developed. Some birds have the faculty of seeing at a great distance with marvellous acuteness. The hawk will discern his prey at a great distance; and in the cities of the East, where the wild birds are sometimes fed by the inhabitants as a matter of duty, if a man goes out upon the flat roof of a house, and strews food around him, in a few moments he will see the storks and other birds careering through the air towards him, though when he went up not a single bird was in view. Though they have no external ears, the sense of hearing is very fine in birds, for many of them can not only hear sounds at a great distance, but can distinguish the difference between the various notes and modulations. This is shown by the fact that bullfinches learn to whistle tunes, and many birds of the parrot and pye tribe to utter words and sentences.

In sagacity, too, and the faculty of imitation, some birds are not inferior to the most teachable of quadrupeds. Every one in our large towns has seen the "performing canaries," trained to draw little waggons, to fire tiny cannon, to fall down as if shot, and to go through many similar feats and tricks; and an instance is recorded in which a stork played at hide-and-seek with a party of children, taking his share in the amusement with an air of grave enjoyment very ludicrous to behold. The affection of many species for their young is also very remarkable. Some will lure the hunter or the dogs away from their nest by affecting to be wounded, and thus tempting their enemy to pursue them by the hope of capture; until, when they consider they have placed a sufficient distance between the pursuer and their nest, they rise suddenly in the air and speed away home, leaving the baffled foe gazing after them in astonishment. One of our great writers, Joseph Addison, especially notices the care and attention bestowed by the hen upon her domestic concerns. "With what caution," he says, "does the hen provide herself a nest in places unfrequented and free from noise and disturbance! When she has laid her eggs in such a manner that she can cover them, what care does she take in turning them frequently, that all parts may partake of the vital warmth! When she leaves them, to provide for her necessary sustenance, how punctually does she return before they have time to cool and become incapable of producing an animal! In the summer you see her giving herself greater freedom, and quitting her care for above two hours together; but in winter, when the rigour of the season would chill the principles of life and destroy the young ones, she grows more assiduous in her attendance, and stays away but half the time. When the birth approaches, with how much nicety and attention does she help the chick to break the prison—besides covering it from the injuries of the weather, providing it with proper nourishment, and teaching it to help itself!"

In this book there will not be space to describe with any completeness the vast variety of birds found in different parts of the earth. But we shall have something to say concerning the principal families and their habits and customs, so that our young readers may have a general idea of this beautiful part of the living creation, and may afterwards pursue the subject more at length in more advanced books on the subject. But whether the account be shortened or extended, one thing cannot fail to strike the observer; namely, the infinite goodness and beneficence of the great Creator, by whom all things were made, and by whose power and mercy every living being is sustained.

"He hears, and feeds their feathered families; He feeds his sweet musicians, nor neglects Th' invoking ravens in the greenwood wide; And though their throats' hoarse rattling hurt the ear, They mean it all for music—thanks and praise They mean, and leave ingratitude to man. Oh, He is good, He is immensely good! Who all things formed, and formed them all for man; Who marked the climates, varied every zone, Dispensing all His blessings for the best, In order and in beauty."