

Has, then, the rumour of the new decree already been broadcast among you blackcaps and made you cancel your scheduled long-distance flight across the Mediterranean?

### CONFUSING THE SEASONS.

But really you have no business to be serenading Mussolini this time of the year on this island, little blackcapped Fascist! Do not believe a word the violets and the anemones and the cyclamen say; they are always mixing up the seasons, always forgetting that winter has come. Do stay with me as long as you can; sing to me of spring, and make me, too, forget that winter has come! I well know you will soon be off, by command of your Maker, to sing, to fight, to woo, to win, to love, to mate, and to rear your young. You have also, I know, to fulfil your engagement for the opening of the grand opera season, under the patronage of Almighty God, in every English garden, with subdued nightingale rehearsals at dawn among the rhododendrons under a bedroom window, and gala open-air performances the whole day long, with all the leading stars of the company. Then there are to be popular promenade concerts every evening

for the lonely wanderer in the forest among friendly trees, with solos of a belated blackbird singing his ballad late in the night. Then there are to be matinees on all the commons, where the greatest lyric poet of all time will sing Nature's glorious morning hymn to the rising sun. Quivering on invisible wings high overhead, his body so small that a child could clasp it in his hand, and yet his immortal voice is strong enough to fill the whole sky with gladness and every human heart with gratitude.



FANTAIL ON WING.

Do you know where I saw him last, the sky-born God's Messenger, the sun-worshipper? He was beating his wings against the steel bars of his prison, no bigger than a mouse-trap. His head was drooping, his eyes were half closed in the agony of terror, one of his tiny feet was almost torn off by the string of the snare. Was this, then, to be your reward for all the joy you had given to us, little songster? What offence against the