

ly little bird as he climbs about, head up or heels up, with an apparently entire contempt for the majesty of the great all-ruling law of gravitation. Contempt for great powers seems to be rather a characteristic of the Chickadee, for Emerson wrote:—

“Here was this atom in full breath,
Hurling defiance at vast death :
This scrap of valor just for play
Fronts the north wind in waistcoat gray.”

Audubon speaks of a chickadee alighting on his gunbarrel. Probably this was just as he was leveling it at one of the kind; and it is no unusual thing for an inquisitive chickadee to alight on the person of some curious observer, who sits perfectly still in their haunts.

The nest is generally in a rotten stump, and not very far from the ground. It is in outward appearance, much like the nest of the Downy Woodpecker but smaller; and like that bird the chickadees dig it out for themselves, although they are fond of utilizing some knot-hole or other cavity which will save them the greater part of their labor. One which I examined, was lined with a thick felt of hair and feathers which was so compact, that when the rotten stump was torn away, the nest remained intact, like a strong purse of softest down and fur.

The young, which are remarkably numerous, are for some time after leaving the nest, led about by the parents. I am inclined to think that the parties of five or six seen rambling about together in the winter are the survivors of one family of the previous year still under guidance of the parent birds. Their food all the year round is chiefly insects, and during the whole acrobatic performance, which they carry on from dawn till dusk, a careful scrutiny would shew them to be picking up minute aphides and other small insects, which constitute their main support. An examination of the tongue would shew it to be split up at the end into a sort of brush which is said to be of great service to it in securing its tiny prey. About dusk the whole band is said to retire to some hollow tree, where they nestle together in comfort even during the coldest of weather; for in Manitoba they do not seem to be seriously inconvenienced by even 60° below zero F.: and when the return of light summons them forth to begin another day they do not fail to answer the summons and take up the acrobat performance where they left off. Now and then some hilarious member of the party, in his excess of cheefulness, will spare a moment to