

Seeds and berries, of course, some birds will eat, and perhaps they will take a *small* percentage of your fruit as a "Commission" for saving the rest.

Are not rooks when following the plough generally eating the wire-worm and the creatures which destroy your corn? and so with other birds, yet allotment men have the barbarous stupidity to sweep all the birds sleeping on the bushes after dark into their nets and have had their allotments eaten up by insects in consequence—so with oak trees. If you hang up a mutton bone with a little meat and fat on it, in a low tree in winter, do you not soon find it covered with tom-tits feeding?

When the gardener shoots the little birds and the game-keeper the larger ones, or, worse still, traps them, it is doubtful if a large bird recovers the indignity of being trapped—but when taken out afterwards, not much hurt, except in his feelings, tho' nursed, and mice presented to him, refuses to eat, and dies of disgust. One knows that the Order of Nature is being upset, and that these men are bringing about the very thing they thought to prevent.

It is well known that the destruction of owls has brought about a plague of field mice.

A gentleman fond of his rooks had grain scattered on his gravel walk to attract them. The rooks never condescended to look at the grain, tho' at least one old fellow waddled about on the grass close by feeding—and the surrounding trees were full of rooks. But the grain brought a plague of sparrows, which has never ceased.

A land owner had two estates in neighbouring, not adjoining counties, soil, climate, etc., pretty much alike. In one he let his gardener shoot all the birds, in the other he forbade it. The latter always had plenty of fruit, the former none.

Does a silent suspicion ever visit anyone where the birds are not shot and complaint is made that all the cherries and gooseberries have been eaten by them, that a much larger two-legged creature has been there?

The lively nuthatch, unable to eat any of the commoner foods, may be allured by *hazel nuts* from his trees, and so brought through the winter.

Alas! for the unspeakable folly of making the lark a common dish at table!

Doubtless, dear Sirs, you make your little *Country Members* observe what the *wild birds* eat and *distribute* them largesse *accordingly during the winter*, thus saving the lives of the sweet songsters for the Spring.

Even in large towns, much may be done to save the birds' lives, and gladden the parks next spring with blackbirds, robins and even thrushes, provided always: 1, that your neighbour does not overwhelm you with sparrows by constant "crumbing," 2, that you can feed your birds out of reach of the cat inhabitants of leads.

Tree creepers have not been mentioned here, because they are not songsters. But if you give nothing but crumbs, the poor little tree creepers who do not speak will come to your balcony and go away, finding nothing, to die.

Still few learn the lesson—few except the cook who lived near one of the large parks and who cut up everything left, and punctually at the same hour appeared with her meaty stores, yet not more punctually than the birds, who assembled half an hour before and on her appearance flew down at her feet. To her that park was indebted for many of its songsters.

Cock Robin and Jenny Wren are no longer the Darlings of our childhood. The lovely little flirt, the wren, has almost disappeared from some parts. The Golden-Crested Wren no longer hangs her nest from the evergreen tree. Cock Robin, every inch a cavalier, with his scarlet waistcoat, so spick and span, with his sword by his side, avoids a humiliating contest with the Roundhead sparrow, now in these days the Trades Union Sparrow.

"Nobody would kill a robin," says the sentimental man. No, but the nets? do they discriminate?

The blackbird, in a very hard winter, comes with the first glint of dawn, long before it is light, to his entertainer's window, and if she does not rise to give him a breakfast, or if it is only bread, he retires, so disappointed. Nobody makes you, my Lady Disdain, may be said by many.

But I appeal, dear Sir, to your affection and esteem for the birds and children to be the "Dicky-birds'" efficient friend,

and believe me,

Your and their faithful servt.,

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

I regret that, under the severe pressure always of work and ill health, I am unable to do more.

Excuse an interrupted

and somewhat disjointed

F. N.

letter.

#### LETTER II.

Feb. 26/95.

10, South Street,  
Park Lane, W.

To the Editor

of *The Newcastle Chronicle*.

Sir,

May I thank you for your kindness to wild birds and for so kindly sending me two copies of the well-known paper *The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, Feb. 16/95 "Supplement" and its fellow.

Might I farther request of your kindness to send me to the above address, twelve copies of the same, if it be not troubling you too much?

Much has still to be done to restrain by enlightenment the cruelty of School boys? I was shocked to hear the other day from the brother of a school boy in a respectable old country town, *eminently* respectable with its schools, its Abbey Church, its river, and what is called its "good tone," that its boys were in the habit of trapping small birds in this severe weather, and cutting off their heads!!! There was not even the temptation of selling them for a penny—it was sheer brutality among these poor little fellows.

With every kind wish for the Dicky Bird Society.

I beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

### THE DICKY BIRD SOCIETY.

Through the kindness of the Organising Editor of the "Newcastle Chronicle" I have been able to obtain information concerning The Dicky Bird Society. It was founded by the "Newcastle Weekly Chronicle" in 1876, "being a children's circle conducted by Uncle Toby for the protection of kindness towards birds and living things." When the children join the Society they have to pledge themselves in the following manner:

#### Member's Pledge.

I promise to be kind to all living things—to protect them to the uttermost of my power, to feed birds in winter-time, and never take or destroy a nest. I also promise to get as many boys and girls as possible to join the Dicky Bird Society.

Over 400,000 names of children appear on the roll, which is still maintained, and fresh members are joining.

On February 16, 1895, there appeared in the "Newcastle Weekly Chronicle" a most interesting article written by Uncle Toby which incorporated Miss Nightingale's letter. Uncle Toby ends his article: "Some birds, it is true, have no sorrow in their song, no winter in their year; but multitudes of them have to bear all the rigours of the inverted year, and for them Miss Nightingale's homily pleads with tactful eloquence." A.M.B.

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