

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DECK OF A STEAMER.

BY L. OTLEY PINDAR, HICKMAN, KY.

I left Hickman, Ky., which is situated on the Mississippi River, one afternoon late in August, 1889, on the steamboat Granite State.

Soon after the boat left the wharf, I stationed myself on the upper deck to see what birds I could find on, over, or by the river, which, as there was no wind, was as smooth as a moonlit lake.

Numbers of Forster's Terns were to be seen, some skimming over the surface of the water, others mounting higher and higher, farther and farther away till lost to view, while others again sported here and there as carelessly as the Chimney Swifts and Barn Swallows that darted by the boat, or the Turkey Vultures that whirled in mazy circles overhead.

On a tall tree, near the river and just below Columbus, Ky., was a family of Kingbirds, and in the same tree was the nest which had been their summer home and which they would so soon desert. Just above Columbus a Snowy Heron flew from a clump of willow bushes at the approach of the boat and a little farther on some Kildeers ran about uneasily as the boat's wheel sent the waves rolling over the low, flat bank on which they were searching for food.

Dusk fell as we neared Cairo, and the darkness above us seemed to be increased by the large flocks of Crows flying to their roosting places in the dense Missouri swamps.

The next morning found us some distance up the Ohio River. All through the day and indeed during the whole trip the Swifts, Barn Swallows and Vultures were common. But they were not all. That giant wader, the Great Blue Heron often flew across

the river in advance of us. The White-bellied Swallows mingled with the more somber Swifts in their aerial evolutions.

On the banks on both sides of the river could be seen various species of birds. Where the woods came down the water's edge Bronzed Grackles were in plenty, some sitting in the trees, others walking on the ground. A few Carrion Crows were noticed at different places, particularly Shawneetown, Ill., and Lewisport, Ky. Robins were plentiful, always in good sized flocks; and in Illinois particularly, wherever cleared fields edged on the river, the Field Lark was heard and occasionally seen, and if these fields were bordered with weed patches and bushes the Field Sparrow was sure to be there.

A large covey of Bobwhites flew up in a field near Henderson, Ky. at the sound of the boat whistle, while seven or eight miles above this place an immense colony of Bank Swallows had found summer quarters in a high bank that rose straight from the water forty or fifty feet.

Other birds were noticed which could not be identified and one which could well be dispensed with was very easily identified, viz. the English Sparrow, found in abundance in every place at which the boat stopped, especially the larger towns and cities.

