

by pure accident; the old birds, with a wariness and wiliness well calculated to mislead the nest hunter, assume an air of utter indifference to the presence of intruders, as though they had no secret hiding-place to conceal from prying eyes; their work was to lick up honey from the nectaries of expanding blossoms, or to dig out with their strong mandibles, the dormant insect. . . . As an instance of devoted attachment to its young, it may be mentioned that we have found the old bird dead at the entrance of its nesting hole after a bush fire, in which it had perished rather than desert its helpless offspring, yet, from the nature of the locality, escape would have been easy.

" In September we have observed it poised on the slender bough of some tall *Panax*, luxuriating on the viscid nectar of its blossoms; happy enough it looks when thus seen through some opening through the trees; its deep red breast-feathers lit up by the slanting rays of the declining sun; sated at last, it cleanses its huge beak against a neighbouring bough, then with grateful chatter, glides off to join its fellows.

"Insects form no inconsiderable portion of its food, how diligently they are sought for may be judged from the heaps of bark chips that lie beneath decaying trees; often it may be noticed on the ground, tearing away the mossy clothing of the huge gnarled roots that spread around, even the soft rotten boughs are gnawed to obtain the larvae of some of the larger bush insects. . . ."

FLYCATCHERS (Potts).—"To the quiet observer of the habits of our bird-friends, but few sights can afford more gratification than watching the patient industry which is displayed by the very energetic and useful flycatcher, in the construction of its compactly-formed nest. The nest is to be found near its food supply (for the young will make incessant demands on the exertions of the parent birds), and it seeks a sheltered position where insects 'most do congregate'; it must at the same time afford 'ample room and verge enough' for the numberless evolutions to be performed by the rapid fluttering of two pairs of most active wings, which are soon to be constantly fanning the lazy air. To meet these indispensable requirements, the security offered by the densely tangled thicket is most commonly neglected for the retirement that is to be found beneath the high bank of some shady creek; the bough usually selected stands out well from the main stem, not too close to other branches. The foundation of the nest is laid by adroitly securing small slender chips of decayed wood with lines of cobweb to the spray selected; this delicate operation must of necessity be a work of great difficulty, *c'est le premier pas qui coute*; in places where splinters of decayed wood were not to be obtained, we have noticed that the glumes of a coarse grass have been