

### Coming of the Mockingbird.

BY W. OTTO EMERSON, HAYWARDS, CAL.

[Read before the Northern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, March 4, 1899.]

MY first acquaintance with *Mimus* in the vicinity of Haywards was on Nov. 28, 1888 when one was seen feeding on late pears left in the trees. He had been making his home about the orchard for a month or more, singing cheerily every bright, sunny day and so far as known this was the first occurrence of the Mockingbird so far north as San Francisco, although it is a resident of Southern California, frequenting the orange groves. The Mockingbird was not seen about Haywards again until October, 1894 when he made his appearance in a winter pear tree beside the house. All through the clear days of winter he could be heard singing gaily from the tops of the pear or large pepper trees, now and then mimicing and silencing all the other birds about the place, with very low, subdued notes.

As the spring days lengthened his song became stronger, and could be heard through all the dale, the neighbors each commencing to notice and to claim him. By the latter part of April 1895 he disappeared only to return in November, and quickly leave as though some duty called him. It was Nov. 2, 1896 when he next came and I have now grown to look for him as a regular wandering winter minstrel. He has become so tame as to take up his roosting place in a climbing Cherokee rose vine which runs over the rear gable of the house, close to a window at which is my work table. I could look on him as he came to his lodgings, which were always approached with a sharp outcry, while at other times he would announce it was roosting time by perching on the tall flowering spikes of a garden plant and crying out in a harsh clicking note which could be heard for several hundred feet. Then he would jump into the air, spread his black and white wings, and sail over the ridge of the house to his one favorite branch among the climbers, where he always sat facing the side of the house.

In the morning the same warning

notes were given before he would leave the climber and after feeding early he would generally perch himself on the ridge of the house to salute the sun as it touched this point. Following a rainy day he would alight on the ground to feed on the worms which seem to come up after a warm rain. I have noticed that after eating his fill of the pink pepper berries he would go to rest on the house ridge and disgorge the hard kernels of the seed, as I have also seen the Cedar Waxwings do. My attention was first drawn to this by finding great numbers of seed kernels in the roof gutters, and on watching the Mockingbird one morning I noticed that the mode of throwing them out was by jerking his head to one side; this dislodged the kernels and the pulp of the berries was retained. The Waxwings come in May in large bands and fill themselves with these berries, flying then to orchard or creek trees where they sit puffed up in little brown balls, disgorging the kernels which later take root and grow.

In the spring of 1897 *Mimus* began to show a great deal of playfulness by chasing away the robins from the pepper trees and from about the house even down to the orchard, sailing at them with his flashing white-barred wings and tail, until all had left his grounds. At no time does he wander off the place nor has he brought a mate in returning each fall; perhaps he is waiting to see how we will protect him first, before venturing to set up house-keeping among the fruit orchards and gardens of this locality.

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MR. H. C. JOHNSON writes from American Fork, Utah, under date of Jan. 22, that a snowstorm prevented him from a trip in quest of the breeding grounds of Clarke's Nutcracker, but he hopes to locate his prize this season, in which case BULLETIN readers will be regaled with an account of the trip, together with photographs.