

32 When the Swallows come

the sweet rich blossoms. How bees seem to glory in the sun! They revel in its warmth as well as in the attractions of the trees. A friend who was standing talking to me a few days ago, asked what that noise was which he likened to the hum of an engine working at great speed: this was caused by the rapidly vibrating wings of my bees flying to and from their hives.

But it is the birds which make me love this orchard: their spring-time songs draw one amongst the trees, and make one wish to stay there. The little Garden-warbler is one of my favourites: he is so tame and confiding, and already he is searching with his mate for a suitable gooseberry-bush in which to build.

But as I stand watching all these I become conscious of a great commotion in the tree on my right. Peering through the blossom, I see the cause. Two spiteful Willow-wrens are fighting for a mate which each of them wants: and as they cannot both be gratified, they settle their differences by doing their best to tear one another to pieces. As they flutter their wings and hop from branch to twig in their passion,