

surrounded by such dangers. The tender households of the birds are not only exposed to hostile Indians in the shape of cats and collectors, but to numerous murderous and bloodthirsty animals, against whom they have no defence but concealment. They lead the darkest kind of pioneer life, even in our gardens and orchards, and under the walls of our houses. Not a day or a night passes, from the time the eggs are laid till the young are flown, when the chances are not greatly in favor of the nest being rifled and its contents 10 devoured, — by owls, skunks, minks, and coons at night, and by crows, jays, squirrels, weasels, snakes, and rats during the day. Infancy, we say, is hedged about by many perils; but the infancy of birds is cradled and pillowed in peril. An old Michigan settler 15 told me that the first six children that were born to him died; malaria and teething invariably carried them off when they had reached a certain age; but other children were born, the country improved, and by and by the babies weathered the critical period, 20 and the next six lived and grew up. The birds, too, would no doubt persevere six times and twice six times, if the season were long enough, and finally rear their family, but the waning summer cuts them short, and but few species have the heart and strength to make 25 even the third trial. ▼

The first nest-builders in spring, like the first settlers near hostile tribes suffer the most casualties. A large proportion of the nests of April and May are destroyed; their enemies have been many months without eggs, 30 and their appetites are keen for them. It is a time, too, when other food is scarce, and the crows and squirrels are hard put. But the second nests of June, and still more the nests of July and August, are seldom