

HOLDEN'S NEW BOOK ON BIRDS

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Holden's New Book on Birds by George H. Holden

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GEORGE H. HOLDEN

**HOLDEN'S NEW
BOOK ON BIRDS**

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NEW
BOOK ON BIRDS.

BY
GEORGE H. HOLDEN.

Little dewdrops of celestial melody. — CARLYLE.

KEEP YOUR BIRDS IN HEALTH.
THE FOOD, CARE, BREEDING, DISEASES AND TREATMENT
OF HOUSE BIRDS.

GEORGE H. HOLDEN, PUBLISHER,
240 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.
(Between 15th and 16th Streets.)
11 BOWDOIN SQUARE, BOSTON, MASS.

1903.



ANNOUNCEMENT.

*Mr. George H. Holden personally manages
the New York establishment, No. 240 Sixth
Avenue, near 15th Street, and can be ad-
dressed, or seen, there.*





THE SONG OF BIRDS.

BY W. W. CALDWELL.

WHEN spring returns in bud and flower,
And south winds breathe o'er hill and plain,
And winter's cold hath lost its power ;
Then longings come to hear again
From field and grove the blackbird's call,
The sparrow's chirp, and, over all,
The bobolink's exultant strain.

When summer blushes in the rose,
And woodland odors fill the air,
And all the grassy wayside glows
With golden light and blossoms fair ;
In welcome shade I love to rest,
While near me, o'er his hidden nest,
The linnet trills, and lulls my care :

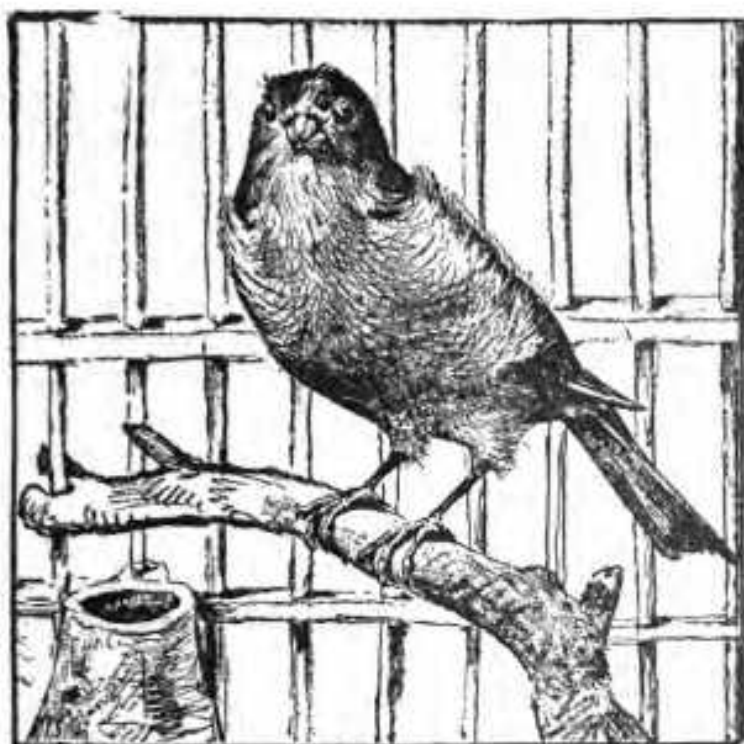
Or wake at early dawn, when now
Faint flushes up the orient play,
And hear from every leafy bough
Glad choirs their adoration pay ;
Or, when the twilight purples die,
Thrill to the robin's plaintive cry,
His farewell to departing day.

And still, when winter spreads around
The chilly covering of the snow,
And woods in dreary silence bound
No more with sounds of joy o'erflow,
Beside my hearth I sit, and hear
The same sweet music ringing clear,
And summer-time within I know.

For look ! where at the window swings
Yon blithe canary, full of glee ;
And answers to my call, and sings
All day his varied melody,
So that I seem to hear again
The skylark's song across the main,
Or nightingale in Thessaly.

NEWSBURYPORT, Jan. 14, 1875.





ST. ANDREASBERG CANARY.

(THREE QUARTERS NATURAL SIZE.)

The canaries generally kept in America are bred either in Germany or in England. The Germans breed birds for their songs, while the English breed especially for high colors and larger sizes. Most every part of Germany has its canary breeding district, but the larger numbers are bred by the inhabitants of the villages in the Harz Mountains. These birds are called the Harz canaries. They are about five and one half inches long, with compact bodies,

well proportioned, and in color varying from the light mealy to the clear green; some have crests. Their singing qualities commend them to the world at large; hence the strife among the buyers from Russia, Europe, and America to obtain the best, the selected stock. It is hardly necessary to say that we, in America, are ready to pay well for this most delightful merchandise, and in this case money not only talks, it also sings, and you hear the songs—sweeter sounds than the jingle of all the gold Mother Earth ever bore us.

The Harz canary has a mellow voice with a good variety of notes, and varying from the medium to the louder and softer songs. That is, some singers have voices of medium volume, while others have louder songs, and still others have the lower, softer voices. There is also quite a difference in the compass of the voices, some singing higher and also lower than others, and some voices are confined to the high notes, while others have the contralto register. That is, a canary voice may be a tenor, a soprano, or a contralto; or it may have some notes in all these parts.

The original canary, the forefather of all canaries, wore a dull yellowish-green coat, and had a voice like the sparrow. Man caught him, recognized the possibility of making an improvement in him, and kept right at the cultivation for some hundreds of generations, a canary generation is one year, and we see and hear the charming results.

Being familiar with the demands of cultivated bird

lovers here, and being personally acquainted with the largest dealers and breeders in Germany, it is possible to show those breeders what qualities of voice are most sought after in America. The best argument so far used is gold; but I have had moments when a rapid-fire gun seemed necessary to let in a little daylight to open up some subject whose brain was protected with that more than steel-clad armor, precedent.

The differences in the voices, explained above, result from certain methods pursued by the breeders. In the German districts each breeder tries each year to obtain certain desirable characteristics in the voices of his birds, and in a few years some thus get a reputation for breeding such special birds. There are bird-shows and singing matches with blue ribbon and other attachments, so that the exact results which each man has actually obtained are known, not alone in Germany, but in one of the best markets, New York; and to the blue ribbon man over goes our gold to buy his next year's raising, months before the eggs are laid, and nearly two years before the voices will be sold by me in New York or Boston, or perhaps to some bird lover in St. Louis or San Francisco, whose face I have never seen, and yet am well acquainted with him, his tastes, and daily needs, through the mail bag and telegraph wires.

So I am not only "counting the chickens before the eggs are hatched," but I buy the bird a year before the egg is laid from which he is to issue, and often sell "him" prior to his existence, guaranteeing