

kie Marsh, held four eggs and one Cowbird each on this date. The Wood Thrush is a fairly common breeder around here. 6.

70. Robin (*Planesticus m. migratorius*), May 8th, 1914. Nest with four eggs. Very common breeder. 25.

71. Bluebird (*Sialia s. sialis*). One pair of birds laid three sets of five eggs on the following dates, in the same place, when they were robbed: May 4th, May 19th, and June 27th, 1914.

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### THE CHRONICLE OF A TAME OLIVE-BACKED THRUSH.

BY CORDELIA J. STANWOOD.

One day while following a trail through the woods that lead to a boiling spring, I came upon the nest of an Olive-backed Thrush in a low fir. The bird was lining it with dead leaves. The following day the nest was completed, and in due time the bird was brooding four beautiful green-blue eggs, speckled with golden-brown. I visited the nest when it was time for the young to appear and found four nestlings. When the young would be about ten days old (July 10, 1909) I started for the spring once more, both hope and fear contending in my soul. The nest was more or less exposed. The nestling bird has many foes.

Although I made good time, it seemed as if my feet were weighted with lead, so doubtful was I of the sequel. When I actually beheld four sturdy young Thrushes in the nest I could scarcely believe that what I had been anticipating so long had actually come true.

In order to learn as much as possible about the Olive-backed Thrush, I had planned to take a young Thrush home for a time, if I were so fortunate as to obtain one. The nestlings were already standing to strengthen the legs, as young Thrushes and Robins do at times, one or two days before leaving the nest. It seemed wise to leave my Thrush in the nest as long as practicable. Still there was every indication of a storm. The nest was more than a mile from home. If I did not secure a nestling at once, it seemed doubtful if I

should have another opportunity, yet they made such a goodly picture in the nest that I could not bear to disturb them. After debating the question a few minutes, I concluded to borrow a Thrush.

There was no choice of nestlings. As I reached out my hand toward the nest, the four hopped over the side in different directions, each giving vent to a startling chirp. I pursued the one that sped up the pathway and thought myself very fortunate to overtake him.

The parent birds came to the succor of the young immediately with cries of *whit! whit! whit!* but remained in concealment. I placed the little bird in the corner of the grape basket which I carried and covered him with my handkerchief. He began to call *schree!* in a sweet, silvery whistle, and struggled to get free. It was almost 9 o'clock in the morning when I made the capture. The day was hot; I was obliged to go home by a longer way as there was another bird's nest to visit. I set out with trepidation.

Upon finding some strawberries in a hayfield I took the little bird out of the basket to feed him. He trembled, relaxed his claws, closed his eyes and nestled in my hands. After this we walked a number of miles through the woods, the little bird standing on the edge of my basket, or on my sleeve. Sometimes I put him down on the ground while I let him catch mosquitoes. Once or twice he dodged under a leaf or hid in the grass, but these were the only indications of fear that he now showed, aside from the fact that he refused to open his beak for food. He ate two strawberries, taking them bit by bit with the tip of his nib.

It was noon when we reached the house. I stood the Thrush on the sill of a screened window. Seizing an ant's egg,<sup>1</sup> a bit of earthworm, or a piece of grasshopper with the tips of the scissors, I tried to tempt the little bird to eat. He did nothing but call lustily. Then I placed him on my knee,

<sup>1</sup>At this date the grasshoppers are just beginning to come. Most of them are under a half inch in length. Ants' eggs are very plenty.

put my hand around him and moved the tempting morsel in a circle around his beak. It was of no use. The bird continued to make a loud, automatic chirp.

I, too, was troubled. Suppose that he should starve to death! If I carried him back to the woods, would the parent birds be in the vicinity of the nest? Thus I meditated. Still the little fellow refused to eat.

In the meantime a child came who begged me to visit a nest which she had found in a hayfield more than a mile and a half distant. I argued that the little bird would not eat until he became sufficiently hungry. I could not hurry the matter by standing by. I went with Dorothy.

It was 4:30 p. m. when I returned. I sat on the mat where the food was in the middle of the room and took up the scissors. The moment that the Thrush heard the scissors click he flew from the windowsill to the floor and opened his beak for food. He ate two earthworms, cut up into bits, then he perched on my knee and preened his feathers, pulling off fragments of the quill casings. In the future he never hesitated to take food when he was hungry.

As it began to grow dark the Thrush mounted the lilac branch which I had placed for a roost in a large packing box in the corner of the room for him, laid the tips of his beak on his wing and went to sleep.

At 3:30 the following morning the little visitor began to call for food. I carried him to a spring not very far from the house, but he was not ready to bathe. He hopped around while I dug earthworms, and ate four with a relish.

Yesterday, instinct prompted the little bird to hide among the grasses and under the leaves; today, instinct prompted him to perch high in a tree. Here he slept as if he were a part of the great out-of-door world. After eating he always took a nap. The second evening, when the Thrush went to roost, he really tucked his beak under his wing.

At this stage the Olive-backed Thrush has large, intelligent, hazel eyes that look black in shadow; he is exquisitely colored. The upper parts are olive, speckled with golden-buffy;

the underparts are buffy on the throat and breast, and silvery-white on the belly. The breast and belly are spotted with black. The feet and legs are a mixture of flesh-color and brown-gray. Speaking colloquially, the legs of the Olive-backed Thrush are very long in proportion to the body. The beak is brown-gray, and the throat is lined with a rare golden-yellow. The bird is light and graceful in all his motions.

On the third day of his sojourn in a strange land, the Thrush perched on my hand and snuggled against my throat. When I wrote in my notebook, he insisted on standing in the book. I caressed him; he then perched on my arm.

It took me four days to teach the young bird to bathe in the basin of water in the house. Although I put pebbles in the bottom for him to stand on, he always looked askance at that basin. At last, however, he consented to take a thorough bath and flapped his wings vigorously. (I have since found that young Thrushes will go to a brook and bathe on sight of the water after they have been out of the nest a few days.)

The fifth day was, perhaps, the most memorable of all these days with the wonderful little Olive-backed Thrush. On this day he sang a baby Thrush song several times. It was not complete and very husky, but it was most fascinating. I could barely catch the strains in the adjoining room. A person would never notice it in the woods.

Again, while I was writing in my notebook the interesting facts of the day, the Thrush flew from the window, alighted in my book, and began to peck at my pen. I suppose that he mistook it for the scissors with which I fed him, but it looked as if he wished to keep me from writing. His next move was to back across the page until his tail feathers touched my hand. I smoothed his feathers with one finger — his favorite caress. Then he turned and presented his breast. I thought that the whole pretty scene might have been an accident. Twice I returned the Thrush to the window sill and the second and the third time he came in like manner. At last he perched on my shoulder, but continued to chirp for attention. After this, whenever opportunity offered, he came to be petted.

This same day he picked up ants' eggs from the floor, likewise an ant, and showed an automatic tendency to pick up everything.

Each time he picked up an egg I said "good," and he made a little squeal of delight. It seemed as if he waited for me to say "good" each time before taking another egg. When he picked up anything his manner was most ludicrous. First he opened his beak far too wide, then he twisted his mandibles awry while he examined the morsel first with one eye, and then with the other, while he kept up an excited twitter, just as young birds do when the parents carry food to the nest. The little squeals of delight, coupled with the acts of the baby Thrush seemed to say nothing less than "Do you see what a brave boy am I?"

As time went on, he ate larger and larger numbers of ants' eggs. One day when I was out, he picked up thirty ants' eggs from the windowsill; on my return he flew into my basket, selected a grasshopper and ate it. He cared less for earth worms as he grew older.

During the outings that the Thrush and I frequently took, he bathed in the brook and nibbled off bits of grass and plants. He occasionally picked up an earthworm. When he heard a noise or a strange sound, he laid his feathers very flat, and strained up his neck to listen. At such times he looked very small and wild. His sunbaths were always short. He preferred the shade after a minute.

The Thrush was constantly doing interesting things. One evening he begged for a high perch. I tacked a second lilac branch over a door and he was satisfied.

On another occasion he pecked at the handle of the little silver spoon in his cup of water. It gave a ringing sound. He repeated it several times. I think that he went to the cup for water as some tame Thrushes that I had later used to peck at the cup when they wanted water, and at the paper containing steak when they wanted steak.

While he was with me, a terrific thunderstorm, accompanied by rain and hail, seemed to come from three directions

and meet over the house. The wind lashed the branches of the trees. The young Thrush, perched in an open window, sang his Thrush song over and over during the storm.

The day after the thunderstorm I entertained a caller for nearly two hours. The Thrush became so excited that he sang all the time that my friend was present. From that time on he sang very little.

One morning I left a basket of fragrant, old-fashioned roses on the couch. They were across the room from where the Thrush cuddled half asleep. He flew to the bed, hopped all around the roses and pecked softly at leaves, buds and petals. He acted as if he were caressing the petals with his beak.

When the Thrush was eight days old, he ate so much that the united efforts of the children and myself were not sufficient to keep him in fresh insect food. I began feeding him some steak. He was very fond of it, as well as bread and milk. After eating, he usually gave several comfortable little grunts. Always when he had sufficient food, he ran rapidly away.

After studying the Thrush twelve days in the house, the thirteenth morning I placed him in a bit of evergreen woods above a swale with a brook running through it. Here I cared for him while he learned the ways of the wood folk.

I purposely did not give the Thrush much food as I knew that his salvation depended on his own exertions. I fed him once in about three hours.

In the afternoon I was at the spring with some friends. The Thrush heard our voices and in a moment drifted like a bit of thistle down to the shoulder of one of the young ladies.

We fed him and he caught mosquitoes and grasshoppers for our delectation. When he caught a grasshopper he tore the legs and wings off before eating it.

It is surprising to see what the woods will do for a young bird. The Thrush learned in one day to use his beak with great rapidity and precision. He flew into the air a foot for mosquitoes and sometimes a yard or more for other insects. He ate so rapidly that I ceased feeding him with the scissors.

At 8:00 p. m. I went to the pasture and placed the Thrush on a high perch. He made many changes. It took him a long time to select a satisfactory roost. It was characteristic of the bird.

I usually found the bird in the vicinity of the clump of evergreens where I first placed him. In the beginning he flew to me and begged for food. I let him follow while I went to hunt for grasshoppers. He showed a tendency to keep to the cover of bits of brush, small bushes and clumps of ferns and bracken. The bird caught mosquitoes, picked up moths, ants, grasshoppers and spiders continually.

Later the Thrush waited to be called. When I said "Come, Pet!" he answered *chu! chu!* in a mere whisper.

One evening it was dark and foggy at 7:40. The wind was south of east. There was rain in the air. The Thrush begged so hard for food that I had to go over the clumps of hay scented ferns on my hands and knees to find the grasshoppers hiding at the bottom. He killed everything that he ate. He spent a very long time oiling his feathers, which confirmed me in the opinion that it would rain before morning.

Finally, he insisted on following me home. Three times he perched on my head. At last I ran and hid behind some bushes and under this cover escaped. I spent fifty-five minutes in a futile attempt to put him to bed. The next morning the Thrush was dry, although there were fog showers during the night. He was feeding, but came at my call. I then introduced him to ant hills.

At dawn the next day, before I arose, I heard a noisy rout of Crows in possession of the pasture. (I suppose that they were feeding on grasshoppers, which were common this year.) I hurried to the brook and called and hunted for the Thrush for more than an hour before he answered. He was very frightened and had hidden in a high pine.

I felt that the tame Thrush was thoroughly educated. He knew where to drink and bathe, where to find mosquitoes, moths, spiders, ants, ants' eggs, grasshoppers and earth-

worms. The wealth of a strong, young bird was at his disposal.

It was 8 in the evening of our fifth day out-of-doors. The woodlands were full of Olive-backed Thrushes and Hermit Thrushes that had come down to the swale to drink and bathe with the Robins. I called the Thrush a full half hour before he answered me in the usual grove. He came reluctantly. He was nearly as large as a full-grown bird. His tail was two inches long. When I called, the woods seemed alive with Thrushes. To my "Come, Pet!" the Hermits responded *chuck! chuck! p-e-e-p!* and the Olive-backed answered *whit! whit! whit! whit-ye, whit-ye-er!* The Thrushes were in full song. The warm, misty, moonlit woods fairly palpitated with their wonderfully beautiful strains.

The young Thrush partook of thirteen small grasshoppers. As I put him on a high perch for the night he floated out into the swale. I looked for him carefully in the low spruce where he seemed to alight. He was not here, but I heard the plashing of his wings in one of the sedgy little pools. The Olive-backed Thrushes called persistently, insistently, a few feet from where I stood.

The moonlight, the mist, and the birds were bewitching, but it was growing late and I had to tear myself away.

After this experience I called and hunted for the Thrush several days, but he never came again to my summons. He had heard "the call of the wild" and responded!

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## HOUSE WRENS AS I KNOW THEM.

BY MARY E. HATCH.

I have always been especially fond of birds, but particularly is this true of the little house wren.

While I watch eagerly each spring for the return of the birds, and rejoice in seeing each new species come back, yet there is a little more joy experienced upon seeing my favorite wrens once more than in beholding all the others.