

Electricity and English Song Birds.

An English journal has become alarmed at the relation of electricity to song birds, which it maintains is closer than that of cats and fodder crops. How many of us, it asks, foresee that electricity may extirpate the song bird? Yet, unless some unknown factor intervenes, the chain of cause and effect would seem to be far simpler than that of the cat that kills the field mice that would rife the nests of the bumblebees that ought to fertilize the red clover. With the exception of the finches, all the English song birds may be said to be insectivorous, and their diet consists chiefly of vast numbers of very small insects which they collect from the grass and herbs before the dew is dry. As the electric light is finding its way for street illumination into the country parts of England, these poor winged atoms are slain by thousands at each light every warm summer evening, battering themselves against the globes until the ground beneath is strewn with them. The fear is expressed that when England is lighted from one end to the other with electricity the song birds will die out from the failure of their food supply. Americans have long been familiar with the destruction of insects wrought by arc lights in the warm months, but it is not on record that the naturalists in this country have given themselves any particular concern about it, or that it has reacted to any serious extent against any other part of the animal kingdom.