

THE WEST SHORE.

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OUR FEATHERED IMMIGRANTS.



RARELY, if ever, in the history of the nation, has the action of a community had as deep a foundation in sentiment as that of an association of our citizens of German descent, in importing to this state the song birds of their native land. It is nothing new to take from one portion of the globe for propagation in another, the feathered, furred or scaled representatives of the animal kingdom, but the moving impulses have all been of a more sordid or utilitarian nature than those which have led to the action of this society. The brute creation of the universe has been assembled in menageries and museums for the amusement and instruction of the people, and for the pecuniary gain of enterprising managers. Fish, flesh and fowl have been transplanted from native haunts to strange homes, that the sportsman and angler may better amuse himself, or that the people may, at cheaper cost, add to the attractions of their dinner tables; and even municipal authorities have engaged in this work of introducing birds into city parks, though less from a feeling of sentiment than a desire to preserve the trees from the ravages of insect pests. In this action of our German citizens, however, all considerations but those of sentiment are eliminated.

As around the scarred trunk of the forest patriarch twine the fragile vines of spring, so do tender memories of childhood cling about the aging heart of man. Go where he will and do what he may, the home of his youth will ever exist in his mind as a Garden of Eden, a Happy Valley of Amhara, to which, at times, his thoughts will turn with a loving

tenderness. At such times, any familiar object, even the most insignificant, that is identified with those days of childhood invokes feelings of regard nearly akin to reverence. In the same manner, the exile from his native land, though his act of expatriation may have been a voluntary one, though he may have exchanged a life of privation and labor for one of ease and comfort, though he may have forsaken his home to escape the tyrannical rule of an autocrat to enjoy the blessings of political freedom, can not but cherish feelings of tender regard for his native land and the home of his youth, which some familiar object will call into active life. A story is related of the early days in the Australian mines which illustrates this redeeming trait in the human character. During a time at the Ballarat mines when rioting was in progress because of the taxes levied by the government upon the miners, some Americans noticed a great crowd of English miners moving off into the country, and supposing that some important project was on foot, they followed. After a journey of several miles they reached the hut of a stockman, and there the mystery was explained. Hanging in front of the door was a large cage, and within it perched an English bullfinch, from whose throat issued the joyous notes of a song these exiled men had not heard for many weary months and years. Tears came to the eyes of many a rough and hardened man, and for the time being the load of years of dissipation and crime was lifted and the tender sentiments of the natural man appeared.

Happily, neither in physical nor moral condition, can these promoters of the movement to introduce into Oregon the song birds of Germany, be compared with those hardened miners of Ballarat, but the fountain from which their emotions spring is the same. It is not, however, simply a desire to gratify themselves, that these gentlemen have taken the action they have, but, as well, to improve and make more pleasant the conditions of life in the home of their