

ness by leaving it behind. To the above I sometimes added a folding butterfly net, for it is well to take what comes along in out of the way places. Butterflies were individually common but I found no great variety. I suppose the season was too dry and the locality over-exposed to the strong trade wind.

In this season and locality the heat is greatly tempered by the trade wind by day, and at night one needs a blanket, though it is very different in humid places away from the coast. In Cuba there are no *poisonous* snakes (though I have seen some good big ones); but insect pests are at times somewhat too varied and abundant. In short there are minor drawbacks—and one should take reasonable precautions against illness; but in spite of all these the collector who longs for new fields and change of environment will find pleasure in both in the sunny island off our southern shores.

U. S. S. Maine, New York, February 4, 1916.

MEETING SPRING HALF WAY

By FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY

I

TEXARKANA", the porter announced to a curtained aisle on that April morning. Texarkana! May all men know by these presents just where they stand. We raised the shades to find that in the night winter had been left behind, spring had come in Texas, spring with its birds and flowers and green things growing. "The trees are all green!" a boyish northern voice exclaimed with fervor born of snowbanks passed in the Alleghanies. And so they were, all green, not with the dark heavy green of summer's fulfillment but with the delicate green of the first blush of spring promise, at whose delicacy you fairly hold your breath; a green that is almost white with the young hickory leaves, a tender pink with the oaks, making the woodland pools reflect a veritable fairyland forest. Blooming apple and peach trees gathered butterflies, leaf-crowned oak tassels swayed in the wind, and as the train passed through a stand of pine we breathed the velvety air of sulphuring pineries—nature was full of rich promise. All the warmth of the woods centered in the red bud, all the light of the woods focused in the snowy thorn and the dazzling white sprays of the dogwood. The ground flowers were blooming also—exquisite spring beauties, Baptisia, mandrake, and deep magenta phlox in luxuriant bunches.

Through the open windows came the spring songs of Tomtits, Cardinals, and Mockingbirds, and as if to furnish appropriate setting, there passed in rapid succession cotton fields with last year's bolls hanging, darky shanties flanked by outside chimneys, groups of pickaninnies, colored women in sun-bonnets driving mule plows, and oak woods in which small brown pigs rooted for acorns. The handsome red horse-chestnut blooming in the woods recalled Audubon's famous painting of the Carolina Wren. At a wayside station the squawk of a Bluejay came in through the window, while from a passing swamp came the call of the Maryland Yellow-throat, not to be heard in Washington for fully two weeks. The first palmettos and bunches of cactus were followed near the Trinity River by the first gray moss, in which appropriately enough Parula Warblers were singing, also two weeks ahead of Washington. The

white flower spikes of the yucca, the purple clusters of the wistaria, the green bunches of Baptisia and discs of mistletoe, scarlet painted cups and fields of solid yellow and purple gave pleasing diversity as the train passed through their varied habitats.

But the vivid green of spring to us from the brown north was perhaps the dominating pleasure of the journey, greatest near the close of the day when the slanting yellow light intensified the green of a meadow, made an oak fairly glow beside a dark juniper, and gave an exquisitely delicate green to an acre of mesquite whose finely cut leaves—most interesting fact in the study of the light relations of plants—lets the sun shine through so that the ground beneath bears a carpet of flowers.

At Austin, where we saw baled cotton in the depot, the birds were a striking mixture of northern, southern, eastern, and western species. We were greeted by the song of the Canyon Wren! Out of place as it seemed in the city, the clear, pure notes rang out as bravely as in a canyon, and the little canyon dweller might easily have strayed over from congenial ground in the first escarpment of the lower Staked Plains, three miles to the westward. Several of the birds were seen in the city. One that stood on a chimney top, its long bill, rounded back, and hanging tail silhouetted against the sky, sang loudly, swaying from side to side till a lordly Mockingbird flew over and calmly appropriated its perch. Mockingbirds were everywhere, singing with equal abandon from the chimney above us or the fruit trees close beside us. And well might such southerners feel at home, for among the flowers and trees of the city were numbered yucca, tamarisk, banana, fig, and pride of India. From one of the berry-bearing pride of India trees rose a flock of the cosmopolitan Cedar Waxwings, but they may have stopped for the berries of the mistletoe, also borne by the little tree. The more northern Turkey Vulture was in the sky with its southern relative the short-tailed Black Vulture, whose services as scavenger were evidently appreciated by the inhabitants, for when it was suggested that one suspected of eating a snake should be shot to settle the matter, the citizen addressed promptly replied, "You'd have the corporation after you if you did!" Purple Martins were already back from Brazil, their loud twitterings being continually in our ears. Less traveled Western Lark Sparrows were among the commonest birds of the city, singing loudly from the trees of the yards and streets, and a resident Cardinal flew into a bare tree only a few feet from us on the grounds of the State University.

These grounds presented a picture long to be remembered, for they were solid acres of blue-bonnets, low, deep blue lupins, among the choicest of the family, that made the air rich with their hyacinthine fragrance. In some fields the blue was toned to an exquisite color scheme by a mixture of pink verbena and vivid pink phlox outdoing their garden cousins in luxuriance. The lupins reached out to the edge of the big spreading live oaks, trees that interested us greatly as they bore a form of the so-called Spanish moss (*Tillandsia recurvata*), that instead of hanging in long veils grows in short tufts on the branches. As we examined it, a herd of Jerseys grazed under the trees with pleasantly jangling bells whose leisurely tinkling harmonized with the familiar *Pe-ter, Pe-ter, Pe-ter*, of the Tufted Titmouse which hunted among the branches, and the soft cooing of Mourning Doves which flew around through the trees with musically whistling wings.

On the University grounds one of the everyday birds was that theatrical

character, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, one of the birds that makes Texas peculiarly attractive to the bird student. To easterners, to whom the name Flycatcher calls up drab Phoebes, pensive Wood Pewees, plainly clad Kingbirds, and small olivaceous Empidonaxes hard to find in the green woods, the first sight of the Scissor-tail is little less than astounding. Nature, apparently tired of making Quaker garbs for retiring woodlanders cut a new pattern, on Swallow-tailed Kite lines, adding splashes of salmon to the striking black and white plumage, after which she endowed her creation with the skill of an acrobat, the dash and fire of a master spirit of the air.

Between its noisy acrobatic feats the Scissor-tail sits demurely on a telephone wire, apparently its favorite perch, though it looks much too large to perch on a wire. But the long scissors that open and shut so effectively during aerial displays keep a nice balance, and after all, though making such a brave appearance, *forficata* is mainly wings and tail, feathers and fire. Giving chase to Hawks and Caracaras—the Mexican Eagles used as the national emblem of Mexico—is every day sport, and no chance is lost to show who is lord of the neighborhood. A pair of the Flycatchers that I happened on had a nest in a low tree and the female was quietly brooding when a strange Scissor-tail appeared. The guardian of the nest waited to ask no questions but darted at him in fury. As the two chased through the air, to our amusement the brooding bird jumped up on the edge of the nest and stood looking after them. When the visitor had been driven from the landscape the lord of the nest performed a series of aerial evolutions as if to relieve his outraged feelings. The curious performances of these original birds entertained us all the way across southern Texas.

From Austin to San Antonio we were crossing their country, the mesquite end of the great prairie that extends from the Gulf to the Saskatchewan, and between cotton fields, flowers filled the spaces among the mesquite trees. In San Antonio as in Austin we found northward bound Waxwings and White-throated Sparrows still lingering, while Martins, Cardinals, Mockingbirds, and Jackdaws swelled the list of city birds that might well make northerners envious. But though San Antonio has become a bustling American city, Mockingbirds may still sing in the plaza by moonlight and many picturesque, softly tinted adobes on the outskirts keep the flavor of the old Spanish town and hark back to the days of the Alamo.

On our way from San Antonio to Corpus Christi we crossed more arid mesquite and cactus country where the wind comes from the dry interior and there is practically a northward extension of the Mexican flora and fauna. Large herds of cattle and men on the round up were seen, for most of the country was then, in 1900, given over to cattle range. At Beeville this arid, barren, mesquite plain changed to fertile coast prairie on which there were strips of scrub oak and a mixture of chaparral, with some new flowers and old ones in new combinations. A heliotrope-like purple Phacelia grew in masses along the railroad, and scattered among the white poppies a magenta Callirhoe gave rich color as the western light shone through its broad petals, while masses of yellow evening primrose added to the rich effect. A glorious prairie sunset ending in deep red and purple told that we had entered the humid coast belt.

But back from Corpus Christi Bay, where we stopped for a little work, the prairie cover was a mixture of mesquite, cactus, and wind-compacted chap-

arral. The flora was Mexican, strange thorny bushes being interspersed with brilliant flower masses. The fences were made by pitchforks with cactus pads, the pads laid along a line on the ground rooting and branching till they grow to high impenetrable fence walls that in their season become beautiful with large yellow tuni flowers. When spring comes on the prairies of Texas, even the fences burst into bloom.

It seems a world of flowers and birds, for as you go south you meet hordes of nocturnal migrants that have stopped to rest and feed by the way. Such a cosmopolitan assembly of birds! Resident southerners jostling wings with passing northerners on their way from their southern wintering grounds to their northern breeding grounds. On the prairie near Corpus Christi there were among others both the northern and southern Vultures, and such southerners as Harris Hawks, Desert Sparrows, Road-runners, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Jackdaws, Pyrrhuloxias, Mockingbirds, and Caracaras side by side with such northerners as Dickcissels, Lincoln Sparrows, Lark Buntings, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows, Upland Plover, and Warblers. Swifts, Swallows, Nighthawks, Cowbirds, Hummingbirds, Gnatcatchers, Marsh Hawks, Kingbirds, and other Flycatchers, Bob-whites, Wrens, Shrikes, Orchard Orioles, and Vireos added to the confusion. In the absence of high trees the bushes and thickets seemed crowded. Not every seat was taken, to be sure, but you were impressed by the numbers of birds and surprised by the incongruous assemblies that confronted you in the bushes. Mourning Doves seemed to be everywhere in the brush, many of them apparently passing the time while their mates brooded. Lark Sparrows were in squads singing in the bushes or feeding on the ground, their white tail crescents flashing out as they flew, Grasshopper Sparrows were chirring everywhere, and Mockingbirds were singing and scolding and going about their daily matters. Once a whirl of birds passed, explained by a handsome white-rumped Harris Hawk. Now and then a brilliant Cardinal appeared on top of the chaparral and sang.

But the song that dominated part of the brushy prairie was a new one to my ear and became the song of songs to me, for it is to the southern prairie what the rare song of the Pine-woods Sparrow is to the moss draped pines of Florida, and the chant of the Hermit Thrush to the pointed firs of the northern mountains. The Cassin Sparrow! Even now, long years after, the name of that plain little brown bird comes with bated breath. How it recalls the first time it was heard! It was on an ordinary sunny Texas morning that I walked out into ordinary chaparral prairie in an every day mood, all ignorant of the existence of *Peucaea cassini*, when lo! from the brown bushes in front of me up sprang a little winged creature, a 'blithe spirit', an embodiment of the deepest joy of life, and with head raised and wings outspread, from a well spring undefiled poured out a song that held both the gladness of the blooming prairies and all the joy and hope of his mate on the nest.

While such intimate pleasures were to be experienced among the birds of the neighboring prairie, interesting hints of the surrounding water bird life, both resident and migrant, were obtained at Tule Lake to the northwest and also along the shore line adjoining Corpus Christi.

Tule Lake was alive with Grebes, Shovellers, Plovers, Sandpipers, and Terns, and a party of tall pinkish Avocets were wading out across the small waves, putting their long up-curved bills down delicately before them; while Stilts, all black above, all white below, stilted up on long pink legs, were going

through a variety of amusing antics and raising their black triangular sails over their backs. Rising from the lake flocks of Sandpipers would go whirling away dark before us, at a turn glancing white against the blue sky.

Not far from Tule Lake, at Priour's Ranch, the home of an old collector, specimens of rare southern birds were to be seen, among them skins of the Black Skimmer, Roseate Spoonbill, and most remarkable of all, Mexican parrots said to have been taken near Corpus Christi when severe southern winds were blowing up from below the boundary line. A barrel of wild cat and coyote skins was shown us and the skulls were seen lying around in the corners of the workshop. Live Brant of different species were in hen coops in the yard, and a small mother Tree Duck driven away by a Turkey whose society she had enjoyed was said to be dividing her time between the barnyard and the kitchen.

Beyond the ranch we were pleased to find eight Roadrunners, so quaint and curious that they are to other birds what the cactus is to garden plants. In some places along the way we saw them standing up on fence posts, crested heads and long necks raised and long tails flipped up enquiringly, for all the road to see. Here they were so tame they would not take the trouble to get out of sight. A few Snowy Egrets, Poorwills, small moth-like Bullbats, and Mexican Eagles added to the southern feeling. Picturesque Mexicans with two-wheeled mule carts carrying women with black rebozas over their heads, and men with peaked hats, together with pole houses thatched with cattails, reeds, or marsh grass, accented the Mexican flora and fauna.

The shore line from Corpus Christi Bay south afforded many novel sights. A line of pasture fence posts that extended thirty or forty rods out into the shallow water of the bay, were favorite perches of a variety of water birds. Three Cormorants, a Great Blue Heron, and two Brown Pelicans made up the row one day, the Pelicans making droll figures like china toys with heads erect and chins drawn in. Formerly, we were told, a thousand Pelicans nested on a small island twelve miles from Corpus Christi, but the colony had been entirely broken up. Only about half a dozen of the interesting birds were seen when we were there. In flight, with their big bills on their pouches, their great flapping wings and short tails, they were droll figures indeed, suggesting wise feathered magicians. Deserted nests of Great Blue Herons, big saucers of twigs set on bush tops, were seen, and on a low grass-covered island the Herons themselves were found standing. Along the shore were seen Sandpipers, Plovers, Willets, Yellow-legs, Stilts, Curlew, Turnstones, Gulls, and Terns, together with Kingbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Horned Larks, and Pipits—along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, as I liked to say to myself. An historic spot below us made it seem more real, for here during the Mexican war one side buried a ship-load of flour and the other side on discovering it, dug it up! Sometimes the picture from the shore of the gulf was a monochrome, a gray sky over gray water touched with life by white caps blown in by the wind. On moonlight nights when the yellow globe filled all the sky with light down to the level prairie horizon, giving a wonderful effect of wide illumination, the harbor was especially beautiful and peaceful, with the silvery gleam of the moon on the water, and the soft lapping of waves along the shore.

(To be continued)

MEETING SPRING HALF WAY

By FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY

II. (*Continued from page 155*)

DRIVE DOWN across the southernmost prairies of Texas in April if you would meet the last of the migrating hordes of birds and see one of Nature's most remarkable exhibits of 'social plants'. Daisies that whiten occasional meadows in the east and the so-called poppies that gild strips of uncultivated land in California partially explain the term, but on the prairies most of the species are social plants and acres or miles of one species are followed by acres or miles of another species. Blue-bonnets dominated all the other flowers at Austin and were among the dominant flowers at Corpus Christi. Beyond them there was one flower bed about a mile wide and three miles long, solid *Coreopsis*, so brilliantly yellow it fairly mirrored the sun. That many of the social plants like *Coreopsis*, verbena, spiderwort, and phlox are the familiar garden flowers of the east makes their riotous growth seem peculiarly remarkable. Fresh from an eastern garden, even rods of verbena are enlarging to the mind!

The richest flora and fauna between Corpus Christi and Brownsville was found on the bands of clay soil adjoining the two towns and separated by a wide stretch of sandy soil. The most conspicuous flowers of the clay were yellow tar weed, yellow and pink primrose, purple verbena, magenta *Callirhoe*, and yellow *Coreopsis*. Cactus, thorny chaparral, and mesquite also occurred on the clay soil, while on the sandy tracts here and there among the sand dunes stood live oak groves.

We began our three hundred and sixty mile drive from Corpus Christi to the Mexican boundary and return, on April 24, 1900, and that day made twenty-two miles to Petranilla Creek, enjoying the alternation of green mesquite orchards and gay flower prairie. One section of prairie had miles of pink evening primroses stretching as far as the eye could see. In the mesquite orchards the beautiful trees suggested the pepper trees of California with their finely cut waving foliage branched to the ground, and toward sunset the slanting light made the lacy foliage an intense yellow green. Though not yet decorated with their delicate tassellated yellow blooms, two trees that we saw bore brilliant blossoms—scarlet-breasted Vermilion Flycatchers! One of these was in a mesquite on the Oso, how musically the Spanish names run, the other in a tree at Mott Aura, Mott being the local name for a small grove on the open prairie (this one having a mixture of huisache, hackberry, and mesquite), Aura commemorating the Turkey Vultures which formerly frequented the grove. Having the unusual addition of a pond, Mott Aura had attracted not only the scarlet *Pyrocephalus*, green Vireos, and black Jackdaws, but also a Solitary Sandpiper and a number of Yellow-legs.

On the prairie the characteristic birds seen during our journey were Meadowlarks, Mourning Doves, Dickcissels, Sennett Thrashers, Nighthawks and Upland Plover. Knowing Dickcissels previously only as individual songsters well met on their breeding grounds in the wheat fields of the north, it was a pleasant surprise to meet the spring flocks on their way north. We began meeting them on our first day out. Long rows, rows sometimes reaching hundreds, were lined up on the fences like Swallows on telegraph wires. Their flat heads

and hanging tails marked them when too far away to see their chestnut backs or yellow chest patches. Their familiar song with its mouthed furry burr suggested the wheat fields of Illinois, for which some of them may have been bound. When not in exclusive rows of their own kind, the Dickcissels were often sitting alongside the large Mourning Doves, making the groups suggest old and young. A droll picture was seen one day, May 9, on our return trip, four Hummingbirds sitting on a fence, mere darning needles against the big prairie.

On the fence posts or low bushes from our first day out we occasionally saw one of the large Hawks, *swainsoni* and *sennetti*, among the rare pleasures of our journey. *Swainsoni* was a familiar westerner but the southern *sennetti* was new to me. When opportunity afforded I noted eagerly its immaculate breast, white rump, and white tail with black subterminal band; but the impression of the bird is what is recalled to-day when a level prairie comes to mind. At a distance one sees a large statue of a Hawk on the prairie floor; on nearer approach, a King of Hawks looking up with calm enquiring gaze, both gaze and pose bespeaking the silent power of the race. The white of the Hawk, by Mr. Thayer's view of protective coloration, has been worked out to the undoing of its prey, the small mammals that look up at it against the light of the sky into which its whiteness enables it to fade; while on the other hand the small mammals have become colored like the prairie to protect them from furred and feathered hunters that look earthward.

Some Jack rabbits that we saw on our first day's drive trusted to their protective coloration as if they knew what Nature had done for them. While one ran off fleetly, its long black-marked ears held high, several crouched motionless, and one fairly skulked along, its ears flat on its back concealing the conspicuous black nape, as it ran with body close to the ground. One of the crouching ones trusted to its disguise, but with anxiety in its big eyes, while we drove near enough to have touched it with a whip. In another place a Jack was jumped up from the horses' feet and apparently half asleep broke all the rules of protective conduct, stopping only a few yards from us and sitting down on its haunches with ears up full length and black neck conspicuous, a rare exception to our common experiences.

Jack rabbits were the only animals seen on the open prairie but on the clay banks of Petranilla Creek when we made camp, tracks of coon, wild cat, and coyote, besides the excitingly strange tracks of armadillo—curious round, stumpy nail prints—suggested many stories of north and south. Big armadillo burrows were also found on our trip, slanting under cactus roots, and under tufts of marsh grass. How ardently I wished for a sight of the ancient armored beasts!

The rich band of vegetation bordering the creek demonstrated what water will do on the prairie. The flora showed the same northern and southern admixtures that made the fauna especially interesting. Elms and ashes stood side by side with hackberry, moss-hung live oaks, blooming cactus, palmettos that were all leaves, and the curious all-thorns that instead of leaves have green bark covering branches and thorns. Our camp floor encircled by these interesting trees and bushes was carpeted by pink primroses that, at nine in the morning, were still facing west where they had turned to follow the sun the night before.

Both migrant and resident birds enlivened the camp with their bright col-

ors and songs. An Indigo Bird back from its winter in Mexico or Central America, and our first Cuckoo, back from South America, were found here, and after listening to the voice of a Chat we caught sight of its brilliant yellow breast in the mesquite. A Wren, having probably wintered near home, was already beginning to build, being seen carrying a stick up through a streamer of moss. Hearing a bright pleasing song that resembled the Indigo Bunting's, I followed it up till, on a bare tree top in the sun I discovered—a Nonpareil, the familiar many colored cage bird! A Red-bellied Woodpecker came flying in to the bridge over the creek, but seeing us withdrew to watch us from around a corner. Besides these, there were Mockingbirds and a family of Harris Hawks, the handsome southerners. Their nest, a heavy platform of sticks in the top of a moss-draped hackberry, was littered with fur and bones, a dozen wood rat skulls among the number. The large well feathered nestlings had the same handsome rufous patches that distinguish the parents. The guardian of the nest, perhaps made unduly anxious by our presence, stood for a long time on the bare top of a tree that commanded the situation, and like a preoccupied philosopher ignored the hysterical attacks of a Mocker, doubtless another parent merely expressing his responsibility in terms of his own nervous temperament.

After Petranilla Creek, our next objective point was King's Ranch, fifty miles west of Corpus Christi, across broad stretches of flat blooming prairie, with successive bands of pink and white primroses. Where there were no fences the migrating Doves and white-winged Lark Buntings perched on the cactus pads, edging gingerly along as if fully mindful of the sharp spines. Once in passing we caught a delightful wave of song from the white wings. Fences were so rare that they were taken advantage of, and one corral that we passed was occupied by hundreds of Mourning Doves as close as beads on a string.

At San Fernando Creek a herd of range cattle reminded our Texas camp man that in a dry time thousands of cattle had been saved by having the spines burned off the cactus so that it could be fed to them. The old man warned us when looking for birds to 'watch out' for rattlesnakes, for he said in such hot weather the snakes stayed in the shade in the day time. As they were the large diamond backs of Texas and Florida whose long fangs put a dangerous amount of poison into the circulation, his warning had some point. At San Fernando Creek new flowers came in, a magenta Mexican poppy, a small mesquite with fragrant blossoms, and a bright red flowered cactus, followed later by blue-bonnets. The heat that made the cactus bloom also produced our first mirage. The spring migrants had need to hurry, but besides the white wings we noted a tardy Ovenbird, a Black-throated Green Warbler, and a Clay-colored Sparrow, on this, the twenty-fifth day of April.

Our second night's camp was on King's Ranch, one of the largest cattle ranches of Texas, where we met the Brownsville and Alice stage road and turned south across the rich stock range. The cattle king was at that time a cattle queen who spent her winters in New York, leaving her superintendent in charge. At his advice we camped at Santa Gertrude, as two windmills and their water tanks were called. A vivid green circle enclosed by mesquites branching to the ground with abundant water made indeed a camping place to commemorate a saint. Quail, a pair of Cardinals, and a pair of Thrashers carrying food showed their appreciation of the tanks, which were evidently well known in the region. As we had been warned regarding fellow travelers

near the Mexican border, when a party of dusky faced men rode in and proceeded to camp on the opposite side of our enclosure, I made sure that our fire-arms were fully in evidence and valorously determined to protect the camp from midnight Mexican daggers! Terrors of the night! The first Mexican to cross our camp ground, well after sunrise, was a mild mannered lad with a piece of drawn work to exchange for coffee and sugar for his breakfast! Nevertheless, on leaving the windmills we had to abandon the Alice and Brownsville stage road we had been enjoying, as, beyond that point, the stage drivers locked the gates behind them to prevent horse thieves crossing private pastures.

Another day passed in a world of flowers, a day of moving pictures, of beautiful and interesting forms of vegetation and bird life. More circles of pink evening primroses were surrounded by green mesquites, and a grove of low huisache more filmy and delicate even than the mesquite, was carpeted with *Coreopsis* as yellow as buttercups. Then, in striking contrast, came a thicket of thorn brush with cactus coming into bloom, and beyond a carpet of the curious Indian wheat, a whitish plantain that grows extensively in the arid region, and whose miniature grain the pocket mice carry home in their pouches. Big bare circles around peaked ant hills with bare trails leading to them through the vegetation were characteristic and numerous.

At a turn of the road there appeared a lake set in a cool dark green tule frame. A gleaming white spot on its edge, through the glass proved a red-breasted Shoveller, and on a tongue of the lake stood a Solitary Sandpiper and a Plover with her young, while a Greater Yellow-legs, followed by its miniature a Lesser Yellow-legs, walked along the shore, mirrored in the water. One shallow strip of pond that we passed was covered with little shore birds running about and scolding at each other in double.

After passing acres of white mint we came to one solitary scarlet painted-cup, so gratefully brilliant after the white that its single flower caught the eye and held it charmed. Beyond, the pink *Erythraea* began increasing and swelled in numbers till it reached its height. Following the *Erythraea* came an unusual field of blended colors. In the vivid green grass was a stand of pink phlox and a level higher, thinly but uniformly scattered through it, a stand of some bright yellow flower. While the color combination seems crude and in-harmonious, curiously enough the effect of the yellow was merely to lighten the pink, to illuminate the field in a rare and surprising manner. After this, as if Nature would do nothing to weaken such an effect, there followed miles of white daisies.

Before sundown we passed our next landmark, Santa Rosa Ranch—the names marking the road between Corpus Christi and Brownsville are those of ranches, windmills, or motts—and after driving up to the hubs through freshet lakes we camped for the night between two runs, much to the dissatisfaction of the old Texas camp man who said that he had been caught that way in winter, camping beside a dry wash and having to stand up to his knees in water half the night! The only excitements of the night, however, proved to be the passing of birds in the darkness, the fine chip of small migrants, the squawk of Black-crowned Night Herons, and low over us the thrilling swishing of heavy wings, probably those of Wild Turkeys. As the night had been dry, Mr. Bailey found pocket mice and kangaroo rats in his traps, for we had now entered the sand belt that supplies homes for these small burrowing animals

and the badgers that prey on them, all of which are unknown in the clay belts adjoining Corpus Christi and Brownsville.

After visiting the traps we went in search of the birds that were holding jubilee on the other side of the woods, and in spite of the warning of the old Texan, "Look out, there's varmints in that bresh," pushed through the dense cactus and thorn armored thicket, bending low to escape the thorny branches or shoving rigidly through with minds hardened to the pricks of needles, though with eyes out for coiled rattlesnakes. After a strenuous passage we reached the edge of a lake of flood water, in the middle of which mesquite trees stood up to their heads, black-spotted with Jackdaws, squawking and squealing almost loud enough to drown even the cackling of Coots and barking of Grebes that were adding to the merry medley on that April morning.

In one corner of the pond a small flock of Cormorants perched on the mesquites, their long snaky necks and bills raised expectantly. When they descended to the water they looked drooler than ever, for they still sat with long bills pointed skyward. A party of gray, white-billed Coots feeding quietly in a dark green tule cove or standing on the beach as if at home, and scattered groups of Coots swimming about in leisurely homelike fashion offered amusing contrasts to the strained alert manner of the Cormorants. Some Eared Grebes with light ear patches were swimming about as complacently as were the Dabchicks, between dives, though their spring journey was not yet completed. Through the bushes we caught sight of two Gallinules disappearing so fast we merely saw their small hen-like heads and bright red bills in passing.

Along shore the sand was filled with holes and pellet-made chimneys of fiddler crabs, and I spied one little fellow with its arms around a victim backing down its hole. Coon tracks on the sand told the other side of the crab story.

Taking up our journey again our prairie road disappeared in another flood pond, in which we went up to the hubs. Beyond, on the dry prairie we drove through bands of color, miles of low pink phlox and pink primroses, yellow *Coreopsis*, *Senecio*, or *Oenothera*, orange brown *Thelesperma*, scarlet painted-cup and white daisies. During the day we noted the Blue Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, and Maryland Yellow-throat. In an oak mott that we crossed there was an interesting old stage station, a Mexican pole house with thatched roof, its pole walls chinked with mud, a brush corral adding to the foreign picture.

Under the oaks of the mott we found three fellow travelers, an old Mexican with a pointed hat, a boy with a three-story water jug in his hand, and a solemn little burro with a peccary skin spread on his back. Our mules shied at the group but we stopped to talk to the wayfarers and persuaded them to sell us the handsome white-collared peccary skin. Where it had been secured, our Spanish was inadequate to discover, but a few of the wary wild pigs are still left in the region though they escape the hunter by taking to caves and cactus and thorn brush. If a mounted cowboy ropes one, he does it with great risk to his horse, for the pigs when brought to bay gash the horse's legs with their sharp tusks.

After leaving the mott, instead of prairies glowing with flowers, we had equally beautiful green salt marshes alive with light that glinted from the stems of the marsh grass. The green level stretching away to the horizon was dotted with ponds, some bordered with tules, some merely flood water ponds

with submerged tufts of marsh grass, but all covered with water fowl, some of which were resting and feeding on their way from Argentina to Alaska. Among those seen were the Solitary, the Western, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Dowitchers, Black-necked Stilts, Killdeer, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, feeding in flocks together, besides quakerish Willets, and comfortable looking Shovellers. How interesting to meet the travelers half way!

But while our morning, with its lakes full of water fowl, was the most exciting of our journey, our afternoon dragged slowly along for we had reached the sixty or eighty mile stretch of light sand that in distinction from the hard bottomed sand of the mesquite land makes such hard pulling that we had been warned about it before starting. Coarse poor grass and low oak brush replaced the flowers we had come to consider our portion, and sand dunes were the most interesting landscape features. The country was as bare of bird as plant life with two notable exceptions. Upland Plover were passed along the road so tame that they walked close to us with gentle fearlessness, their heads raised, their mild eyes resting upon us; and farther on we saw a flock of perhaps a hundred Long-billed Curlew flying toward the ocean in a long shifting line, now a broad V, now a saw-tooth W, now a straight line, a stirring sight. When the birds had gone, the hours dragged out and we helped them pass as best we could analyzing stray flowers, collecting an occasional specimen, or photographing some new type of vegetation, studying up constellations for our nights in the open, and dipping into the miniature pocket poets I had brought for such hours of need. After Wordsworth we were well attuned to the quiet prairie sunset, a warm, serene sunset, the round pink ball going down on the level horizon broadening the outlook till we found ourselves quoting Lanier's *Marshes of Glynn* with their range and their sweep.

At last the low line of trees we had been wearily traveling toward for hours was reached and proved a veritable oasis in the sand belt. An oak mott, San Ignatia by name, raised only a few feet above the general level but made up of large old live oaks that dispensed cool shade through the hot hours and offered shelter to birds from all the region round about. The trees, filled with nests, were noisy with squawking Jackdaws, clamoring Scissor-tails, and loquacious Mockingbirds, the heated medley being cooled down by the quiet cooing of Doves. When the aviary had settled down for the night a rattlesnake, discovered too near our tent, had to be shot, and at the report of the gun an amazingly large flock of Scissor-tails burst out of the tree, proving what the oak mott meant on the treeless prairie. The oaks had been trimmed up for wood by previous travelers, but after making camp it did not take the old Texan long to discover some dead branches he could lasso, and we were soon sitting before the camp fire enjoying our supper after our long day's drive.

The stars came out so temptingly that we carried our sleeping bags out under them on the open prairie. To sleep under the stars on the open, level prairie—the dream of years was to be realized at last! As if from a raft on the ocean the entire circle of your horizon is star-filled sky! As night closes in around you, you seem to be alone with the stars. Mortal no longer, you become a point in the universe. All human cares, all the littleness of human life drop from you, the great universe lies close around you.

But one cannot always stay on the illuminated, soul expanding mountain tops. The return to earth in this case did not bring the looked for second rattlesnake, but a scorpion fell from a shaken sleeve the next morning. The day

with tall peaked hats. In passing a goat pen we persuaded the white-bearded goatherd to take a dime for a cup of goat's milk though he urged that it was worth only *un centavo*. A jolly party of Mexicans traveling in a prairie schooner camped by our water tanks.

Here we saw our first tropical and sub-tropical White-winged Dove, a bird which afterwards grew rapidly common. In hooting it sat on a branch and puffed out its throat emitting its curious hollow, cavernous *whoo-hoo'-hoo-hoo'*. A nest that we discovered was in a huisache over flood water about six feet from the ground.

Beyond Sauz Ranch a new effect was given to the woods by the butterfly tree (*Parkinsonia aculeata*). It had been only in bud at Petranilla Creek a week before, but we were going south and it was here in full bloom, its jessamine-like yellow flowers having a delicate fragrance. A *Salvia* also added a bright touch to the woods, and outside the magenta poppies increased in numbers.

(To be continued)

A HOSPITAL FOR WILD BIRDS

By DR. W. W. ARNOLD

WITH TWO PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

ONE OF the most delightful sequelae to my efforts to interest school children in bird-life and its protection, was the establishment of a hospital for the care and treatment of wild birds suffering from what might be termed the normal catastrophes which happen to vast numbers of our feathered brothers as they journey from their embryonic egg-shell home to the grave. For a number of years I had been devoting much time and attention to arousing general interest in the welfare and protection of bird-life, through talks on birds, illustrated by lantern slides and mounted specimens; but it seemed impossible to arouse a permanent interest and abiding enthusiasm in the children until I adopted the plan of taking the live birds that had been restored from some accident, and showing them to the children, at the same time reciting the life-histories of the feathered patients, the character of their injuries, and the method of treatment carried out for their relief. This plan met with an immediate response, and the children deluged me with such numbers of crippled birds that I was compelled to erect a commodious aviary (fig. 50), and to call into use a large number of small cages for the accommodation of the seriously injured.

Within twelve months the size of the hospital had to be doubled to accommodate the feathered patients; and following the heavy hail storm occurring July 18, 1915, I was completely swamped and had to resort to all kinds of devices to furnish shelter for the flocks of battered and broken creatures brought to me by the children. Forty-five robins suffering from broken wings, broken legs, eyes knocked out, and bodies battered and bruised, refrigerated by ten or twelve hours spent in windrows of hail stones, were brought to the hospital for treatment; and fifteen miscellaneous victims—bluebirds, finches, black-headed grosbeaks, yellow warblers, red-shafted flickers, meadowlarks, tana-

was spent in trapping, skinning, and writing up notes among the bird colony of the oak mott. Its rarest member, *Pyrocephalus*, the exquisite little scarlet-breasted Flycatcher sang a rapturous flight song suggestive of that of the Cassin Sparrow. When in midair he would puff out the feathers of his breast till he might have been a full blown red rose, and then float down through the air to the flowery fields below. The Jackdaws, prominent members of the mott colony, amused us by their buffoonry, their attitudinizing, their crackling, brush-breaking noises and their falsetto squeals while their mates calmly gathered nesting material. Golden-fronted and Texas Woodpeckers called as they passed back and forth through the trees, the Golden-fronted with a loud penetrating rattle. Vireos hunted about, and passing Warblers, among them the Black and White Creeper, chipped in the tree tops. A belated Chestnut-sided was seen in another oak mott later in the day. A Mockingbird was building in an oak and we found a Lark Sparrow's nest sunk in the ground at the foot of a bush containing four eggs. On the live oaks were found clumps of a stout air plant related to the Spanish moss with beautiful purple fuschia-like flowers that proved to be a new species, and it was carefully photographed, as was also a solid acre of pink phlox, though, alas, we could not reproduce the colors!

When we again took to the road and Barn Swallows with their dark backs and deep chestnut breasts circled around us, by contrast we realized anew how keen and bright were the tones of the prairie flowers. As we drove on a Caracara with its proud, erect bearing, waited in a low tree ahead of us till we could distinguish its black crest, and as it flew off its white wing tips were conspicuous. A partly eaten snake and the Mexican emblem seemed well correlated. Very few birds were seen along the road on these last days of April, and those mostly summer residents, a few Mourning Doves and Horned Larks, a flock of Cowbirds around a herd of cattle, and once a Nighthawk sitting with furled sails on a 'chip' on the prairie. Resident bird life centered in the motts, where Wood Pewees, Lark Sparrows, Quail, Clay-colored Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Curve-billed Thrashers, and Mockingbirds were seen, a Mocker in one place feeding half grown young. Mockingbirds were so abundant that the old Texan remarked comprehensively, "Wherever you find a bush you'll find a Mocker, without an accident, from Corpus here."

The largest mott, which was seen on the twenty-ninth, offered such generous shade that cattle had bared the ground under its oak roof. Jackdaws were making a great commotion here and Orioles and Black and White Creepers increased our wish that we might camp and investigate.

A north wind gave us a beautiful sight, a flock of perhaps forty White Pelicans maneuvering in the sky, flying in a wedge or a straight line, for, as we were told, a north wind makes them fly north because it piles the water so high down the gulf that they cannot get their fish. The events of the hour were a number of large Hawks, the Harris, Sennett, and Swainson, some of them perching on telegraph poles, as if appreciating the rare possibility, beautiful, smooth sand dunes, and our old friends the mesquite and cactus, together with ponds enlivened by Redwings and waders, and encircled by brilliant yellow *Coreopsis* rings. These yellow rings around pools were so numerous that they demonstrated the aquatic taste of the flowers.

Sauz Ranch, the next spot on the map, proved not only a white man's ranch and stage station but a Mexican village of picturesque hackells made of branches and thatched with grass, inhabited by Mexicans who rode around

stead of comporting themselves in the usual way, they gathered in flocks of from half a dozen to thirty or more individuals, and took to the high cottonwoods, going over the whole top of a tree after the methodical manner of a flock of nut-hatches or bush-tits, even hanging from the branches upside down when need be.

Although not encountered in any numbers, enough Bridled Tits (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) were seen in the valley bottom to point to the probability that the species occurs regularly in such situations. As there seem to be but few state records for the Gadwall (*Chaulelasmus streperus*), I record a female shot a few miles east of Phoenix, March 27, when there seemed to be more of the same species present among the large flocks of teal and Shovelers.

Ornithologically as well as otherwise, Arizona is a wonderful state, and a great deal remains to be done among the birds within its boundaries. It is almost a pity that its southern border offers so many inducements to the collector during the spring and summer, the consequence being that other parts of the state, and the south as well during the winter, have rather suffered for lack of systematic field work.

Covina, California, August 28, 1916.

MEETING SPRING HALF WAY

By FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY

III. (Concluded from page 190)

AS WE approached Mexico, not only were hackells more frequently seen, but yuccas became more common, sturdy little drum majors, four to twelve feet high, offering good nesting sites to Orioles and Thrashers. Cactus also increased in amount and variety. The beautiful magenta clusters of the ribbed *Cereus* and a small devil's head, with hooked spines, were among them. The thickets were becoming more dense, a veritable jungle of mesquite, huisache, butterfly tree, cactus, and yucca, suggesting the eleven foot rattlers that had been reported with such an air of verity. When Mr. Bailey was tempted in by some rare specimen, the old Texan cried excitedly, "You better come out of that thicket there's buggers there I tell you!" But a long black snake dispatched by the roadside was the worst 'bugger' encountered. Near a pond a plant resembling sunflower was found together with masses of a white nicotine that fairly smelled of tobacco.

Some of the migrants met with were near their southern breeding limits but the Veery seemed decidedly out of place beside Golden-fronted Woodpeckers and the two Doves, the Ground and the White-winged. In the mesquite thickets two of the common notes heard were those of the Golden-fronted Woodpecker and the Wood Pewee. The soft lulling notes of the Wood Pewee to us northerners brought up pictures of cool, high, heavily-roofed northern woods that contrasted strangely enough with these low, hot, thin-leaved mesquite, cactus, and thorn thickets, drolly spoken of as timber; but though the Pewee, which winters from Nicaragua to Colombia and Peru, breeds as far north as southern Canada, some of its numbers do breed as far south as southern Texas.

At our first lunch camp beyond Sauz Ranch a thunderstorm overtook us just as the Texan had lit the fire. He had gathered his firewood painfully, complaining, "There's plenty of that little bresh, but its mighty thorny I can tell you!" and loath to have to gather a second batch, when the rain began, slipped the bake oven over his fire. Fifteen or twenty minutes later when about two inches of rain had fallen and his fire was out, the old man, standing in the water remarked, facetiously, "A little more and this would have been a right smart rain".

While waiting for the roads to dry off a little we walked around among the bushes where the Thrashers and other birds were singing and the White-winged Dove was hooting like an Owl. In the cactus we found nests of Curve-billed Thrasher and Cactus Wren, while the Bullock Oriole, Chat, Yellow Warbler, Summer Tanager, Bewick Wren, Roadrunner, Shrike, and the small Texas Woodpecker added interest to the hour.

In going on we realized that we were nearing Mexico, for at a roadside store, where strings of garlic hung on the wall, we got two dollars of Mexican money for one of United States coin.

Thirty-five miles from the Mexican line we forded Rio Coloral, formerly one of the mouths of the Rio Grande. Here we found Spotted Sandpipers, a flock of White-winged Doves, a Fish Hawk catching fish, and a Mockingbird with a nest in a blooming tuni cactus. In this, the land of the Mockingbird, one of the birds would often start a moonlight chorus, birds of other kinds joining in as they awoke, the Cassin Sparrow being among the nocturnal choristers. These nocturnal concerts which have been described by other field workers, were among the most delightful features of our life in the open. In the thickets beyond Rio Coloral we found the Sennett Oriole and the handsome Green Jay, a Mexican bird just ranging up into southern Texas. Fresh deer tracks were also seen.

Twenty-three miles from Mexico we camped for a night near a Mexican hackell where we got *centimo leche*, saw women carrying big milk cans on their shoulders and Señors in pointed hats and Señoritas in black rebozas. In sight of camp Jack rabbits nibbled grass and ambled about trustingly. A Caracara flew by, at which, to our amusement, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher dashed after him and pouncing down, rode on his back till they were out of sight. Texas Woodpeckers and Orioles were in evidence, and Cowbirds fed around the mules. But our camp was named Parauque Camp for the Parauque, a new bird to me, a Mexican bull bat that comes up into southern Texas and whose hoarse *pa-rau'-que* called us hurriedly from our camp fire. Out in the mesquites it would fly from one bare spot to another catching insects like a Poor-will.

The next day there was one long stretch of white daisies framed by mesquite, daisies smaller and with finer petals than the eastern flower but effective in the mass when turned toward the sun. In the main it was a day of blooming cactus, splendid masses of it in fuller bloom than we had found it before; a day that gave new meaning to the word cactus to me. Never again would it stand for spine-covered grotesque forms of vegetation. Does the desert bloom like a rose? No, it blooms like a cactus! Nature strews your path with thorns, it is true, but only to ensure the flowers, big generous blooms of gorgeous hues, bright lemon, soft saffron, dull orange, magenta, and glowing crimson. Seven species there were along our way. Lowly ground clusters

made glad the waste places, fairly excited us by their triumphant notes of color; low cactus trees held the eye as landscape centers, and great walls, twice our height, yellow with bloom, fairly radiated sunlight. Cactus Camp we dubbed our night's camp for it was beside an eight to ten acre patch of solid yellow flowered prickly pear.

In one cactus bush, oddly enough, a wood rat was sitting in an old Thrasher's nest that he had fixed over for himself. Another wood rat had decorated its house with one of Mr. Bailey's small traps, a rare specimen for its museum! On one side of camp was a small slough that would have been tempting for a swim had it not been for the alligator slides on its banks. The soft mud of the roads here was marked up with tracks of turtle, deer, and armadillo, and the ground in many places covered with miniature toads.

From the cactus strip we drove down through coast marshes, really river flats extending along both sides of the Rio Grande, where numerous small *Ammodramus* kept flying up from the marsh grass, buzzing low over the tufts to drop down again out of sight.

After our long journey through country whose occasional houses were Mexican hackells, when approaching Brownsville we looked twice at an unfamiliar appearing building and then exclaimed, "Why, that house has boards on it!" so quickly had our eyes accepted Mexican standards. Fresh from the prairie with eyes trained to enjoy soft colors we came to a Mexican house whose dull pink wall harmonized well with its grape vine trellis, and the adjoining pink-walled chapel with its cross standing on the ground beside it. As we drove by a pretty little *Señorita* ran out and pointing to the road with a volley of Spanish held up three fingers. When we failed to comprehend, she grew embarrassed and ran back to the house full of shy laughter, but a guess that she was sent to collect the toll gate fare finally saved the situation.

As we entered Brownsville, May 1, after a hundred and eighty miles of level prairie, the jocose old Texan called out, "I can't see the town for these yere plegged houses!" Mexican hackells and palmetto roofed sheds and brush corrals were found in the heart of the town, but a public school building with piazzas running around two stories, told of the white population. A boy with a sling shot shooting Eave Swallows from a large colony nesting about a building had a modern air, and girls in shirt waists on bicycles offset *Señoritas* with blue or black rebozas over their heads. The principal industry of the town was apparently Mexican drawn work, though the manes and tails of the horses had been cut off by the makers of Mexican hair work!

A small pink frame house with pink pillars was pointed out as the birth-place of the Mexican Republic, for here in his early days Porfirio Diaz had lived and planned the Mexican revolution. A larger house next door with white pillars and an air of prosperity was pointed out as the second home of the man with the iron hand.

In Brownsville, be it noted, no English Sparrows were seen. A number of native birds were found, among them the Buzzard, the Mexican Crested Flycatcher, Jackdaws, Martins, Barn and Eave Swallows, Mockingbirds and Titmice.

From Brownsville we ferried across the Rio Grande to Matamoras, the river, which was rising rapidly, swirling around cutting its banks at such a rate that it was plain to see how it had cut its way down from Rio Coloral. On both sides of the river the chief crops were then cotton, corn, and sugar cane, but oranges, lemons, bananas, and guavas were also seen growing. Both

Brownsville and Matamoras were formerly towns of great wealth, Matamoras having been the distributing center during the Mexican war; but externally the flat-roofed, one story adobes with their softly tinted walls and blinds were merely characteristic Mexican dwellings. The iron gratings for doors and windows may have hinted at vaults and safes of days of opulence but they also bespoke the southern climate where doors and windows must needs be open at night. The plaza and market place were characteristic and the picturesque old cathedral whose chimes could not be rung without the payment of a tax had bullet holes left from war times.

With all this foreign setting it was a surprise to find an enthusiastic botanist, a woman connected with the Presbyterian mission, actually teaching botany to the Spanish Señoritas. Would that some one could have taught them the birds!

Leaving Brownsville late in the day we were obliged to camp for the night within too easy reach of the town, for our road was as historic as the towns themselves, and although the tragedies of earlier days were now infrequent, we were warned by an old army officer to camp before dark well away from the road and to have no late camp fires to attract attention. In spite of the keen interest taken in our movements by the Brownsville Mexicans, however, the first night passed without incident; but the second night we camped in the mesquite which offers thin cover and in the middle of the night the camp guardian awoke to find two mounted Mexicans at the foot of his sleeping bag. With the instinct of an old timer who sleeps with his gun in his blankets, he had his finger on the trigger ready to shoot through the blankets when the men looking down on him—asked the road to Brownsville!

Farther on our way from the Mexican boundary we passed a party of sullen, hard faced Mexicans driving a band of suspiciously good looking horses, which reminded us of the locked gates of the cattle ranches. And later when we were crossing King's Ranch we met three horsemen so well mounted and armed that we imagined they might be looking for missing horses. The old Texan, however, said they were Mrs. King's soldiers and that probably "something had happened" down at the other end of the ranch and they were "going to see about it."

In spite of local tragedies we passed safely on our way, our only excitements supplied by the "varmints" of our old camp man. A cup of water poured down what appeared to be a gopher hole in front of the tent one morning brought out a tarantula, an inhabitant of the clay soil where as the Texan complained, "the mud grewed to the tent pins". A second spider when trying to evade pursuit ran down a convenient sleeping bag, hence the name Tarantula Camp! Perognathus Camp commemorated a little pocket mouse who, when a floor without holes was being selected for the sleeping bags, popped out of a closed door in the ground and ran into the tent, and who, in searching for his door in the night tramped on our beds and finally got into a trap. There was also one Rattlesnake Camp, though two earned the name, and the shooting of a third rattler coiled in a trail almost led to serious consequences. The shot roused a band of range cattle, the most dangerous animals one encounters in the west, and with their keen hunting instinct they took after the hunter, who only escaped them by dodging into the chaparral as they came charging furiously along, heads and tails up. A Texas long horn at one ranch that we passed had a spread of horn measuring about five feet, for the old

Spanish stock which has nearly run out has gone to horns, in southern Texas. A ground squirrel was seen on our way north, and in one place a red coyote ran across the road ahead of us turning to look back over his shoulder.

On the way north, among the choice southern birds seen were Black-crested Titmice, the exquisitely tinted pink and gray *Pyrrhuloxia*, a pair of tiny Verdins about one of their big globular nests, Red-eyed Cowbirds sitting on the roadside fences, a White-tailed Kite on a bush in a salt flat, and a small flock of the Black-bellied Tree Ducks standing high on their long legs on small tufts in a pond surrounded by pink water lilies; while on a cool looking pond over whose shimmering water dragon flies were wavering, the diminutive bluish gray Mexican Grebe, found only between southern Texas and Panama was seen swimming about, appropriately enough, among blue and white water lilies.

A number of nests were found in passing. On May 4, eggs were seen in a White-winged Dove's nest, and young in a Jackdaw's nest; on May 5 a Sennett Oriole's nest with four eggs was found in a yucca, a remarkable basket shaped nest hung by a handle from the bayonets of the yucca. The same day a Mockingbird's nest with four eggs was found in a blooming cactus, a Caracara's nest was discovered in the top of a small round oak with fuzzy-headed nestlings, and in a huisache a family of half grown Cardinals were being fed; and on May 6, a Desert Sparrow's nest was found in a low bush with large feathered young.

While the bulk of migration had passed, on May 6, two Whooping Cranes were seen going through their maneuvers in the sky; on May 8 a Wilson Phalarope, a beauty in full breeding plumage, was watched swimming about on a flood water pond; on May 9, a flock of two or three hundred Dickcissels was seen on the fences; on May 10 a large flock of Mourning Doves were passed on a fence; a Black Tern was seen over a lake, and several species of Sandpipers on a narrow strip of pond; besides a few other northerners seen on different days, among them a few Ducks, Thrushes, and Warblers, notably the Black-throated Green, the Blackburnian, and Redstart on May 11, at Petranilla Creek.

The prairie flowers as we went north also underwent a remarkable change. Although we made the whole trip of about three hundred and sixty miles from Corpus Christi to Brownsville and return in seventeen days, not only had the great waves of migration passed north but in places the prairie carpet had changed completely during the interval. An entire set of social plants had gone out of bloom and been replaced by others. In one section we were nearly a day with a newly laid carpet of yellow tar weed that gave a softly tinted picture, the yellow green floor having a wall of dull green mesquite and a roof of soft blue sky. Between Petranilla Creek and Corpus Christi where, on April 24, the ground had been pink with evening primroses, on May 11 it was covered with white mint as far as the eye could see in all directions. The change was so complete that it was positively startling.

But one gets to expect big things of the prairie—waves of flowers, passing throngs of birds, overhead the starry host of heaven, and round about the encompassing clouds. One moonlight night we camped among huisache trees and slept on a bed of daisies, and after the moon set the sky grew fuller and fuller of stars till one could but marvel at their myriad host. Silent night! What infinite peace Nature offers her children! On one of our days when there

was open prairie from horizon to horizon and the blooming white floor and the uplifted song of the Meadowlark had put us in tune, we had a characteristic prairie cloud effect. We were encircled at first by low white cloud flecks in the blue and then as they grew and grew, by encompassing white clouds that seemed to travel with us, till, after crossing a gulch we came up on the other side, seemingly right up into the clouds when, as forest trees rise in a fog, the white host loomed up, white challenging spirits before our path.

Washington, D. C., April 6, 1916.

NESTING OF THE LECONTE THRASHER

By J. R. PEMBERTON

WITH TWO PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

IN THE CONDOR (Vol. vi, 1904, pp. 95-98) M. French Gilman has given us a rarely good and complete account of the nesting habits of the Leconte Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*). It was with much pleasure that I was able during the spring of 1916 to observe the many interesting characteristics attrib-



Fig. 53. NEST OF LECONTE THRASHER. HALF OF THE CHOLLA CACTUS HAS BEEN TORN AWAY TO EXPOSE THE STRUCTURE.