

the chimney or spouting, and from morning until night keeps up a ceaseless "Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!" Yet, in spite of all his noise and boldness in our presence, he is a rank coward when facing one of the larks. Any one of them can, and moreover does, at will, rob him of his meals. It is only because of this that I allowed him to remain.

Besides the interest and endless amusement of the larks they are very useful. Woe betide the unwary fly or other insect that strays near them. Does it happen to be flying high up they rise and catch it with surprising ease. If low to the ground, they pursue it on foot, for all the world as a tame young duck chases blowflies. Very seldom do they miss it.

When I am digging the garden the larks are in their element. They search every nook and cranny in the freshly-dug earth and eat every grub and particle of insect larvae that appears. The common white grass grub is a favourite tit-bit; especially when feeding the young birds and the sitting female do they prize this grub. Our garden is over-run with this pest, yet if I dig ever so many during a day's work, the larks are able to deal with every specimen.

One lark is so tame that, when hungry, he will take grubs from my hand. Like all of his kind when carrying food to his mate and family, he treats the unfortunate grub in one particular manner: First he lays it upon the ground, then deliberately he bites it with his very serviceable beak; starting at one end of his prey, he crushes it flat, working slowly along until he has arrived at opposite ends; then very neatly he doubles it over, catches both ends in his bill and departs. In a few moments he is back, ready for the next victim.

The birds also delight in following the plough, or rather in eagerly fossicking in the freshly turned earth. When I was working close to the house two of the little chaps used to await my hitching-up of the horses every morning. Towards ten o'clock they would disappear; presumably their appetites were satisfied.

One morning, while yet it was too frosty to plough, the larks awaited me as usual. Presently one, tired of waiting, flew back to the lawn, while the other one—who must have been very hungry—after much consideration attacked an enormous frozen worm. It was so big that he could hardly shift it, let alone eat it. Eventually, however, he succeeded in breaking off a piece about a half-inch long, which, after a tremendous struggle, he swallowed. Then he flew to a post, where with a cheerful "cree! cree!" he began to preen his feathers, apparently highly pleased with himself. It was the only time I ever saw a lark eat a worm.