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A MONTH WITH THE GOLD-FINCHES.

BY MARY EMILY BRUCE.

The nesting season is nearly over and the air is full of the voices of young birds before the Goldfinches begin to build. In the leisurely golden time of the year, when the fields are yellow with grain and the roadsides gay with golden-rod, the dainty pair, in love with the summer, the sunshine, and each other, plan their home. True to their careless, happy natures they neither hurry nor overwork. A suitable place is chosen, the nest is built, the eggs are laid, and the little dame sits content in the sun, while her mate fills the air with music, as high over woods and fields he takes his undulating flight in search of food. To watch a Goldfinch's home is a privilege that brightens the whole summer, and one would like to write their story with a pen dipped in sunshine.

It was late in July before I reached the farmhouse among the hills of Vermont where I was to spend my vacation, and I found the orchards near the house already full of young birds. Baby Sapsuckers flopped about in the apple trees, young Vireos were followed here and there by anxious mothers, Catbirds uttered notes of warning by the roadsides, and infant Flycatchers and Thrushes regarded me with large inquiring eyes. A pair of belated Robins, nervous and overworked, were looking after their young ones, who were still in the nest, but for the most part family cares were over, and my only hope of watching the home life of the birds was to find a Goldfinch's nest.

In vain I searched the orchard near the house. Goldfinches flashed in and out among the branches, and sang of summer joys over my head, but they guarded well the secret of their homes. When I had nearly given up in despair, chance favored me, and I happened upon the object of my search in a

maple tree in front of a neighboring farmhouse. Blessings never come singly, and just as I was rejoicing in this treasure trove the little daughter of the house pointed out another nest in the orchard. A third nest, also in a maple tree, was discovered a few days later, but this was already full of half fledged birds, and both maple tree dwellings were too high in the branches to be easily watched.

Nothing could be better suited to my purpose than the home in the orchard. The Goldfinches had chosen a tiny pear tree quite close to the house, and the nest was barely four feet from the ground. There was something very charming in the confidence they had shewn their human neighbors, and the pair won my heart from the first by their gentle, trustful ways. It was a satisfaction to watch a nest for once where I was not treated like a robber and murderer. I could draw my chair quite near to the little pear tree, and the mother bird would look at me without a shadow of alarm in her bright eyes.

It was marvelous to see how quickly she recognized the voice of her mate in the Goldfinch chorus about her. Her neighbors in the maple tree might come and go, and she never stirred a feather, but a sudden quivering of the wings and a soft twittering response would announce his approach long before I could hear his voice, and as his song became audible to me, louder and more joyful grew her note of welcome. He would alight in a neighboring tree, speak to me first in a mild, questioning tone, like a pet canary talking to his mistress, and then fly down to the nest and feed his mate. After the dainty meal was finished they would talk together for a moment before he left her for another flight into the big sunshiny world. Life in this miniature home was very sweet and harmonious, and the golden bird in the tiny tree with its treasure of a nest made a