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THE MOCKING BIRD

From early youth the writer has been keenly interested in natural history. Bird life has an appeal all its own and there seems to be nothing of greater interest than to watch the great family of our "feathered friends" in their daily struggle for food, in their strife with one-another over the wily worm, or for that matter, the worm that is simply dumb.

Very human are the various bird families. They have their likes and dislikes, and are not slow in showing them. What special delight it is for the little fellows to indulge in their daily bath. And how they fight for the privilege! How different from the boy who tries to escape the bathtub.

We felt very proud of our student body during the time last winter, when "snow o'er all the landscape" made it impossible for the birds to find food, for the interest they showed and the pains they took to feed the little feathered creatures. They helped to save the birds—and what a world it would be without birds! Right here it may interest some of our young readers to know that in extremely cold weather the birds enjoy a warm bath. It will amply repay anyone for the trouble he takes to place warm water in the bird bath just to watch the antics of the little fellows and to note their delight. However, when we started this article we had the Mocking Bird in mind, so we shall now take up our text:

Where the Magnolia blooms, where there is perfume in the air, where the earth is bedecked with flowers in profusion and of every conceivable hue, where oranges grow in abundance, where there are wooded areas with innumerable vines—in a word, where Mother Earth seems to have opened her box of entrancing natural jewels and strewn them in profusion upon her spacious lap—is where the Mocking Bird is found. And where is this favored land? It is in our glorious "Sunny South," and possibly Louisiana is the spot most favored by the Mocking Bird.

John James Audubon, one of our greatest naturalists the world has ever known, was born near New Orleans, May 4, 1780. We shall follow with his description of the lovely Mocking Bird:

"It is there (Louisiana) that you should listen to the love song of the Mocking Bird, as I at this moment do. See how he flies around his mate, with motions as light as those of the butterfly. His tail is widely ex-

panded, he mounts in the air to a small distance, describes a circle, and, again alighting, approaches his beloved one, his eyes gleaming with delight, for she has already promised to be his and his only. His beautiful wings are gently raised, he bows to his love, and, again bouncing upwards, opens his bill and pours forth his melody, full of exultation at the conquest he has made.

"They are not the soft sounds of the flute or the hautboy I hear, but the sweeter notes of Nature's own music. The mellowness of the song, the varied modulations and gradations, the extent of its compass, the great brilliancy of execution, are unrivaled. There is probably no bird in the world that possesses all the musical qualifications of the king of song, who has derived all from Nature's self. Yes, readers, all!

"No sooner had he again alighted, and the conjugal contract has been sealed, than, as if his breast were about to be rent with delight, he again pours forth his notes with more softness and richness than before. He now soars higher, glancing around with a vigilant eye, to assure himself that none has witnessed his bliss. When these love scenes are over, he dances through the air, full of animation and delight, and, as if to convince his lovely mate that to enrich her hopes he has much more love in store, he that moment begins anew, and imitates all the notes which Nature has imparted to the other songsters of the grove.

"The musical powers of this bird have often been taken notice of by English naturalists, and persons who find pleasure in listening to the songs of different birds whilst in confinement or at large. Some of these persons have described the notes of the nightingale as occasionally fully equal to those of our bird. I have heard both species in confinement, and in the wild state, and, without prejudice, have no hesitation in pronouncing the notes of the European philomel equal to a soubrette of taste, which, could she study under a Mozart, might perhaps in time become very interesting in her way. But to compare her essays to the finished talent of the Mocking Bird, is, in my opinion, quite absurd."

ESCORTS

Sat., Mar. 29—to Salem - - - - Miss David
Sun., Mar. 30—McBride - - - - Miss David

Winona - - - - Mrs. Steward
Mr. Sherman

Hawley - - - - Miss Lundquist
J. S. Kunkel

