

fly and the yellow lining of the mouth was plainly visible. At one time we both had our glasses trained on an unaccompanied youngster and the adult suddenly flashed into the field and fed it while we watched. We were both impressed by the fact that the youngster seemed larger than the adult.

In its search for food, the adult kept very close to the trail and we were interested to see that it frequently circled the trunks of trees in exactly the same manner as a feeding Nuthatch. Earlier in the day, we had heard the song of this species in two other parts of the mountain. There were at least five singing birds beside the pair we saw feeding young, which last did not sing at all. This observation was made in Avery County, Grandfather Mountain lying in three counties, Caldwell, Watauga, and Avery.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *Charleston, S. C.*, and JAMES J. MURRAY, *Lexington, Va.*

Intoxicated Robins.—There are many clumps of bush honeysuckle in a large park immediately adjacent to my Denver home. These bushes produce, in July, an abundant crop of small bitter red berries, which are greedily eaten by Robins, old and young.

For several seasons past my neighbor Mr. F. S. Bonfils, and I have noted a condition of more or less profound intoxication in these Robins after they have eaten these berries. This drunkenness has been seen in every shade of severity, from mild unsteadiness to a degree of incoordination sufficient to cause the birds to fall to the ground. It seems to make some of the birds utterly fearless and perhaps a bit belligerent, for they become quite unafraid of passers-by and interested spectators. A few dead Robins have been found about these honeysuckle bushes, suggesting the idea that some birds consume enough of the berries to carry the toxemia to the threshold of lethality. There has been as yet no opportunity to make an autopsy on one of these dead Robins, presumably poisoned by the berry diet.

Mr. F. C. Lincoln and his colleagues of the Biological Survey have been kind enough to identify this honeysuckle bush for me, as *Lonicera tatarica*. The botanists of the Survey informed Mr. Lincoln that this species contains saponin, an ingredient which readily explains the intoxication outlined above. Other bushes and plants also contain saponin, as for example seneca, horse-chestnut and sarsaparilla. Saponin is a well known toxic glucoside; locally used it acts as an anesthetic and muscle poison, and when given hypodermically or by the alimentary tract, paralyses the greater nerve centers. In sufficiently large doses it causes death by cardiac paralysis. In Robins this assumed saponin poisoning resembles that of ethyl alcohol if the poison be taken in moderate doses, but larger doses are much more toxic than the alcohol. To me the most interesting thing about the situation under discussion is the fact that the birds have not learned to avoid these injurious berries. This explodes the myth that no animal eats anything harmful to itself.—W. H. BERGTOLD, *Denver, Colo.*