

Peter July 6, 1892

Dear Margaret

I have now the pleasure of
sending you ³ a few stuffed birds,
which I hope you will accept as
tokens of my remembrance and
gratitude. I have packed them as
securely as possible, and hope that
they will reach you in safety. If they
should be in any way injured,
be sure to inform me of it, that
I may repair the damage, or direct
you how to do so. I have placed
your birds upon a stand made
of Nova-Scotia maple, you must
~~not~~ take out some of the screws & cut
the twine with which it is fastened,
before removing it. Two of the birds are
packed in cotton, in a little box, and
basket. One (the humming-bird) must have
the wire attached to its tail inserted in a
little hole at the top of the tree (marked by a
wooden pin) so that its bill may be turned
inwards over the tree. The other must have
its tail wire inserted in another hole in the
side (also marked by a pin) so that its head
may hang down. The butterflies & moths

May be placed any where you chose,
on your stand or in Maria's case.

When you place the ~~stand~~^{shade} over it,
put in a few pieces of camphor to pre-
vent the attacks of insects, & tell Maria
to do the same to hers. You will find
a piece of ribbon beneath one side of
your stand, by which you can pull
out a card on which the names of
your birds are marked. I may now
give you a few hints respecting the
habits and character of your guests.

1st is the Humming bird, with its ruby
throat and emerald back. How
I wish that you could see its
swift and fairy-like movement
as it darts from flower to flower, bal-
ancing itself on humming wings before
each, and seizing the minute insects
which form its food; then suddenly
wing to a tree top and sitting for an
instant to plume itself and look
around. When the fruit trees are covered
with their sweet scented blossoms, is the
time of the humming birds harvest, and
many may then be seen in almost
any orchard. In such a place I shot
the one now sent, and I can assure
you that, hardened as I am in bird-
killing, when I saw the poor fellow

be bleeding among the grass, I felt as if I had been guilty of a very bad action.

No 2, The Black capped Fly catcher, is one of those little birds which spend their lives in hunting flies and other insects, It is an active little bird, and when flitting about among the leaves, has a very showy appearance.

No 3, The yellow throat, is a very restive bird, preferring close thickets and only now and then ascending to the top of a bush to utter its little song. It also is a feeder on insects.

No 4, The Redstart, which I have attempted to place in the act of flying, is also a flycatcher, and has a loud & sweet, though not very varied song. The one sent is a male, the female is quite dull in colour.

No 5 is the yellow crowned warbler, one of the earliest of his family in winter as in spring. I shot him as he was alternately dashing off in pursuit of flies, and returning to his perch on a spruce tree, to sing his vernal love song - little anticipating that, instead of wearing his hood in Nova Scotia, he should be sent off in his present condition to Britain. It thus he furnishes one of the many instances of the uncertainty of earthly prospects.

I have attempted to place him in the
attitude of springing from his perch.

Lowest in the scale is a bird whose
thick short bill shows him to be a
vegetable feeder. He is the purple finch,
or red linnet. His food consists
of buds, grain & fruits; and, although
he sometimes strips the ^{buds} from our
trees, he atones for his sins in this way
by a song more loud and sweet
than that of almost any other of our
birds. I cannot give you the names
of the ^{sticks} ~~ropes~~ at the base of your tree,
but they include some of our prettiest
sorts. My birds may afford me
more lesson, pleasing at least to me,
that, as birds of passage return every
year to their native land, or absent
friends may meet again. I may
conclude with the most sincere good
wishes and respects for you and all
my other friends in Edinburgh and its
neighborhood.

Yours affectionately
J. Lawson

P.S. Most of your Broom & whin seeds have germinated
and produced flourishing plants.
I have sent you a few more Magasins.

July 6th 1848