

their own with, and unless the old man comes home pretty often, his hen might need a new nest, and perhaps new legs too, for I have seen two cedar birds pull so hard on the loose strings in the bottom of a nest that they both swung to and fro, hanging free in the air. Young birds with their first nest have a good deal to learn. They have "inherited instinct" in large quantities, but the longer they live the more they learn, and in that we have no advantage ourselves. For instance, I never knew till last year that a pair of Parkman's wrens might, through jealousy on their part and a little want of ordinary care on the other side, destroy nest after nest of their neighbours. On our verandah the wrens certainly were the ancient Britons, they found the place uninhabited and they unfurled their flag. I didn't notice the skull and cross bones on it, but welcomed them with open arms. I am bound to say they were careful to keep away from open arms but they got tame enough to go about all their little affairs and pay no attention to the big two-legged incumbrances, who certainly did sometimes get in the way by keeping them off the back of a chair that would have been a good place to sit on for a minute and shriek with joy. Two years' sole possession is probably enough to make any wrens feel absolute lords and sole owners of a chosen nesting place. This may account for the anger of our wrens when the Saxons came over in the shape of two swallows, and built a house within ten feet of their house. I don't think the Britons felt strong enough to fight in the open but they held much counsel in the dark, and I noticed that those young Saxons had a hard time in feathering their nest. They carried feathers from all over British Columbia without filling the nest; for, what the wrens could not use themselves, I think they sold or gave away to cedar birds, kingbirds, yellow-throats, etc., in fact, to any bird in need. Finally, the swallows decided that it took years of experience to feather a nest, and they laid four eggs on such material as was left. This so upset the wrens that they were at a loss what to do for some time. I know this because I was laid up sick on the verandah, and they had several chances of revenge which they did not take. There must have been a thorough discussion of the whole case about the time the swallows' eggs were three days incubated. For several days the swallows had never been both absent together, as one came in the other went out, and so on all day, in from five to ten minute intervals. One day, however, this care was relaxed for a few minutes; I suppose the hen met a friend and began some discussion as to how feathers were to be worn or not worn, and overstayed her time; then the old man having as much patience as most of us would have if we had to help with the incubating,