

make the oodies of birds objects of sacred regard to most boys so that they shall not wish to deprive them of life.

In every city a considerable number of birds meet accidental death every year, especially during the seasons of migrations. Many of these are picked up by the children while fresh and fit to handle. These unfortunate birds will become the source of most of our material. In any corps of teachers we would expect to find at least one with sufficient knowledge of taxidermy to prepare the skins suitably for preservation and study. Some of the older boys will gladly learn to do this work, and a few will become quite efficient, so that the labor will not only be taken off the hands of the teacher but will become of educational value to the pupils.

The deserted nests should be freely taken for study. After studying, in winter, the nests of last season, most pupils will be early on watch to see the new nests built. This will lead them to observe the more touching actions of the birds. At all times the teacher should be on the watch for opportunities to make direct appeal to the moral nature, but it should be done unobtrusively.

4. *Organize pupils into bird-protecting societies.* By this means unite all pupils, who are sufficiently awakened, in an effort to protect the birds and their nests, to provide nesting places for those species that come near human habitations, and to exert a restraining and educating influence on the thoughtless and vicious. By this means the few children who never enter the public schools could be watched and possibly influenced.

In an attempt to carry out the plan outlined above some difficulties and dangers must be met. Considerable knowledge of birds is necessary to the one who directs the undertaking. Details of method in the school room would occupy pages and would not be in place here. It is sufficient for the present to state that the writer knows where this plan is being tried with encouraging progress.

C. D. McLouth.

Muskegon, Mich., Dec. 16, 1893.

#### BIRD NOTES.

THE notes published in a recent issue of *Science* on "Birds Which Sing on the Nest" recalls an interesting instance of this kind that came to my notice last summer. It shows that the black-billed cuckoo is not always as quiet and retiring as we generally consider him. A pair of these birds built their nest in my friend's door-yard, so close to the house that it afforded a good opportunity to observe them. This pair were unusually loquacious, and throughout the period of incubation the bird on the nest was often heard holding a conversation with its mate lurking in the trees about the premises. When one bird flew to its perch on a certain tree, preparatory to flying to the nest, there was likely to be considerable chatter before it approached nearer. It is interesting to note that while some birds are quiet when incubating, as if to escape observation, their young often make considerable noise while yet in the nest. The flicker is a case in point. To merely hammer on the tree in which the nest is located is often enough to set the whole family going. I have also heard young bluebirds calling "*we-a-ry*" from their nest in a hollow stub. And, as for the young crow, his "*gobble, gobble, gobble*," when being fed, is a well-known sound in the woods in spring, and often betrays the nest to the young bird's-nester.

WILLARD N. CLUTE.

Binghamton, N. Y., Dec. 13, 1893.

#### POSTAGE ON NATURAL HISTORY SPECIMENS.

In your issue of Nov. 17, with reference to a ruling that natural history specimens cannot be transmitted through the mails as "samples" it is suggested that the various scientific bodies of the United States should use their influence to induce the governments of certain enumerated countries to consent to such material passing by sample post. It is sought to throw the blame upon the countries in question, whereas the trouble arises solely from the fact that the United States have not yet advanced far enough to have a *parcel post* as is in operation among these other countries. There is no difficulty in transmitting specimens from Canada to the most remote coun-

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