

THE CROSS-ROADS.

Where the roads crossed we met, My love and I; In the near bay the ships Tossed heavily.

His accents broke the pause— My tongue was tied; He found I had words to say— My soul replied.

At the cross-roads we kissed— I stood alone, He was the seaward road, Mine the home.

Dravay the great world grew, An' I the sun cold; So young, an' hour ago, I had grown old.

TO DAFFODILS.

Fair daffodils, we weep to see You haste away so soon; As yet the early rising sun Has not attained his noon.

We have short time to stay as you, We have short time to spring, As quick a breath to meet decay, As you or any thing.

A SQUATTER'S ADVENTURE.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

The tornado or hurricane of the far West—"herrikin" the backwoodsman call it—is a species of tempest very similar in character and effects to the typhoons and cyclones of the far East.

In traversing the Western States it is not uncommon to come across the track of a tornado. If it be in a timbered district the trees will be seen all down, their tops turned in the same direction.

The effects of such storms are often of the most eccentric kind. There is a well-authenticated instance of a barn-door fowl, a "rooster," having been stripped bare of his feathers, standing tail towards the tempest when it struck him—chanteicleer escaping without any further damage!

"I'd made 'bout a acre o' claim, an' had got a shanty set up for the ole woman an' myself on the edge o' the standin' timber.

"I war down by the eend o' the clarin—that air the eend furrest away from the shanty. I war busy pickin' off the years o' corn an' shuckin' them inter a basket, an' didn't notice ne'er a cloud in the sky till all at once it sud'ntly darkened over, as if night had kum on three hours afore its time.

"I kedd'n't give the ghost o' a guess what war up, nor hed I any time for conjecterin'. Afore I ked count ten I war heisted myself—right up into the air, as ef I'd suddenly been supplied wi' a pair o' wings, an' flyin' like a eagle.

"When I rekeriv'd them, which I did arter somethin' like a hour I reckon, I seed I war up in a tree; but, boys, prechaps in the most keurous preedikament any man ever war in among treetops.

"I looked to see my shanty. Thar wa'n't one log on another, nor yit war thar a log in sight. The shanty had been clur carried off, the clay chimbley along wi' it, an' wuss still, all the sticks o' plenishin' it contained. The boss-shed and corn-crib hed also disappeared.

"Wal, boys, while makin' these observashuns I war in a fix meself, an' a durned queery one, as I've already gi'n ye a hint. What do ye suppose it war? Wal, I kedd'n't wait, for ye'd hev neery chance to guess. I war in a fork!

"Wal, boys, I kedd'n't tell ye, it war any thin' but a comfortable fix to be in. To say nothin' o' the unpleasant position, wi' my legs danglin' down, an' the hard dead-wood branches squeezin' ag'in my ribs, I hed the thort to trouble me that I mont never git releaved out o' the predicament.

"Take my word for't, boys, I war in a ugly fix, an' as the hours passed I feel'd skeerier and skeerier. I had jist begun to gi'e up hope, thiakin' I must stay up thar till I bodded my last, an' then stay like a 'possum thet's been shot an' still elings wi' his tail to a branch.

"Wal, boys, ye may think it war all over, but it wa'n't. My ole 'oman war thar down on the groun' an' I up in the tree. Thar war we, man an' wife, not more'n thirty feet apart. Fr all that, we war as well se'parated as if a Indiana divorce-court hed passed sentence atween us.

"An' thar hed I to stay till she remounted the ole hoss an' rode back to the cross-roads store, whur a when o' fellurs war soon gathered and kim on wi' ropes an' a ladder.

"They got me down at last; but but 'twar all a month afore my ribs feel'd right arter the ugly squeezein' they'd experienced atween the two prongs o' the dead-wood.

A most realistic piece of acting was recently witnessed in New York City, where the heroine and the young man cast for her father both lisped in speech. At the recognition, after long estrangement, he said: "Aith I live, it ith my thilde," and she said, "Yeth, yeth, father, I am your own thilde."

A Distressing Case.

The conjunction of the season of gifts with the season of Revolutionary memories presents a fitting opportunity for directing the attention of our patriotic and benevolent citizens to a case of extreme destitution that has lately been brought to our notice; it is that of Mr. John Blake Washington and his family, of Sunnerville, S. C., whose entire fortune was swept away by the civil war, and who are now reduced to the necessity of depending for the very means of subsistence on the charity of their friends.

Mr. Washington's present distress is not owing in any wise to willful idleness; he has made every effort in the last few years to embark in some kind of business, but in vain. Mrs. Washington, his devoted wife, has opened a children's school, but thus far has succeeded in getting but two pupils, each of whom pays the miserable fee of two and one-half dollars a month.

The plight of this unfortunate family is both painful and urgent; they need assistance, and need it speedily. Are there not some among our favored countrymen whom this appeal will reach ready to extend a helping hand? A trifle saved from the holiday fund will scarcely be missed, and there is no telling the happiness it may carry to this impoverished home, which has sometimes seen whole days pass without the spreading of its frugal table.

A Bird's Petition.

The following unique petition, says the San Francisco Chronicle, was received at the Clerk's office of the Board of Supervisors on Monday, and was presented to the Board that night. It was written evidently by a lady, as indicated by the tiny and dainty chirography:

To the Honorable Board of Supervisors: We, the denizens of the air, address our plaintive prayer. For our sakes, and the sakes of hundreds of gentle comrades who, in their brief span of life gladdened, amid the weighty cares of your position oftentimes, your hearts with their sweet warblings and tender ways, but who now, alas! lie moldering on the groun, we, the mourning survivors, beg with bleeding hearts that you, in your pity for us, make stern laws and have them sternly enforced; for with their dreadful slung shots the wicked school-boys make our lives full of endless cares and anxiety; they frighten and worry our gentle mates, daily drop from our midst our beloved brethren, and leave us to weep our bitter tears over the untimely end of our fellow-creatures and our own uncertain future.

A Mammoth Workshop.

What science and the mechanic arts have done for the world's advancement in comfort may be faintly guessed from the survey of a week's work at the manufacturing city of Birmingham alone. Its results are the making, among other things, of 14,000,000 pens, 6,000 bedsteads, 7,000 guns, 300,000,000 cut nails, 100,000,000 buttons, 1,000 saddles, 5,000,000 copper or bronze coins, 20,000 pairs of spectacles, six tons of paper-mache wares, more than £30,000 worth of jewelry, 4,000 miles of iron and steel wire, ten tons of pins, five tons of hair-pins and hooks and eyes, 130,000 gross of wood screws, 500 tons of nuts and screw bolts and spikes, 50 tons of wrought-iron hinges, 350 miles' length of wax for matches, 40 tons of refined metal, 40 tons of German silver, 100 dozen of fenders, 3,500 bellows and 800 tons of brass and copper ware.

The Death of Little Amy.

We drew closer to the bedside, a stillness, as of death, being on us all. We took one tiny hand, now wasted and pale, within our warm palms, when the large blue eyes opened to their fullest extent, and a sweet voice said to the weeping mother, "Tiss me, mamma, once more." She had gone to Him. We think, as our memory takes us back, of a little mischievous girl, with bright blue eyes and rosy face, who, coming in from school with books under her arms would cry out, "Tiss me, mamma; I'm so cold." One little chair is empty at table; one little bed will ne'er again contain Amy; and the room, ah, so cheerless now!—Boston Transcript.

OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS.

Some-thing About the Trade in Canaries and Other Birds, with Hints as to Their Proper Food and Treatment.

A reporter of the New York Graphic has interviewed a leading bird importer in that city, and from him obtained the following interesting information concerning the feathered pets of our household:

Twenty-eight years ago the taste for singing birds barely existed, and in their first year the firm only managed to sell 1,200 birds, all of which were disposed of in this city. The trade has grown largely since then, and last year the sales of the house amounted to 80,000 canaries alone, which were sent to all parts of the Union, and some of them went as far off as South America. The canary is the staple of the business.

WHERE THE CANARIES COME FROM.

These birds almost all come from the Hartz Mountains, in Germany, and the country surrounding, where, though the bird is indigenous to the Canary Islands, it has attained its greatest perfection as a songster. In fact the modern canary is the result of careful breeding, and is as much superior to the original stock as the Durham short-horn cow or the Berkshire pig is to the Adams and Eyes of the bovine and porcine species.

The canary of the Canary Islands is a sharp-billed, shrill-voiced little fellow very similar both in personal appearance and in note to our own yellow bird. By a persistent regard to the advantages to be gained from artificial selection of the breeders and by musical training the Hartz mountaineers have developed the modern canary, and created a trade which helps them to eke out a precarious existence.

The average duration of a canary's life is, or ought to be, from five to seven years, but, unfortunately, after his transformation from an article of commerce to an interesting and too much beloved pet his chances of achieving a ripe old seven years of age are very poor indeed. Occasionally, yet very seldom, neglect is the cause of his premature taking off, but as a rule it is due to a mistaken kindness, combined with an ignorance of what a bird's requirements really are.

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OTHER SINGING BIRDS.

Next to the canaries the different kind

of finches rank as popular songsters. Amongst these the staples are the goldfinch, which sells at \$2.50; the linnet and chaffinch, which sell at \$2, and the bullfinch, whose price, like that of a prima donna, depends upon the result which has rewarded the cultivation of his voice. An uncultured bullfinch sells for \$3, but one who has been in the hands of a maestro and can sing a selection from the operas or a national anthem is vastly more valuable, selling, in fact, all the way from \$20 to \$50.

The thrush is a great favorite with some people, but it is difficult of sale occasionally unless its nationality is concealed. All the thrushes which are brought to this country in the regular way of business are Europeans by birth, so that when an Irish purchaser calls for an "Irish thrush" the trade is unable to comply with the request, though the bird they have for sale is identical in size, plumage and song with hisibernian cousin. The Irish purchaser, however, the minute he hears that the bird is a German by birth declines to purchase him.

The nightingale is the sweetest of all singers, but is a very difficult bird to keep, as it is extremely delicate, and the utmost care must be taken with its diet. Its food is ants' eggs mixed with a compound of grated hard-boiled egg, carrot, and bread. There is a prepared food on which the bird will thrive, but if properly cared for the food should be made fresh every morning as described. A good nightingale sells for \$25.

The black-cap, which sells at \$6, and the English robin, which sells at \$4, are good singers. They are fed the same as the nightingale. Among other singing birds may be mentioned the blackbird, the starling, the skylark, and the woodlark. These are the principal singing-birds which are imported to this country from Europe.

American is not very prolific of natural songsters, for beyond Kellogg, Albani, and Cary, the mocking-bird is the only worthy representative of our country's vocal resources. This bird, however, is a very versatile genius, combining, like the lightho undiscovered tenor of Mr. Mapleson, great power and sweetness of voice and mimetic ability of the highest order. He can sing exactly like any other bird or number of birds whose song he has ever heard, and his own natural song is as sweet as any, so that it is plain that he is essentially an American bird, the E. pharibus nunn of ornithology in fact. They are brought to the North in the summer season, from New Orleans principally, in batches of from 500 to 1,000 at a time. The dealers here select and buy the males, and keep them until they have become good singers, when they offer them for sale. The females are peddled around the streets by unprincipled hucksters for what they will bring.

The parrot cannot be called a singing bird properly; his forte lies in his conversational powers. In the exercise of these he accommodates himself to circumstances with a facility truly surprising, and swears and quotes the Scriptures in obedience to the whim of his master. The value of a parrot depends upon the extent of his vocabulary, and a good talker has been known to fetch \$100. They are very long-lived birds, in this respect being an improvement upon the singers.

ORNAMENTAL BUT SONGLESS BIRDS.

As a rule the plumage of singing birds is very plain, brilliancy of feathers being the requisite of the silent of the bird race. In these songless but beautiful birds there is quite a large business done in this city, many of our wealthier citizens considering their home elegance incomplete without an aviary filled with different kinds of foreign and domestic birds famous for their beauty. Among the most popular are the African finches, of which there are about twenty different varieties, which vary in value according to the brilliancy of their plumes. Of these the veda, or widow-bird, whose tail feathers frequently measure a foot in length, and which on that account is sometimes mis-called the bird of Paradise, is a favorite. The weaver bird is also in good demand, not so much on account of its beauty as because of its wonderful ingenuity in utilizing thread material in connection with the wires of the aviary which it weaves together, the cloth it manufactures being so dense and finely interwoven that it can only be removed by cutting it with a sharp instrument. There are three kinds of weavers, known as the Napoleon and Bishop, which are very richly plumed, and the common weaver, which is a plainer bird. Among the African finches may be mentioned the St. Helena, the silver-beak, the wax-bill, the orange-check, the cut-throat, and others whose names suggest the peculiarity after which they are called. The price of these ornamental birds runs from \$5 to \$8.

BREAKFAST CAKES.—1 pint buttermilk, 1 egg, 1 teaspoonful soda, 1 teaspoonful molasses. Stir in middlings till a little thicker than for griddle cakes; bake in hot gem pans.