

July. So you see in July and part of August I have from seventy to eighty-five birds flying around my trees and my neighbors'. These birds get all their living on the wing, never going to the ground except to get material to build their nests. Their whole living is on millers and flies, and they are great feeders. They are on the wing nearly all the time when it does not rain, and they are especially busy just before sunset, when the caterpillar moths begin their work. These moths or millers lay their eggs the last of July or August, just the time when these birds are in best working condition and but very few winged insects escape them. This is the cause of my not having any caterpillars in my orchard, so I claim.

These birds invariably leave for parts unknown from the 18th to the 22nd of August. They are great singers in their way, and commence their songs about half past three in the morning. Perhaps some would not like that at first as it would disturb their morning repose; then put them further away in your orchard.

Now I believe if every one that had an orchard would put up from one to five martin houses among their trees they would rid them of caterpillars and many other insects that injure our apple trees. These houses do not want to be gaudy but plain, paint lead color if painted at all, high colors drive them away for a few years.

If any one decides to try this they must set their poles (which should be cedar), before the ground freezes and the house must be up before the 20th of April. Some of my neighbors are going to try it next spring, and I wish many others would. Why not have the air full of these beautiful birds about our home? Give them a home and they will come.

J. L. O.

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## GENERAL NOTES.

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A TALENTED CATBIRD.—While walking along a hot, dusty road in the Great Chester Valley about 2 P. M. on May 22nd, the subdued call of the cock Quail issued from a shady grove extending to the roadside near New Centerville. Peering over the rail fence, I was at first unable to locate the sound, but presently espied the author—a Catbird close at hand. Perched between and parallel with the rails, he called *Bob-bob-white, bob-white-bob*, in a soft, dreamy whistle, seemingly rehearsing a love song or singing for his own edification, as the female was not present. After a few trials, he retired within the wood to scratch about

in the dead leaves for an insect or so ; again mounting a rail, one more imitation of the Bob-white whistle was given, then as the trill of a Red-winged Blackbird came up from the swamp beyond, he changed to a shriller *chuc-che e-e-e-e* without a moment's hesitation. I have not heard the Mockingbird in his native haunts, but nevertheless consider such correct rendition of alien song by a wild bird truly remarkable. I have passed this wood many times since but have heard no notes other than the characteristic *mev*, from the throat of this accomplished mocker.

FRANK L. BURNS, *Berwyn, Penna.*

I have noticed several accounts lately of birds killing themselves by flying against houses, etc. I believe it was in a copy of the *Observer* that I mentioned an instance of a Bob-white doing this, and since that time a couple of other instances of the same kind have come under my notice. Last fall a lady brought me a Yellow-billed Cuckoo which she said had fallen against the floor of her porch with such force that it killed itself. When I examined it I found that the bill was broken in several places and the skull was badly bruised. She said the accident occurred in the middle of the afternoon. A few days ago while some lawyers were talking in an office, one of them said that one time while he was standing in the court room after court had adjourned, talking with another lawyer, a Bob-white flew against the window with such force that it penetrated the glass and fell on the floor of the court room. It seemed stunned for a while but soon recovered.

SIDNEY S. WILSON, *St. Joseph, Mo.*

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## EDITORIAL.

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Contrary to predictions and expectations, the present issue is late instead of early. First, because of other work that could not be put aside ; second, because of too little copy ; third, because the editor's plans to be away from home during August miscarried. Instead he will rest at home while working out some problems in moulting and song. But he will be gratified to receive contributions for the September number at any and all times until the 25th of that month.

There is not yet enough material upon the migrations of the "Black-birds" to make a report profitable. A little prompt attention to this small matter will ensure an interesting comparison.