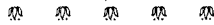


the following afternoon, May 31, found me back in the pasture where I had taken my second set. After rambling about until 6 P. M., having encountered a shower in the meantime, as I was making a final round before starting homeward, I noticed that a curlew gave evidence of a nest in the neighborhood. It took me about an hour to locate it, but by "trekking" in the direction indicated by my signs, I found the female ensconced on her nest in the lower portion of the meadow, among grass growing higher than her back. She sat until I could touch her with my stick as in the preceding instance, and then fluttered from her four eggs. The nest was similar to those described, being mostly built upon the ground, though the site was a slight depression, and besides a pile of dried cow manure. These eggs were heavily incubated, and were much smaller than any before

found, averaging about 2.42 in length by 1.82 in breadth. Their ground is the light greenish olive pattern, blotched more about the large end, three of them showing scrawling blotches of black upon the large end. It will be seen that the eggs of *Numenius longirostris* show decided variation in color of markings, and I know of no other eggs presenting a handsomer appearance in the collector's cabinet. The books report that sets consist of 3-4 eggs, but it does not appear to me than a full first set can contain less than four eggs.

There are many other interesting facts in the history of the Long-billed Curlews, but as this article has more than exceeded the space desired by a patient editor, the future shall have to care for the further interests of *Numenius longirostris*.



The Little Widow

A True Chapter in the Life History of a Pair of Mockingbirds

BY MOLLIE BRYAN, ORANGE, CAL.

DURING the summer of '96 a pair of Mockingbirds nested in a big pine on the lawn, rearing their young among the shrubbery of the garden, levying on the fruit from the orchard close by, as part payment for the beautiful music daily rendered by the head of the house. When not busy with family cares, our singer decided, in return for the rent of his home, to superintend affairs of the ranch, at least in so far as to say who should or who should not come within our garden gate.

Being of rather a pugnacious disposition he made it very manifest who were his favorites. He had an especial spite for a beautiful black and white cat, "Tom," that daily followed my uncle, who lived near, as a dog would. He always escorted Tom half way home scolding and darting at him with great vigor, while Tom rolled on his back,

with all four feet in the air, to ward off the sharp pecks of the bird, but apparently enjoying each encounter. My uncle, becoming tired of having Tom thus persecuted whenever he chose to visit his neighbors, took his gun and put an end to it.

The first I knew of the death of our songster, I missed his morning song, and later in the day my attention was attracted by the female as she flew about the yard and garden, apparently searching for something—and Tom came and went unmolested. On inquiry I learned what, to me, was a tragedy, for all day the poor little mate went from one tree to another, in and out of the bushes, watching sharply each person that passed from the house, constantly uttering a peculiar, mournful,—we could almost imagine accusing—cry, which enlisted our sympathies.

All summer the "little widow," as we

began to call her, remained close about the house. We always knew her by that mournful note which she uttered as she flew, and which differed entirely from any note I ever heard by a mockingbird. She soon came to sleep at night in the Banksia rose over the east porch, always announcing her presence by that cry, which heard at dusk, had a wierd, uncanny sound. Many evenings this porch was unused as members of the family were prevented from passing in and out for fear the little widow's slumbers be disturbed. Her proceedings grew in interest to me, 'till it became a daily practice to record any incident of her lonely life that came within my observation.

One day in September I heard a great chattering and chirping among some birds, and slipped to a window that overlooked the trees whence the sound came. Occasionally there was a note suspiciously like that of a mockingbird. Had some one come to call on our little widow? At a distance a mockingbird began singing softly. In a moment I heard the little widow's cry as she flew to a tree near my window. This was immediately answered by the singer, then calls began from several directions, and I soon saw that a number of mockingbirds were about among the trees. They all set up a great chattering like that of a flock of blackbirds, flying back and forth while they talked in most emphatic tones. Soon five collected in a tree near where the little widow sat watching them with the keenest interest, but silent. What was this meeting for? To discuss politics or was it a matrimonial agency?

One of the birds went over to pay his respects to the little widow, but she ignored him. Returning to the assembled company which had been watching him, another vigorous chirping began, as if arguing over and discussing the situation, until I was wild to understand "bird Latin." One bird seemed to act as chairman, being perched on a limb above, and when he spoke the

others were respectfully silent, then all answered him at once. Not seeming to accomplish anything to their satisfaction by this discussion, after a closing address by the chairman, he gave the word and they rose and flew away—one returning to a tree a short distance from where the little widow still sat. My mind was now fully made up that these kind friends of hers had brought her a companion, and after an introduction, had left him to his fate. He was still ignored, for in a few minutes she gave her accustomed cry and flew down in the yard to feed. For a week she came at night to the Banksia rose, and fed about the lawn during the day, always alone, the stranger keeping his distance, though often visible in the orchard.

At the end of the week I heard a new bird song. It came from the tree where the assembly had been held. Thinking I had found a new warbler, I slipped out to a seat near this tree, and waited patiently for my bird to reveal itself. It was very careful to keep the body of the tree between me and it, when I tried to see it, but all the time the song rippled on; the sweetest, softest and richest notes it was ever my good fortune to hear. I sat entranced for a few moments, then I heard a familiar "to-whit, to-whit" of the mockingbird, betraying the identity of the shy songster. But still this wondrously sweet song went on, in the most coaxing, enticing tones. I then heard the little widow's plaintive cry, and here she came, directly to the tree where the stranger was singing. Ah, then! how everything was changed. The singer came boldly out on a limb, and in an exceedingly animated manner, broke forth in the most rapturous, triumphant song.

The same notes, but so much richer and louder. He sang as though pouring forth his very heart at her feet, while she looked calmly down at him from a limb above. After a few moments of this wonderful song, he darted

through the tree, alighted by the side of her ladyship and made a dainty, graceful bow, then they took wing and flew away together. The little widow's mournful cry was never heard again, neither did she come back to the rose at night. But often through October the warbling, with all its persuasive trills and twitters, was heard in the trees near the house, and the little

widow was always close by. All winter the two remained together about the place, and in the spring began building on a limb that hung above our kitchen door. On seeing my glasses leveled that way, they deserted the half finished home, and took up their abode half a block away, where prying eyes could not discover every detail of family affairs.



The Northwest Crow

BY J. H. BOWLES, TACOMA, WASH.

ON Puget Sound, in the vicinity of Tacoma, the Northwest Crow (*Corvus caurinus*) can hardly be considered as more than a rather common resident throughout the year, and by my observations are never to be found far away from the reach of salt water. This curious trait, together with their fondness for human society, makes them appear much more numerous in this locality than is really the case.

To the uninitiated they might easily be confounded with the Common or American Crow (*Corvus americanus*), but in color they seldom ever approach the glossy black of their larger cousin, some appearing nearly brown. They are also very appreciably smaller, indeed the first I ever saw came near being noted down as a Purple Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) that had wandered a few thousand miles from home. He was on a floating log eating shell-fish and salt water insects, which seem to be their staple of diet with the addition of an occasional bug, berry or caterpillar. Being hardly ever molested in any way, they seem almost ridiculously tame to an eastern observer, accustomed as he is to having a crow take flight at sight of him. It may prove of interest

to mention here what impressed me most forcibly in contrasting the birds of the Atlantic Coast with those of the Puget Sound. This was the extreme tameness of the birds in the last named locality. The gulls, birds to be shot in the east only by the most careful stalking, will scarcely take the trouble to move out of the way of a boat, and at the docks rest on the piles and ships that are being loaded, often within fifteen or twenty feet of hundreds of people. So it is with the hawks, the Common Crow and many others.



J. H. BOWLES.

To return to the original subject, in its nesting *caurinus* differs so completely from *americanus* as to make one think it more closely related to the Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) of Europe. On the Tacoma Flats, at the head of Commencement Bay, is a small cluster of Siwash Indian houses, which are bordered by a line of scrubby apple and cherry trees. In these trees six or seven pairs of this sociable little crow band together in a colony during the nesting season. The nest is placed in a crotch at a distance from ten to eighteen feet above the ground, the same one being made over and occupied each returning season. On one occasion I saw two occupied nests in an apple tree only twenty