

## AN "ALL DAY" BIRD STUDY.

BY BURTIS H. WILSON.

I left the house on the morning of the 15th, at 5 a. m., returning for breakfast at 6, and then returning to the fields to remain until 12 o'clock. The night had been very cold and a heavy dew had fallen, making the air so chilly that it was nearly noon before my overcoat could be discarded. It was an ideal day for bird observation, as there was no wind, and the cold of the morning hours made the birds sluggish, so that it was nearly noon before the Warblers began to seek the higher tree-tops. I noticed, however, that the cold did not prevent the Warblers from singing almost incessantly, even as early as I started out. During the day eggs were found in the nests of Crows, Blue Jays, Mourning Doves and Brown Thrashers, also a Robin's nest with one egg and two newly hatched young.

On account of the extremely backward spring, not only the migrations, but the nest-building, is at least two weeks later than usual with our early arrivals. After losing about forty-five minutes at the dinner table, I again sought the fields, spending the time until 5:15, when we sat down to supper. At 5:45 Mr. Montgomery's son and I started to drive back to town. We reached Milan, on the Rock River, at 7 o'clock, where I entered an electric car and ended my day's observations. Now comes what is to me the interesting part of my story.

During the day I did not see Red-winged Blackbirds, House Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Meadowlarks, Bank Swallows, or Wood Thrushes, until on returning to town we approached within three miles of Rock River, when one by one these birds were seen. This is also true of these birds on my way to the farm on the previous day, and also of several trips made in former seasons over the same ground, the only exception being the House Wren, which usually nests around the farm buildings, but has been seen there only a few times so far this year. Only one Purple Martin was seen during the day, but if we had reached Milan a little earlier more would, without doubt, have been seen, as they nest in the village. But if I had been early enough to see the Martins, I would

have missed the three Great Blue Herons which flew east, high over our heads, when we were still about a mile and a half from the river. Another peculiar fact is that I saw no Grasshopper Sparrows or Vesper Sparrows during the day. However, the latter bird does not seem to be as abundant this year as usual. I noted only one Cliff Swallow, but as they seldom go far from the barn where they nest, and their colonies are not very common, it is not to be wondered at. The most abundant migratory birds seen during the day were the Warblers (mostly Chestnut-sided, Nashville, Tennessee, and Redstarts), and the Gray-cheeked and Olive-backed Thrushes, the Thrushes being very abundant.

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THE SONG OF THE DICKCISELL. *Spiza americana*.

BY P. M. SILLOWAY

Whiling away a recent afternoon over some old piles of ornithological literature, I found an interesting article entitled "Dickcissel in His Illinois Haunts." One paragraph particularly attracted my attention: "The song of this interesting bird invariably begins with three notes, very much resembling the syllables *Dick! Dick! Dick!* These are followed by an indescribable warble with the notes running rapidly together." In his excellent characterization of the song, the writer perhaps unconsciously made use of a term which effectually limits Dickcissel to only one song, the one beginning with the three notes mentioned. Now it happened that during my last summer in Illinois, 1898, I made some special observations regarding the musical ability of Dickcissel, and it may not be amiss to record a part of the notes then entered in my journal. I trust that my friend Mr. Hess will not take this contribution as a criticism of his excellent article in that old Oologist, but merely as a further addition to our fund of recorded observations.

During July, 1898, my home at Virden, Illinois, was near a forty-acre pasture, which was cut into two nearly equal