

**FEATHERED
FAVOURITES:
BRITISH BIRDS**

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Feathered Favourites: British Birds by Joseph Wolf

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JOSEPH WOLF

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THE BIRD'S NEST

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THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

BARRY CORNWALL.



TOUCH not the little Sparrow, who doth build
His home so near us. He doth follow us
From spot to spot amidst the turbulent town,
And ne'er deserts us. To all other birds
The woods suffice, the rivers, the sweet fields,
And nature in her aspect mute and fair ;
But *he* doth herd with man. Blithe servant ! live,
Feed, and grow cheerful ! On my window's ledge
I'll leave thee every morning some fit food,
In payment of thy service.—Doth he serve ?—
Ay, serves and teaches. His familiar voice,
His look of love, his sure fidelity,
Bids us be gentle with so small a friend ;
And much we learn from acts of gentleness.
Doth he not teach ?—Ay, and doth serve us too,
Who clears our homes from many a toilsome thing,
Insect or reptile ! and when we do mark
With what nice care he builds his nest, and guards
His offspring from all harm, and how he goes,
A persevering, bold adventurer,
'Midst hostile tribes, twenty times big as he,
Skill, perseverance, courage, parent's love,—

THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

In all these acts we see, and may do well
In our own lives, perhaps, when need doth ask,
To imitate the little household bird,
Untiring follower ! what doth chain thee here !
What bonds 'tween thee and man ! Thy food the same
As theirs who wing the woods,—thy voice as wild,
Thy wants, thy power, the same ; we nothing do
To serve thee, and few love thee ; yet thou hang'st
About our dwellings, like some humble friend,
Whom custom and kind thoughts do link to us,
And no neglect can banish.

So, long live
The household Sparrow ! may he thrive for ever !
For ever twitter forth his morning song,
A brief, but sweet domestic melody !
Long may he live ! and he who aims to kill
Our small companion, let him think how he
Would feel, if great men spurn'd him from their hearths,
Or tyrant doom'd him, who had done no wrong,
To pains or sudden death. Then let him think,
And he will spare this little trustful bird ;
And his one act of clemency will teach
His heart a lesson that shall widen it,
For nothing makes so bright the soul, as when
Pity doth temper wisdom.