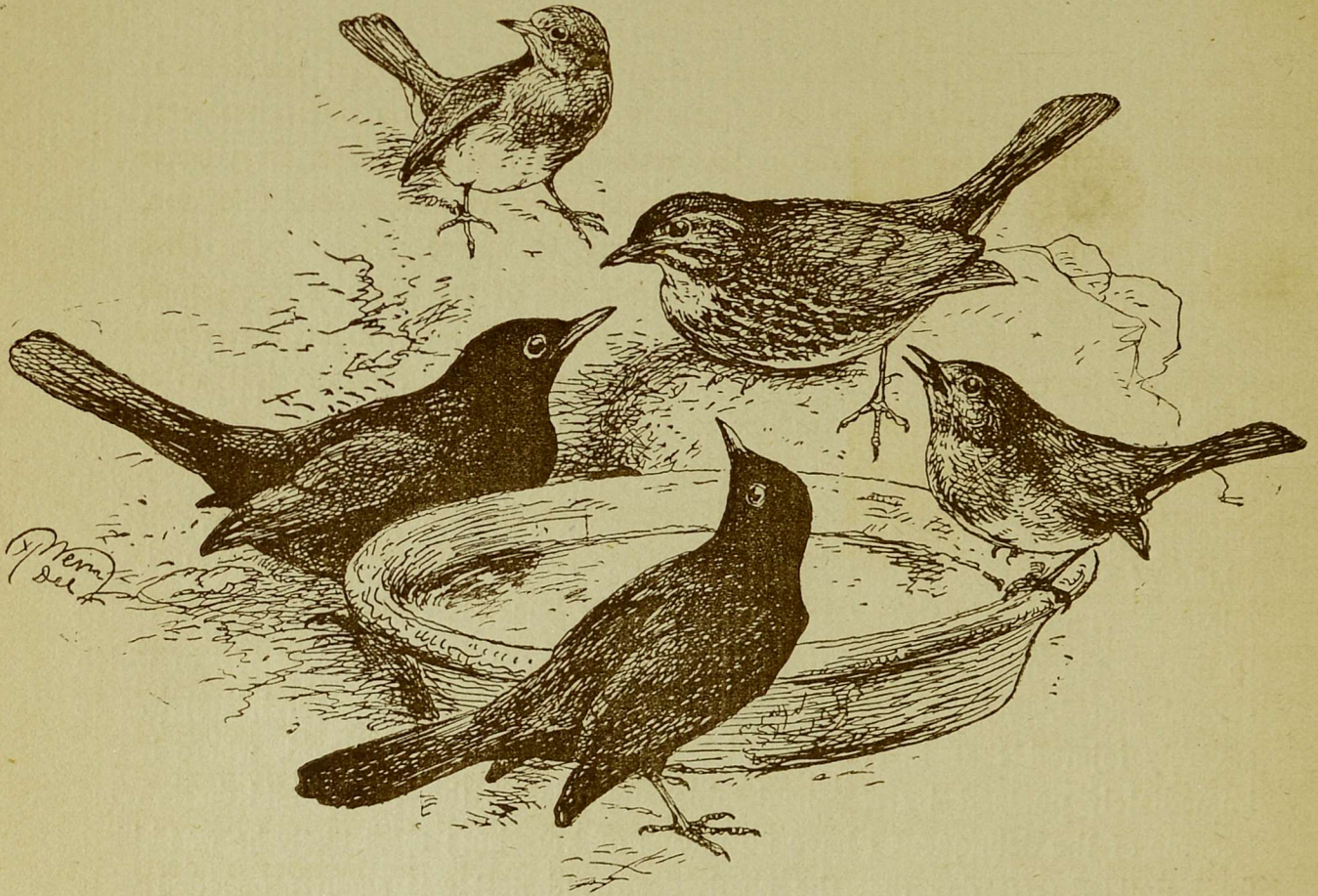
On one occasion I noticed a cat of mine was eating a piece of bread-and-butter near a wall in the back yard. Some Sparrows from this point of observation had been anxiously watching "Master Puss" at his meal. Presently one sprightly cock Sparrow descended, and boldly hopped towards the cat, which left off eating to watch the movements of the Sparrow, which now came quite close; close enough, as Pussy thought, to be caught. He drew himself together, made a spring, but the Sparrow was too alert, and flew off; the cat bounded after him; when lo! the remaining Sparrows dropped from the wall, and carried off the bread-and-butter. It was then clear to me that the whole proceeding was concerted by the Sparrows to get the bread.





Crow courts, as they are called, which might more properly be said to be "*Rook Courts*," are not of infrequent occurrence, and many descriptions of them have been given by authors, both ancient and modern, in which it is said that an erring bird is tried for his life, and that, if found guilty, the punishment is severe, if not mortal. When Rooks are building their nests there is often much pilfering going on, one stealing the sticks from another's nest. I once saw the whole of a new nest carried off during the absence of the owner for only a few minutes. This flagrant disregard of the laws of societies and communities seemed to arouse the utmost indignation, and a "battle royal" was the result, in which several joined. After much buffeting one was struck to the ground, and was so severely injured that it could scarcely fly to an adjoining wood, where it was immediately pursued by a considerable number of the enraged birds. What became of the delinquent I have no means of knowing; most likely he was killed, for I noticed next day that the nearly-destroyed nest was again proceeded with. Goldsmith gives corroborative testimony with regard to the punishment inflicted on badly-disposed and refractory Rooks.

Most birds like cleanliness. Some wash in water, others dust themselves in sand, while others do both. It is remarkable how much they apparently enjoy drying themselves in the sun after their bath, often lying with outstretched wings and legs, with half-closed eyes, as though they were utterly prostrate with pleasure. How often we are told to feed the birds in winter, and how truly they are in need of food no one will deny, yet they are as often in need of water in a hot dry summer as they are of food in winter. Let any one who doubts this place pans of water in his garden, and he will observe how quickly they are resorted to early and late by his feathered neighbours, not only for drinking but also for ablution.

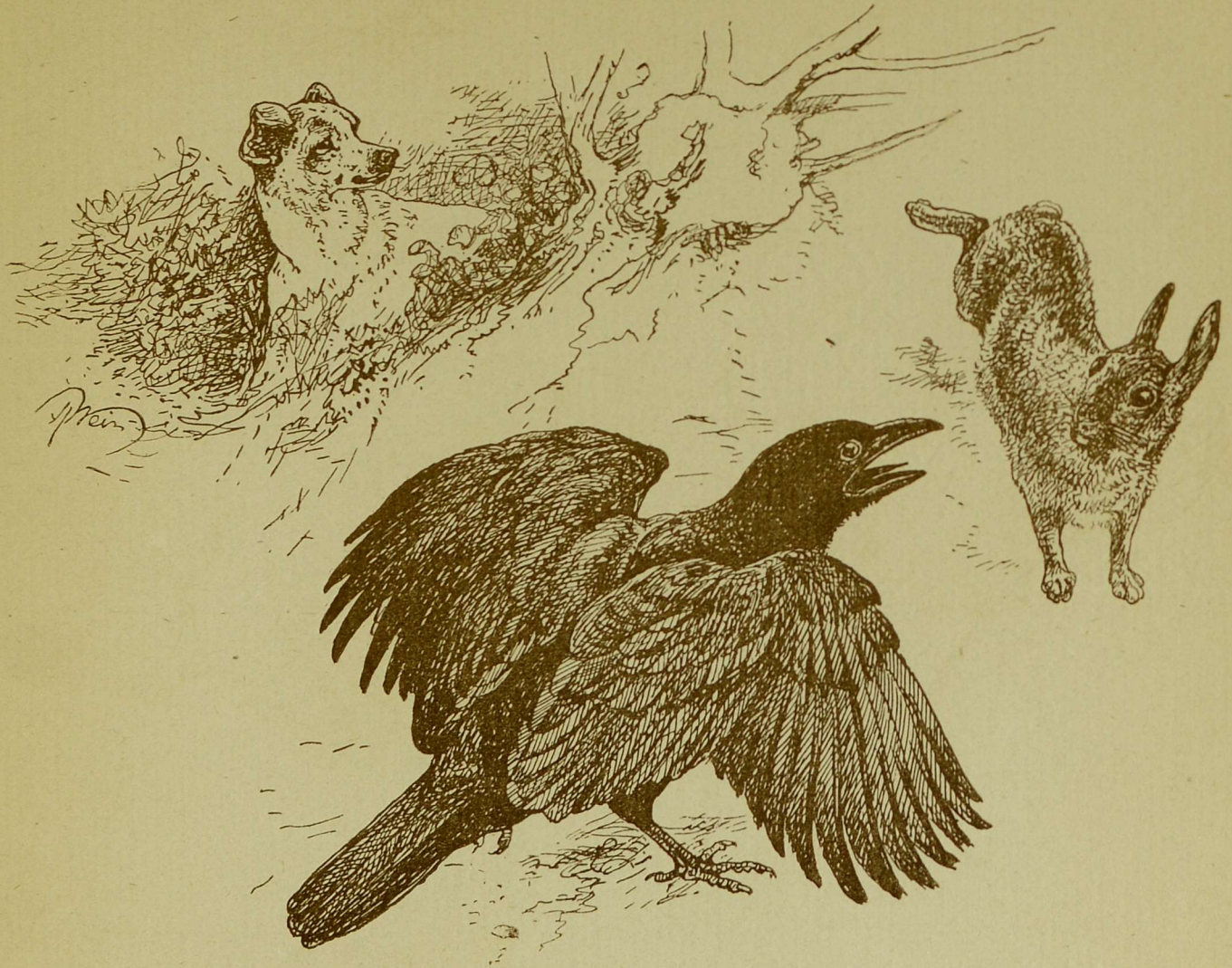




Possibly there is no bird more useful than the Barn Owl, and yet there is scarcely one that man takes such little pains to preserve. How often, how very often do we see it hanging for sale in the market, or just stuffed, in every sense of the word, and placed in some so-called naturalist's window. And this, too, even in the summer time, possibly leaving young to starve. Alas! poor Owl, whose life is a boon to man to help him to rid himself of the pests of mice, small rats, &c. It is an unfortunate thing that the poor birds' wings make *ornamental* screens (save the mark), and that its feathers are soft and beautiful, and so it is killed, and mice and vermin are left to increase. In this way one of man's greatest benefactors among birds is being exterminated. Captain Kennedy, F.L.S., writing on the subject says:—"I constantly watched, by means of my strongest pair of opera-glasses, these nests of Owls, on which one of the old birds constantly sat. In all those nests to which I climbed up there were in April either eggs or young, from five to seven in number in each nest. Beneath the trees on which they were built were lying countless pellets ejected by the birds, and each of these on examination I found to contain entire skulls, hair, and bones of from two to five mice and young rats, field voles, and not infrequently moles." Further on he says:—"As far as I could count each pair of old birds would kill on an average twenty mice or rats *per diem*;" and taking the number of nests and the time the young birds were fed he calculated that they would destroy 28,000. He says, "Comment is useless." Let those who kill an Owl bear these words in their mind.

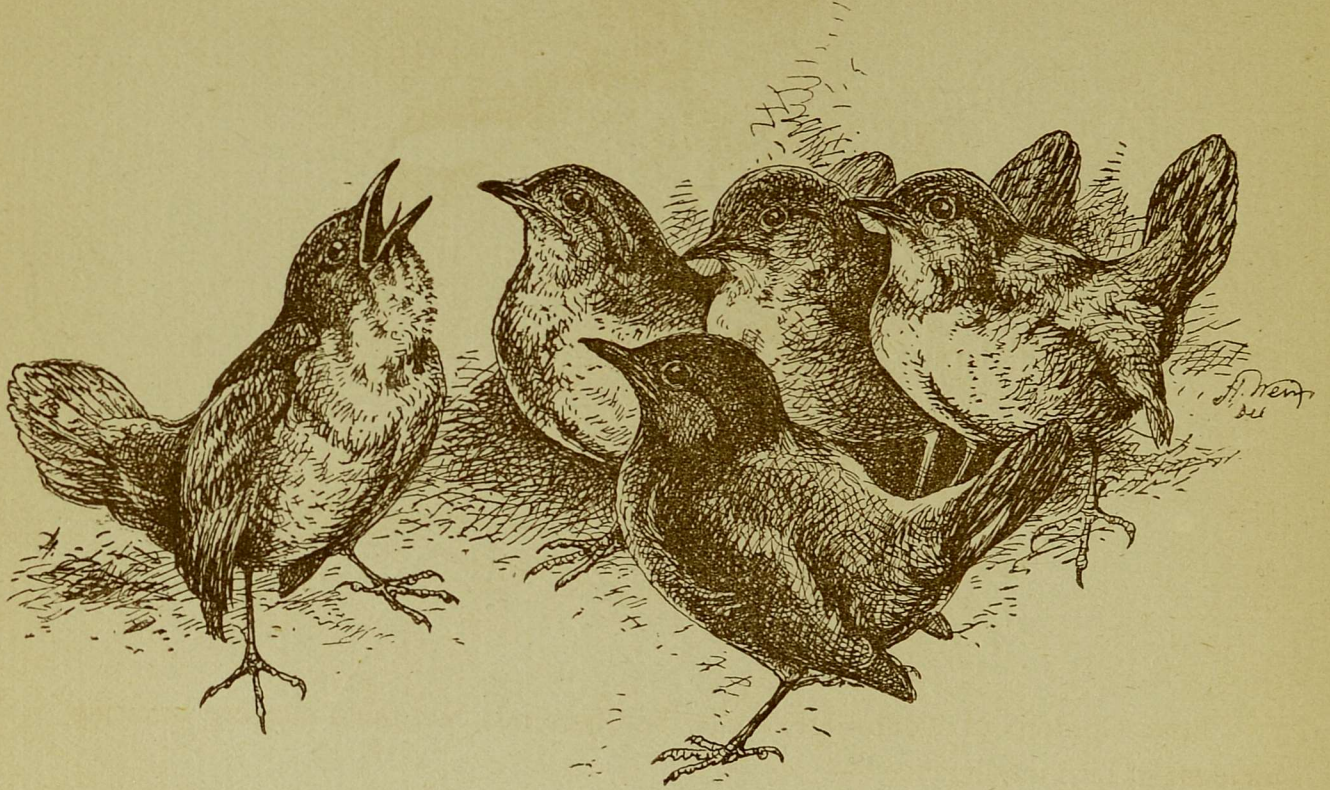


Mr. Ellis remarks, with respect to the Owls:—"Almost any evening these birds leave their safe retreats to take their nightly flights in search of mice, beetles, &c., or I hear them hoot during the day. Rabbits abound, but they take no notice of the Owl as she flies silently over the meadows seeking food, and they show no alarm, as they would if preyed on by these birds. Sometimes you may see an Owl beating a freshly-cut hayfield for mice as regularly as a pointer would for birds. They are perfectly harmless to Pigeons, and have used the same loft, and only wage war on mice and young rats, which are well known destroyers of eggs and young." Mr. Waterton also writes in the highest terms in favour of the Barn Owl. I have gone somewhat away from the usual order of my book simply for the purpose of drawing the attention of all to the importance of the Owl as the friend of man.



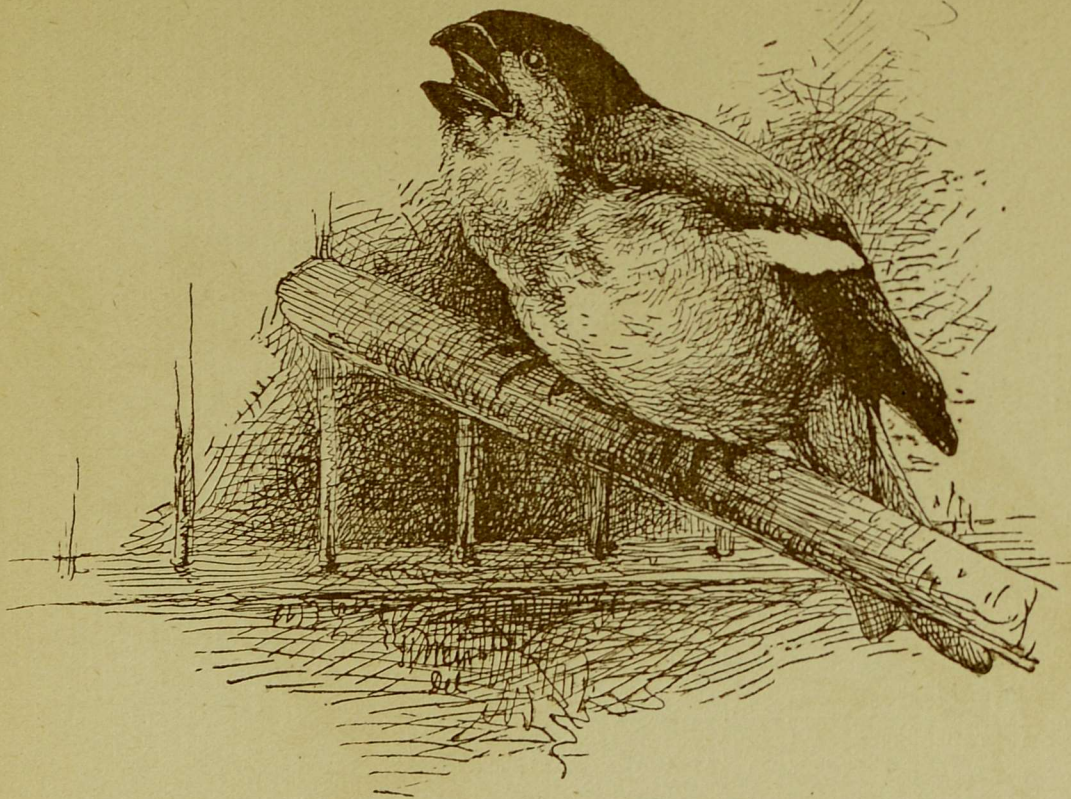
The landlord of an inn, in Cambridgeshire, was in possession of a Raven which frequently went hunting with a dog that had been bred up with him. On their arrival at a cover, the dog entered and drove the hares and rabbits from the cover, whilst the Raven, posted outside, seized every one that came in his way; when the dog immediately came to his assistance, and by their joint efforts nothing escaped. On various occasions the Raven proved of more use than a ferret, and has been known to enter a barn with several dogs, and enjoy the sport of rat-hunting.*

* Stanley's "Natural History of Birds."



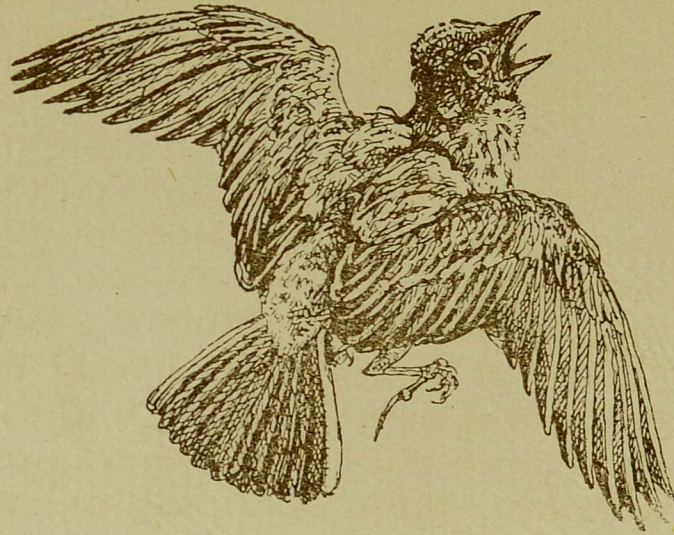
“ A Wren built her nest in a box, on a New Jersey farmhouse. The occupants saw the mother teach her young ones to sing. She sat in front of them, and sang a song very distinctly. One of the young attempted to imitate her. After proceeding through a few notes, its voice broke, and it lost the tune. The mother then recommenced from where the young bird had failed, and very carefully sang the remainder. The young bird made a second attempt, beginning where it had ceased, and continuing the song as long as it was able; when the note was again lost. The mother began anew and completed the song. This done, the mother sang the whole series of notes with great precision, when another young one attempted to follow. The Wren pursued the same course with this one as with the first, and so with the third and fourth. This course was repeated day after day, and several times a day, until each became perfect songsters.”*

* “ Holden Magazine.”



Miss Gordon, of Tonbridge Wells, kindly sends me the following amusing incident of bird intelligence :—

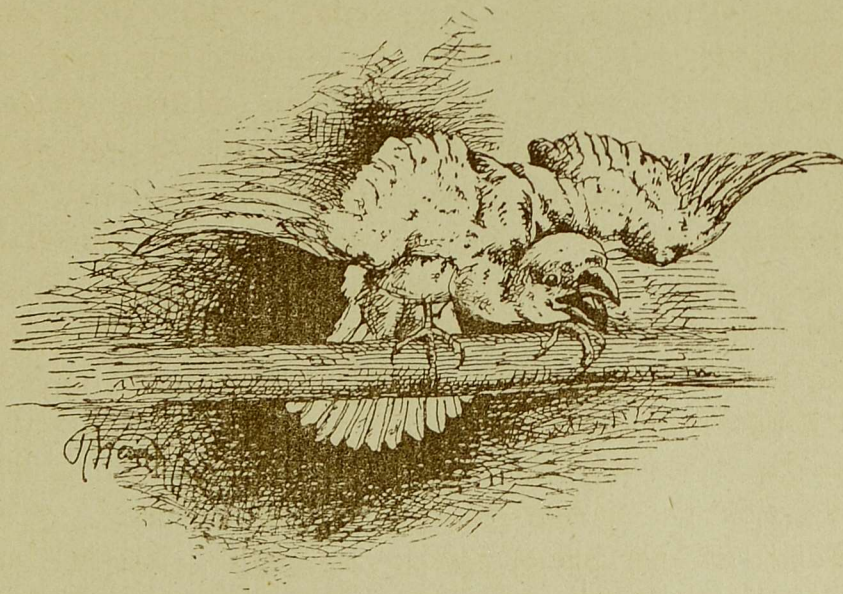
“I was visiting a friend who had a piping Bullfinch. I noticed and spoke to the bird, but never elicited any response. I thought perhaps he was a good little bird, who kept his attentions for his owner. But on the second or third morning of my visit, I happened to be down before anybody else, and was therefore *alone* with the bird. *Then* it was a very different story! He quite surprised me by the pretty way he responded to my greeting, playing with my fingers, chattering and whistling, in short ‘going on’ as Bullfinches do to their friends. Suddenly he stopped, ran to the other end of the perch, turned his back and began to dress his feathers with an air of the most perfect indifference, as if he did not even *see* me! I wondered—but the next moment it was explained—his mistress came into the room. The bird had heard and recognized her step on the stairs, and some subtle instinct had told him that it would not do for her to find him thus coqueting with a stranger. I purposely kept near the cage whilst *she* greeted her bird, who responded quite properly and did not so much as *look* at me—but when she left the room, again he came close as before till he heard her returning, when instantly he was at the other end of the perch, and again the same air of indifference was assumed. I never saw more perfect acting.”

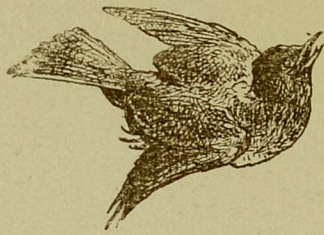


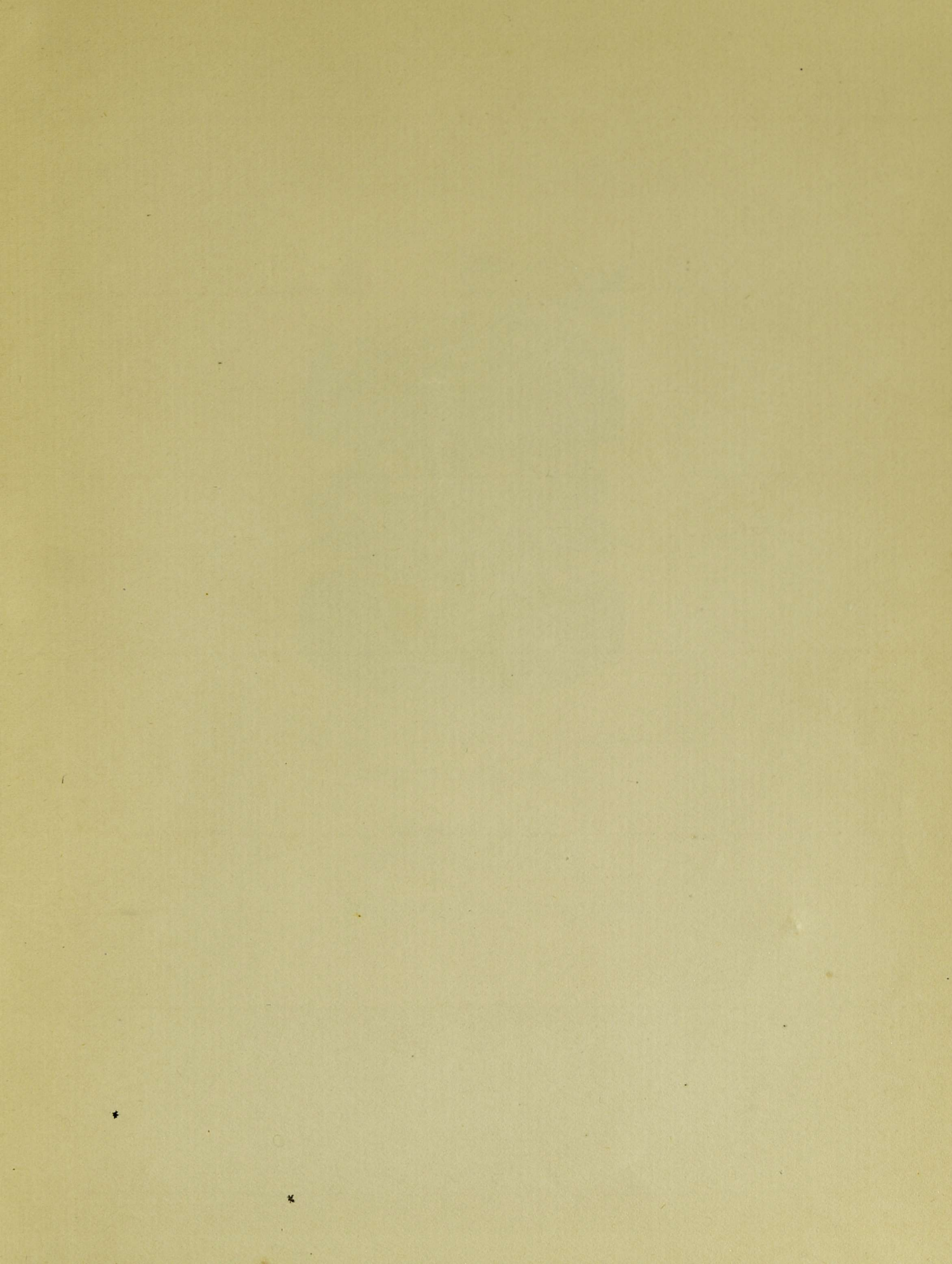
It is very doubtful whether a bird sings from pleasure, delight, amusement, anger, or as a challenge to others, or from some other cause. Many theories have been advanced, and there has been much argument, some holding that the song is that of endearment, others that of defiance, and others that of rage and excitement. Perhaps all may be right in a certain degree. There are some facts, however, which are very observable. It is found that most birds only sing about the pairing or breeding season, and are at other times comparatively mute. The Nightingale, for instance, on its arrival in England, sings most wonderfully, but as soon as its young are hatched, it is heard no more, and so with the Blackcap and many others. Yet the Thrush will sing about nine months of the year at intervals, and certainly when it is not nesting. Again, if a cock's crow may be termed its song, this never entirely ceases, but is louder and more often repeated at the breeding time, or early Spring, than at any other. And this, too, is considered a note of defiance. And so, doubtless, is the song of many birds. Take the Chaffinch, the Thrush, &c. I have seen a Thrush attacked when singing "on the topmost bough," and driven away. I have seen the Nightingale sing with such energy that it has leaned against the bough, near to it, for support. What made that bird sing so, I wonder! And I have known birds sing until they have become so excited that they have scarcely been able to stand.

I have now a Canary who when he sings, seems to work himself into a perfect rage, pecking at and tearing anything he can get at. Why does he sing thus madly? I am afraid that we shall never exactly know what prompts the song of birds, nor why some sing so sweetly and others not, why some sit still and sing, while the bonny lark "up-soars," and "at heaven's gate sings," and is silent when it returns to earth.

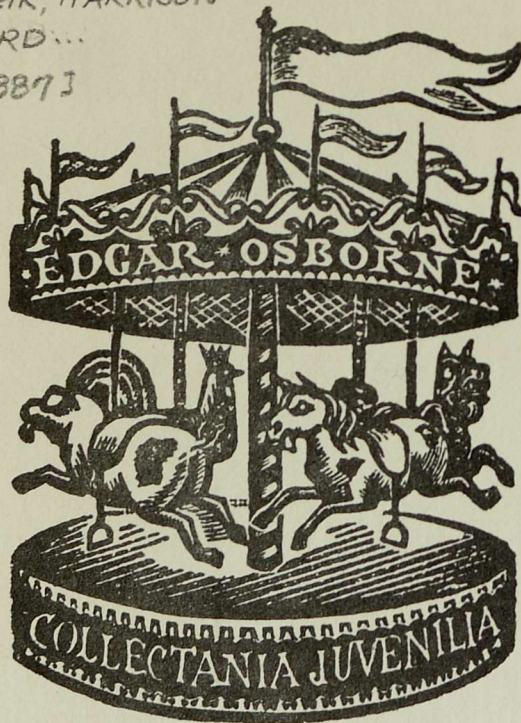
One other matter has caused me much thought, and that is the peculiar jealousy of birds; not only are they jealous of their own species, but also of others, and even of the attention of human beings. As an example of what I mean, I may mention a Canary that I have, by name Mozart. Mrs. Weir attends to and feeds it. It was particularly attached to her until we had a Dove. When the Canary saw the same kind of attention given to the Dove that it only had enjoyed before, its rage knew no bounds, and since then it attacks Mrs. Weir on every opportunity, yet is the same to me as ever. This is not a solitary case, for I have noticed it often and often in other Canaries and species of birds. I have therefore, though reluctantly, come to the conclusion that it is the **RULING** passion of birds, animals, and I think I may say also humanity.







NS
WEIR, HARRISON
BIRD...
[1887]



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