

Bird Men and Women

A formal review of Algernon Blackwood's latest novel would be like breaking a butterfly upon a wheel. *The Promise of Air* is pure fantasy, light as a bit of this-tledown blown by a fairy's breath. "The New Age" is to be the "Age of the Air": we are to live as the birds do, care-free, winging our way, unconscious, full of joy in mere living and at last:

Death is nothing more or less than slipping back into your own subconsciousness, and so becoming greater and finer and more active—more useful, too, and with grander powers—than we ever had in our limited imperfect bodies. Life is nothing but an episode in our universal life. . . . Death is just a change of direction then, really; that's all

cries the bird-like little Jean, who is the central figure of this curious story. The metaphor of flying is strained to the breaking point and reiterated to wearisomeness—but man's partial conquest of the air makes the simile an arresting one.

The Promise of Air, by Algernon Blackwood.
E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.50.