

The Rockwood Review.

human fashion, to become a fit associate for my gentle friends. Though so seldom fed, the little ones seemed to thrive on fresh air and sunshine. Stretching matches and other gymnastics were practised daily, pretty feathers gradually appeared, and by the time they were ten days old they were bonny birdlings resembling their mother. From her they had inherited gentle manners and soft voices, for it was at that early age that they began to talk. They no longer mistook me for a parent bird, but seemed fond of me, trying to swallow the bits of hard boiled egg I offered them, and showing no fear when I took them out of the nest.

When they were nearly two weeks old I visited the orchard every morning before breakfast, expecting each day to find my birdlings flown, but it was not until the sixteenth day that the event occurred for which I had been waiting.

On this morning I was more grieved than surprised to find only two little birds left in the nest. I spent the entire morning in the orchard, waiting to see the remaining birdlings take flight. It seemed to be the policy of the parents to induce them to come out for something to eat, for they were not once fed during this time. I offered them morsels of egg, but they paid little heed to me. They were restless, and I saw that the old home and old friends had lost all charm for them. Suddenly while I watched, one of the two birdlings scrambled onto the edge of the nest, balanced himself for a moment, and then flew straight into the nearest apple tree. From this vantage ground he looked down into the tiny pear tree home that had once seemed all the world to him, and called back to his little brother, that he had found a larger and greener world than that. The baby in the nest seemed half inclined to follow him, but at each attempt after much fluttering of the wings he

would slip back into the old place. Presently the mother came with a morsel of food for the brave little bird in the tree, but no attention was paid to the pleading cry of his lazy brother, and very soon the venturesome young one found the use of his wings so pleasant and the food she offered him so tempting that he followed her across the orchard into the fields beyond.

On my afternoon visit the poor little coward was still in the nest, apparently very hungry and teasing incessantly. He may have thought that he was forgotten,—and I confess that I had fears of this myself,—when late in the afternoon, brighter than a gleam of sunshine, doubtless, to the waiting bird, came the father to the nest. Only this encouragement was needed, the little fellow was not to be left alone again; in a moment he was standing on a tiny twig above the nest, there was another moment of balancing and indecision, and then taking heart he too flew across to the friendly apple tree. He was rewarded by the instant appearance of his mother who had doubtless waited for this evidence of courage on the part of her youngest darling. She first gave him a hearty meal, and then flew from tree to tree towards the fields beyond. My birdling followed her in pretty, undulating, Goldfinch fashion, and I was left alone in the orchard.
