THE BUTCHER BIRD.

HE KILLS FOR PLEASURE AND PUTS HIS VICTIMS OUT TO DRY.

He Ranges Southern, Middle and Chiaparrosa on Thorn Bushes—A Veritable Terror of the Woods—A Bird That as Well as Murderous—The Half Breed Robin.

My bird native to this country is the little Shrike, and surely some one has such striking habits of life as the strike, or butcher bird. He is a member of a family comprising some 300 species, of which only one will indeed additionally be resident in North America. Bold, daring, handsome he is at once the bugbear and the bane of the woods. At a little distance a southerner would readily mistake him for the meadow bird.

His bright gray plumage, tail flecked with white and head black patch are more gay than a train, pantry are quite pleasing to the eye, but, alas, a deadful object as smaller and weaker birds. His habitat is northern North America, and though he breeds in the high ground of New England and New York he grows more common after the Canadian line is crossed.

The strike is a born tyrant. He contest with killing and devouring all insects large enough to attract his fancy, he attacks reptiles, mice and small birds to some extent opportunity offers. His disposition is so miserable at home as abroad, he seldom are two or more seen together but they are engaged in an ugly family quarrel. They are truly carnivorous, and except for the vegetable food that small muscle would rank as true birds of prey.

There is one strange, uncanny characteristic, however, which separates this woodland bully from all known birds. Naturalists have watched and studied it, pondered over it and written long pages of inexplicable explanations of it, and common people have doubted in their superstition or ignorance whether it was the doing of a bird or a demon in bird form. Today it vanishes as deep a mystery as it was 100 years ago.

This is the parole. The butcher bird in his nature love of killing slays many more victims than he has any possible use for. He seems to do it for the mere sport of the thing. Instead of hurting him, however, he carries them one by one to some choice hedge or tree and there impales them in all sorts of fantastic positions to the branches. It gives one a shock to come out of a glade of woods with a view of a fine young tree laden with a ghastly crop of lizards, toads, sparrows, grass snakes, lizards and chipmunks.

If the strike ever returned to feed upon his prize hoard, there would be an explanation of his conduct, and he would be credited with the ignorant belief of a thoroughbred vulture who likes things "a bit gamy." But such is not the case. The weird fruit hangs for days upon the limbs, and if hawks or crows do not find and eat it it will rot until only a few tiny white skeletons remain to fall of the season.

Comparatively few dwellers in the backwoods know this countenance of the butcher bird, and hence arise many errors and apparently well authenticated stories of how that cruel bird is in their branches and of secrets that entail down trade and hearts, so that the trees were full of them.

The butcher bird is a born thief as well as a murderer and often makes his death wrote hopelessly embarrassing to kill and carry off a game pot bird from a cage or to rob a hunter's cabin of fresh meat. Any tidbit he finds he will steal, even if only to suspend it from a lowest bough hard by. The Canadian farmers and trappers despise him heartily and never lose a chance to kill him. The half breeds call him "Whisky Joe" and claim he is half drunk all the time, and loose dose those foolish things.

He will spy out the most carefully hidden trap and always manage to purloin the bait without being caught. The wild country north of the great lakes is a favorite haunt of these butchers, and the Indians who hunt and sell furs to the Hudson Bay Company's monopoly are utterly of the depredations of "Whisky Joe."

The strike builds a bulky, somewhat elaborate nest of heavy sticks below, and upon this foundation a warm covering of twigs, leaves and grass is laid. It is usually in one low tree, and the eggs, which are somewhat smaller than a pigeon's, are decidedly pretty. They are of a greyish green mottled, spotted and streaked with reddish brown. The young birds remain with their parents by sounding and fighting as soon as hatched, in which amicable diversion their fond parents set them a fitting and perpetual example.—New York World.

CHEAPEST POULTRY RATION.

But Sinew Bone an Important Factor. Value of Animal Food.

Progressive poultry men recognize the advantage of feeding animal food of some kind to poultry. They also understand the relief of not having to feed fleshing refuse. Up to within a few years only dry bones were used in this way because of the difficulty in supplying green bone into suitable size for feeding. Since then machines have been put upon the market for cutting or chopping bone into suitable size for feeding. Since that