BRADFORD TORREY

BIRDS IN THE BUSH

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> Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
> And hermits are contented with their cells;
> And students with their pensive citadels:
> Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
> Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
> High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
> Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
> In truth, the prison unto which we doom
> Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
> In sundry moods 't was pastime to be bound
> Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
> Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
> Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
> Should find brief solace there, as I have found.
> Wordsworth.

ON BOSTON COMMON.

Our Common and Garden are not an ideal field of operations for the student of birds. No doubt they are rather straitened and public. Other things being equal, a modest ornithologist would prefer a place where he could stand still and look up without becoming himself a gazing-stock. But "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;" and if we are appointed to take our daily exercise in a city park, we shall very likely find its narrow limits not destitute of some

partial compensations. This, at least, may be depended upon,—our disappointments will be on the right side of the account; we shall see more than we have anticipated rather than less, and so our pleasures will, as it were, come to us double. I recall, for example, the heightened interest with which I beheld my first Boston cat-bird; standing on the back of one of the seats in the Garden, steadying himself with oscillations of his tail,—a conveniently long balance-pole,—while he peeped curiously down into a geranium bed, within the leafy seclusion of which he presently disappeared. He was nothing but a cat-bird; if I had seen him in the country I should have passed him by without a second glance; but here, at the base of the Everett statue, he looked, somehow, like a bird of another feather. Since then, it is true, I have learned that his occasional presence with us in the season of the semi-annual migration is not a matter for astonishment. At that time, however, I was happily more ignorant; and therefore, as I say, my pleasure was twofold,—the pleasure, that is, of the bird's society and of the surprise.

There are plenty of people, I am aware, who assert that there are no longer any native birds in our city grounds,—or, at the most, only a few robins. Formerly things were different, they have heard, but now the abominable English sparrows monopolize every nook and corner. These wise persons speak with an air of positiveness, and doubtless ought to know whereof they affirm. Hath not a Bostonian eyes? And doth he not cross the Common every day? But it is proverbially hard to prove a negative; and some of us, with no thought of being cynical, have ceased to put

unqualified trust in other people's eyesight,—especially since we have found our own to fall a little short of absolute infallibility. My own vision, by the way, is reasonably good, if I may say so; at any rate I am not stone-blind. Yet here have I been perambulating the Public Garden for an indefinite period, without seeing the first trace of a field-mouse or a shrew. I should have been in excellent company had I begun long ago to maintain that no such animals exist within our precincts. But the other day a butcher-bird made us a flying call, and almost the first thing he did was to catch one of these same furry dainties and spit it upon a thorn, where anon I found him devouring it. I would not appear to boast; but really, when I saw what Collurio had done, it did not so much as occur to me to quarrel with him because he had discovered in half an hour what I had overlooked for ten years. On the contrary I hastened to pay him a heart-felt compliment upon his indisputable sagacity and keenness as a natural historian;—a measure of magnanimity easily enough afforded, since however the shrike might excel me at one point, there could be no question on the whole of my immeasurable superiority. And I cherish the hope that my fellow townsmen, who, as they insist, never themselves see any birds whatever in the Garden and Common (their attention being taken up with matters more important), may be disposed to exercise a similar forbearance toward me, when I modestly profess that within the last seven or eight years I have watched there some thousands of specimens, representing not far from seventy species.

Of course the principal part of all the birds to be found in such a place are transient visitors merely. In the long spring

and autumn journeys it will all the time be happening that more or less of the travelers alight here for rest and refreshment. Now it is only a straggler or two; now a considerable flock of some one species; and now a miscellaneous collection of perhaps a dozen sorts.

One of the first things to strike the observer is the uniformity with which such pilgrims arrive during the night. He goes his rounds late in the afternoon, and there is, no sign of anything unusual; but the next morning the grounds are populous,—thrushes, finches, warblers, and what not. And as they come in the dark, so also do they go away again. With rare exceptions you may follow them up never so closely, and they will do nothing more than fly from tree to tree, or out of one clump of shrubbery into another. Once in a great while, under some special provocation, they threaten a longer flight; but on getting high enough to see the unbroken array of roofs, on every side they speedily grow confused, and after a few shiftings of their course dive hurriedly into the nearest tree. It was a mistake their stopping here in the first place; but once here, there is nothing for it save to put up with the discomforts of the situation till after sunset. Then, please heaven, they will be off, praying never to find themselves again in such a Babel.

That most of our smaller birds migrate by night is by this time too well established to need corroboration; but if the student wishes to assure himself of the fact at first hand, he may easily do it by one or two seasons' observations in our Common,—or, I suppose, in any like inclosure. And if he be blest with an ornithologically educated ear, he may still further confirm his faith by standing on Beacon Hill in the

evening—as I myself have often done—and listening to the *chips* of warblers, or the *tseeps* of sparrows, as these little wanderers, hour after hour, pass through the darkness over the city. Why the birds follow this plan, what advantages they gain or what perils they avoid by making their flight nocturnal, is a question with which our inquisitive friend will perhaps find greater difficulty. I should be glad, for one, to hear his explanation.

As a rule, our visitors tarry with us for two or three days; at least I have noticed that to be true in many cases where their numbers, or size, or rarity made it possible to be reasonably certain when the arrival and departure took place; and in so very limited a field it is of course comparatively easy to keep track of the same individual during his stay, and, so to speak, become acquainted with him. I remember with interest several such acquaintanceships.

One of these was with a yellow-bellied woodpecker, the first I had ever seen. He made his appearance one morning in October, along with a company of chickadees and other birds, and at once took up his quarters on a maple-tree near the Ether monument. I watched his movements for some time, and at noon, happening to be in the same place again, found him still there. And there he remained four days. I went to look at him several times daily, and almost always found him either on the maple or on a tulip tree a few yards distant. Without question the sweetness of maple sap was known to *Sphyropicus varius* long before our human ancestors discovered it, and this particular bird, to judge from his actions, must have been a genuine connoisseur; at

all events he seemed to recognize our Boston tree as of a sort not to be met with every day, although to my less critical sense it was nothing but an ordinary specimen of the common *Acer dasycarpum*. He was extremely industrious, as is the custom of his family, and paid no attention to the children playing about, or to the men who sat under his tree, with the back of their seat resting against the trunk. As for the children's noise, he likely enough enjoyed it; for he is a noisy fellow himself and famous as a drummer. An aged clergyman in Washington told me—in accents half pathetic, half revengeful—that at a certain time of the year he could scarcely read his Bible on Sunday mornings, because of the racket which this woodpecker made hammering on the tin roof overhead.

Another of my acquaintances was of a very different type, a female Maryland yellow-throat. This lovely creature, a most exquisite, dainty bit of bird flesh, was in the Garden all by herself on the 6th of October, when the great majority of her relatives must have been already well on their way toward the sunny South. She appeared to be perfectly contented, and allowed me to watch her closely, only scolding mildly now and then when I became too inquisitive. How I did admire her bravery and peace of mind; feeding so quietly, with that long, lonesome journey before her, and the cold weather coming on! No wonder the Great Teacher pointed his lesson of trust with the injunction, "Behold the fowls of the air."

A passenger even worse belated than this warbler was a chipping sparrow that I found hopping about the edge of the Beacon Street Mall on the 6th of December, seven or eight

weeks after all chippers were supposed to be south of Mason and Dixon's line. Some accident had detained him doubtless; but he showed no signs of worry or haste, as I walked round him, scrutinizing every feather, lest he should be some tree sparrow traveling in disguise.

There is not much to attract birds to the Common in the winter, since we offer them neither evergreens for shelter nor weed patches for a granary. I said to one of the gardeners that I thought it a pity, on this account, that some of the plants, especially the zinnias and marigolds, were not left to go to seed. A little untidiness, in so good a cause, could hardly be taken amiss by even the most fastidious taxpayer. He replied that it would be of no use; we hadn't any birds now, and we shouldn't have any so long as the English sparrows were here to drive them away. But it would be of use, notwithstanding; and certainly it would afford a pleasure to many people to see flocks of goldfinches, red-poll linnets, tree sparrows, and possibly of the beautiful snow buntings, feeding in the Garden in midwinter.

Even as things are, however, the cold season is sure to bring us a few butcher-birds. These come on business, and are now welcomed as public benefactors, though formerly our sparrow-loving municipal authorities thought it their duty to shoot them. They travel singly, as a rule, and sometimes the same bird will be here for several weeks together. Then you will have no trouble about finding here and there in the hawthorn trees pleasing evidences of his activity and address. Collurio is brought up to be in love with his work. In his Mother Goose it is written,—

Fe, fi, fo, farrow!
I smell the blood of an English sparrow;

and however long he may live, he never forgets his early training. His days, as the poet says, are "bound each to each by natural piety." Happy lot! wherein duty and conscience go ever hand in hand; for whose possessor

"Love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."

In appearance the shrike resembles the mocking-bird. Indeed, a policeman whom I found staring at one would have it that he *was* a mocking-bird. "Don't you *see* he is? And he's been singing, too." I had nothing to say against the singing, since the shrike will often twitter by the half hour in the very coldest weather. But further discussion concerning the bird's identity was soon rendered needless; for, while we were talking, along came a sparrow, and dropped carelessly into a hawthorn bush, right under the shrike's perch. The latter was all attention instantly, and, after waiting till the sparrow had moved a little out of the thick of the branches, down he pounced. He missed his aim, or the sparrow was too quick for him, and although he made a second swoop, and followed that by a hot chase, he speedily came back without his prey. This little exertion, however, seemed to have provoked his appetite; for, instead of resuming his coffee-tree perch, he went into the hawthorn, and began to feed upon the carcass of a bird which, it seemed, he had previously laid up in store. He was soon frightened off for a few moments by the approach of a third man, and the

policeman improved the opportunity to visit the bush and bring away his breakfast. When the fellow returned and found his table empty, he did not manifest the slightest disappointment (the shrike never does; he is a fatalist, I think); but in order to see what he would do, the policeman tossed the body to him. It lodged on one of the outer twigs, and immediately the shrike came for it; at the same time spreading his beautifully bordered tail and screaming loudly. Whether these demonstrations were intended to express delight, or anger, or contempt, I could not judge; but he seized the body, carried it back to its old place, drove it again upon the thorn, and proceeded to devour it more voraciously than ever, scattering the feathers about in a lively way as he tore it to pieces. The third man, who had never before seen such a thing, stepped up within reach of the bush, and eyed the performance at his leisure, the shrike not deigning to mind him in the least. A few mornings later the same bird gave me another and more amusing exhibition of his nonchalance. He was singing from the top of our one small larch-tree, and I had stopped near the bridge to look and listen, when a milkman entered at the Commonwealth Avenue gate, both hands full of cans, and, without noticing the shrike, walked straight under the tree. Just then, however, he heard the notes overhead, and, looking up, saw the bird. As if not knowing what to make of the creature's assurance, he stared at him for a moment, and then, putting down his load, he seized the trunk with both hands, and gave it a good shake. But the bird only took a fresh hold; and when the man let go, and stepped back to look up, there he sat, to all appearance as unconcerned as if

nothing had happened. Not to be so easily beaten, the man grasped the trunk again, and shook it harder than before; and this time Collurio seemed to think the joke had been carried far enough, for he took wing, and flew to another part of the Garden. The bravado of the butcher-bird is great, but it is not unlimited. I saw him, one day, shuffling along a branch in a very nervous, unshrikely fashion, and was at a loss to account for his unusual demeanor till I caught sight of a low-flying hawk sweeping over the tree. Every creature, no matter how brave, has some other creature to be afraid of; otherwise, how would the world get on?

The advent of spring is usually announced during the first week of March, sometimes by the robins, sometimes by the bluebirds. The latter, it should be remarked, are an exception to the rule that our spring and autumn callers arrive and depart in the night. My impression is that their migrations are ordinarily accomplished by daylight. At all events I have often seen them enter the Common, alight for a few minutes, and then start off again; while I have never known them to settle down for a visit of two or three days, in the manner of most other species. This last peculiarity may be owing to the fact that the European sparrows treat them with even more than their customary measure of incivility, till the poor wayfarers have literally no rest for the soles of their feet. They breed by choice in just such miniature meeting-houses as our city fathers have provided so plentifully for their foreign *protégés*; and probably the latter, being aware of this, feel it necessary to discourage at the outset any idea which these blue-coated American

interlopers may have begun to entertain of settling in Boston for the summer.

The robins may be said to be abundant with us for more than half the year; but they are especially numerous for a month or two early in the season. I have counted more than thirty feeding at once in the lower half of the parade ground, and at nightfall have seen forty at roost in one tree, with half as many more in the tree adjoining. They grow extremely noisy about sunset, filling the air with songs, cackles, and screams, till even the most stolid citizen pauses a moment to look up at the authors of so much clamor.

By the middle of March the song sparrows begin to appear, and for a month after this they furnish delightful music daily. I have heard them caroling with all cheerfulness in the midst of a driving snow-storm. The dear little optimists! They never doubt that the sun is on their side. Of necessity they go elsewhere to find nests for themselves, where they may lay their young; for they build on the ground, and a lawn which is mowed every two or three days would be quite out of the question.

At the best, a public park is not a favorable spot in which to study bird music. Species that spend the summer here, like the robin, the warbling vireo, the red-eyed vireo, the chipper, the goldfinch, and the Baltimore oriole, of course sing freely; but the much larger number which merely drop in upon us by the way are busy feeding during their brief sojourn, and besides are kept in a state of greater or less excitement by the frequent approach of passers-by. Nevertheless, I once heard a bobolink sing in our Garden

(the only one I ever saw there), and once a brown thrush, although neither was sufficiently at home to do himself justice. The "Peabody" song of the white-throated sparrows is to be heard occasionally during both migrations. It is the more welcome in such a place, because, to my ears at least, it is one of the wildest of all bird notes; it is among the last to be heard at night in the White Mountain woods, as well as one of the last to die away beneath you as you climb the higher peaks. On the Crawford bridle path, for instance, I remember that the song of this bird and that of the gray-cheeked thrush[1] were heard all along the ridge from Mount Clinton to Mount Washington. The finest bird concert I ever attended in Boston was given on Monument Hill by a great chorus of fox-colored sparrows, one morning in April. A high wind had been blowing during the night, and the moment I entered the Common I discovered that there had been an extraordinary arrival of birds, of various species. The parade ground was full of snow-birds, while the hill was covered with fox-sparrows,—hundreds of them, I thought, and many of them in full song. It was a royal concert, but the audience, I am sorry to say, was small. It is unfortunate, in some aspects of the case, that birds have never learned that a *matinée* ought to begin at two o'clock in the afternoon.

These sparrows please me by their lordly treatment of their European cousins. One in particular, who was holding his ground against three of the Britishers, moved me almost to the point of giving him three cheers.

Of late a few crow blackbirds have taken to building their nests in one corner of our domain; and they attract at least

their full share of attention, as they strut about the lawns in their glossy clerical suits. One of the gardeners tells me that they sometimes kill the sparrows. I hope they do. The crow blackbird's attempts at song are ludicrous in the extreme, as every note is cracked, and is accompanied by a ridiculous caudal gesture. But he is ranked among the oscines, and seems to know it; and, after all, it is only the common fault of singers not to be able to detect their own want of tunefulness.

I was once crossing the Common, in the middle of the day, when I was suddenly arrested by the call of a cuckoo. At the same instant two men passed me, and I heard one say to the other, "Hear that cuckoo! Do you know what it means? No? Well, *I* know what it means: it means that it's going to rain." It did rain, although not for a number of days, I believe. But probably the cuckoo has adopted the modern method of predicting the weather some time in advance. Not very long afterwards I again heard this same note on the Common; but it was several years before I was able to put the cuckoo into my Boston list, as a bird actually seen. Indeed it is not so very easy to see him anywhere; for he makes a practice of robbing the nests of smaller birds, and is always skulking about from one tree to another, as though he were afraid of being discovered, as no doubt he is. What Wordsworth wrote of the European species (allowance being made for a proper degree of poetic license) is equally applicable to ours:—

> "No bird, but an invisible thing,
> A voice, a mystery."

When I did finally get a sight of the fellow it was on this wise. As I entered the Garden, one morning in September, a goldfinch was calling so persistently and with such anxious emphasis from the large sophora tree that I turned my steps that way to ascertain what could be the trouble. I took the voice for a young bird's, but found instead a male adult, who was twitching his tail nervously and scolding *phee-phee*, *phee-phee*, at a black-billed cuckoo perched near at hand, in his usual sneaking attitude. The goldfinch called and called, till my patience was nearly spent. (Small birds know better than to attack a big one so long as the latter is at rest.) Then, at last, the cuckoo started off, the finch after him, and a few minutes later I saw the same flight and chase repeated. Several other goldfinches were flying about in the neighborhood, but only this one was in the least excited. Doubtless he had special reasons of his own for dreading the presence of this cowardly foe.

One of our regular visitors twice a year is the brown creeper. He is so small and silent, and withal his color is so like that of the bark to which he clings, that I suspect he is seldom noticed even by persons who pass within a few feet of him. But he is not too small to be hectored by the sparrows, and I have before now been amused at the encounter. The sparrow catches sight of the creeper, and at once bears down upon him, when the creeper darts to the other side of the tree, and alights again a little further up. The sparrow is after him; but, as he comes dashing round the trunk, he always seems to expect to find the creeper perched upon some twig, as any other bird would be, and it is only after a little reconnoitring that he again discovers

him clinging to the vertical bole. Then he makes another onset with a similar result; and these manoeœuvres are repeated, till the creeper becomes disgusted, and takes to another tree.

The olive-backed thrushes and the hermits may be looked for every spring and autumn, and I have known forty or fifty of the former to be present at once. The hermits most often travel singly or in pairs, though a small flock is not so very uncommon. Both species preserve absolute silence while here; I have watched hundreds of them, without hearing so much as an alarm note. They are far from being pugnacious, but their sense of personal dignity is large, and once in a while, when the sparrows pester them beyond endurance, they assume the offensive with much spirit. There are none of our feathered guests whom I am gladder to see; the sight of them inevitably fills me with remembrances of happy vacation seasons among the hills of New Hampshire. If only they would sing on the Common as they do in those northern woods! The whole city would come out to hear them.

During every migration large numbers of warblers visit us. I have noted the golden-crowned thrush, the small-billed water-thrush, the black-and-white creeper, the Maryland yellow-throat, the blue yellow-back, the black-throated green, the black-throated blue, the yellow-rump, the summer yellow-bird, the black-poll, the Canada flycatcher, and the redstart. No doubt the list is far from complete, as, of course, I have not used either glass or gun; and without one or other of these aids the observer must be content to let many of these small, tree-top-haunting birds pass

unidentified. The two kinglets give us a call occasionally, and in the late summer and early autumn the humming-birds spend several weeks about our flower-beds.

It would be hard for the latter to find a more agreeable stopping-place in the whole course of their southward journey. What could they ask better than beds of tuberoses, Japanese lilies, *Nicotiana* (against the use of which they manifest not the slightest scruple), petunias, and the like? Having in mind the Duke of Argyll's assertion that "no bird can ever fly backwards,"[2] I have more than once watched these humming-birds at their work on purpose to see whether they would respect the noble Scotchman's dictum. I am compelled to report that they appeared never to have heard of his theory. At any rate they very plainly did fly tail foremost; and that not only in *dropping* from a blossom,—in which case the seeming flight might have been, as the duke maintains, an optical illusion merely,—but even while backing out of the flower-tube in an upward direction. They are commendably catholic in their tastes. I saw one exploring the disk of a sunflower, in company with a splendid monarch butterfly. Possibly he knew that the sunflower was just then in fashion. Only a few minutes earlier the same bird—or another like him—had chased an English sparrow out of the Garden, across Arlington Street, and up to the very roof of a House, to the great delight of at least one patriotic Yankee. At another time I saw one of these tiny beauties making his morning toilet in a very pretty fashion, leaning forward, and brushing first one cheek and then the other against the wet rose leaf on which he was perched.

The only swallows on my list are the barn swallows and the white-breasted. The former, as they go hawking about the crowded streets, must often send the thoughts of rich city merchants back to the big barns of their grandfathers, far off in out-of-the-way country places. Of course we have the chimney swifts, also (near relatives of the humming-birds!), but they are not swallows.

Speaking of the swallows, I am reminded of a hawk that came to Boston, one morning, fully determined not to go away without a taste of the famous imported sparrows. It is nothing unusual for hawks to be seen flying over the city, but I had never before known one actually to make the Public Garden his hunting-ground. This bird perched for a while on the Arlington Street fence, within a few feet of a passing carriage; next he was on the ground, peering into a bed of rhododendrons; then for a long time he sat still in a tree, while numbers of men walked back and forth underneath; between whiles he sailed about, on the watch for his prey. On one of these last occasions a little company of swallows came along, and one of them immediately went out of his way to swoop down upon the hawk, and deal him a dab. Then, as he rejoined his companions, I heard him give a little chuckle, as though he said, "There! did you see me peck at him? You don't think I am afraid of such a fellow as that, do you?" To speak in Thoreau's manner, I rejoiced in the incident as a fresh illustration of the ascendency of spirit over matter.

One is always glad to find a familiar bird playing a new *rôle*, and especially in such a spot as the Common, where, at the best, one can hope to see so very little. It may be

assumed, therefore, that I felt peculiarly grateful to a white-bellied nuthatch, when I discovered him bopping about on the ground—on Monument Hill; a piece of humility such as I had never before detected any nuthatch in the practice of. Indeed, this fellow looked so unlike himself, moving briskly through the grass with long, awkward leaps, that at first sight I failed to recognize him. He was occupied with turning over the dry leaves, one after another,—hunting for cocoons, or things of that sort, I suppose. Twice he found what he was in search of; but instead of handling the leaf on the ground, he flew with it to the trunk of an elm, wedged it into a crevice of the bark, and proceeded to hammer it sharply with his beak. Great is the power of habit! Strange—is it not?—that any bird should find it easiest to do such work while clinging to a perpendicular surface! Yes; but how does it look to a dog, I wonder, that men can walk better on their hind legs than on all fours? Everything is a miracle from somebody's point of view. The sparrows were inclined to make game of my obliging little performer; but he would have none of their insolence, and repelled every approach in dashing style. In exactly three weeks from this time, and on the same hillside, I came upon another nuthatch similarly employed; but before this one had turned up a leaf to his mind, the sparrows became literally too many for him, and he took flight,—to my no small disappointment.

It would be unfair not to name others of my city guests, even though I have nothing in particular to record concerning them. The Wilson thrush and the red-bellied nuthatch I have seen once or twice each. The chewink is more constant in his visits, as is also the golden-winged

woodpecker. Our familiar little downy woodpecker, on the other hand, has thus far kept out of my catalogue. No other bird's absence has surprised me so much; and it is the more remarkable because the comparatively rare yellow-bellied species is to be met with nearly every season. Cedar-birds show themselves irregularly. One March morning, when the ground was covered with snow, a flock of perhaps a hundred collected in one of the taller maples in the Garden, till the tree looked from a distance like an autumn hickory, its leafless branches still thickly dotted with nuts. Four days afterward, what seemed to be the same company made their appearance in the Common. Of the flycatchers, I have noted the kingbird, the least flycatcher, and the phœbe. The two former stay to breed. Twice in the fall I have found a kingfisher about the Frog Pond. Once the fellow sprung his watchman's rattle. He was perhaps my most unexpected caller, and for a minute or so I was not entirely sure whether indeed I was in Boston or not. The blue jay and the crow know too much to be caught in such a place, although one may often enough see the latter passing overhead. Every now and then, in the traveling season, a stray sandpiper or two will be observed teetering round the edge of the Common and Garden ponds; and one day, when the latter was drained, I saw quite a flock of some one of the smaller species feeding over its bottom. Very picturesque they were, feeding and flying in close order. Besides these must be mentioned the yellow-throated vireo, the bay-winged bunting, the swamp sparrow, the field sparrow, the purple finch, the red-poll linnet, the savanna sparrow, the tree sparrow, the night-hawk (whose celebrated tumbling trick

may often be witnessed by evening strollers in the Garden), the woodcock (I found the body of one which had evidently met its death against the electric wire), and among the best of all, the chickadees, who sometimes make the whole autumn cheerful with their presence, but about whom I say nothing here because I have said so much elsewhere.

Of fugitive cage-birds, I recall only five—all in the Garden. One of these, feeding tamely in the path, I suspected for an English robin but he was not in full plumage, and my conjecture may have been incorrect. Another was a diminutive finch, dressed in a suit of red, blue, and green. He sat in a bush, saying *No, no!* to a feline admirer who was making love to him earnestly. The others were a mocking-bird, a cardinal grosbeak, and a paroquet. The mocking-bird and the grosbeak might possibly have been wild, had the question been one of latitude simply, but their demeanor satisfied me to the contrary. The former's awkward attempt at alighting on the tip of a fence-picket seemed evidence enough that he had not been long at large. The paroquet was a splendid creature, with a brilliant orange throat darkly spotted. He flew from tree to tree, chattering gayly, and had a really pretty song. Evidently he was in the best of spirits, notwithstanding the rather obtrusive attentions of a crowd of house sparrows, who appeared to look upon such a wearer of the green as badly out of place in this new England of theirs. But for all his vivacity, I feared he would not be long in coming to grief. If he escaped other perils, the cold weather must soon overtake him, for it was now the middle of September, and his last state would be worse than