

new from start to finish. Probably, when winter came, we might hesitate about taking our usual jaunt and decide to stay where we were, but not so with the birds; those who go to warmer climates, when winter comes on, return joyfully each spring, ready and eager to start their building. Then, if you look closely—but not too inquisitively—you will see what wonderful architects these tiny creatures are, for few nests are fashioned alike. In one thing only are they similar, for, queer as it may seem, their homes seldom have roofs. But this causes our builder no discomfort; as he usually builds in the trees, he has the broad, green leaves to shield him when the sun is hot, and, if it rains, what need has he of a roof, when he always has his raincoat on? Quick and fast though the drops may come, they always roll off his feathers, leaving him dry and comfortable. Then, too, you must remember that he has'nt any furniture to spoil in his little one-room home, and, if the nest should get wet, he has only to fly off to a neighboring branch until it is dry again. But this rarely happens, for he generally sees, when he selects the place to build, that it is safely sheltered.

One house that a little brown creeper built was back of some loose bark, high up on the trunk of a tree. It was lined with feathers and was as warm and snug as one could wish. The home of the thrasher is usually made in the thickest and thorniest of bushes, and, while this little family wishes to be very secluded, they pull the thorns off very cleverly, so as to make a tiny passage for themselves to get to their home. As they tell no one the secret, they are seldom discovered.

A queer little builder is the oven-bird. He builds on the ground in the woods and, with sticks and leaves, constructs a little box exactly like an oven. So well does it match the ground in color, that one can hardly see it. You have heard him, I am sure, in the woods, calling, "Teacher! teacher!"

One of the prettiest homes is that of the vireo. It is a dainty swinging basket, hung near the end of a branch, where it rocks to and fro in the breeze,

an ideal house for this dainty little creature with her modest olive green gown. Another branch of this same family builds an even more decorative home, for the outside is covered with bits of lichens, brought there sometimes from quite a distance, and these touches of dark and light green, yellow and black give quite a festive appearance to it.

Then, have you ever seen, away up under the beams of the big barn, close to the roof, the home of the barn swallows? Like the home of the robins and some other birds, it is made of mud, and this is the way they make it. After they have selected the place to build their home, our two little barn swallows hunt out some near-by puddle where the earth is soft, and, taking a bit of the mud in their beaks, they work it around until it forms a tiny ball. Then they fly off with this and stick it to the beam on which they are going to build their home. Back again they go to the puddle for another ball, and this they bring and fasten to the first bit of mud, then fly away for more. And so they keep busily at it, until the mud cradle grows to be three or four inches high and an inch thick; and all the while their tiny beaks are at work, rounding it off here and flattening it there, much as a potter builds up his jar of clay. When it is done, they line it deftly inside with fine grass and soft feathers, which they pick up in their flights. They are sociable creatures, like the blackbirds, and build together in little colonies. They have much to say to each other and chatter away at a great rate, but their voices are very sweet.

While the barn swallow makes his home in the barn, his cousin, the eave swallow, builds under the eaves outside, wherever they are overhanging enough to afford him sufficient protection. There is another cousin, however, who prefers to have some one else do his building for him, and that is the martin; he would far rather live in a bird house, which some one very kindly has put up for him. But, while this saves him a lot of trouble, I am sure he misses a great deal of enjoyment, for