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# Young Canada Club

BY DIXIE PATTON

## WHAT IS NATURE'S FAVORITE COLOR?

Not counting green, of course, she splashes it all over everywhere, what color does nature like best in making plants? Put down the names of all the wild flowers you know, or, better still, collect and press a sample of as many as are still to be had and put down the names of the rest, and see if you can come to any conclusion as to which color Mother Nature herself prefers above all others.

Let us see, to begin at the very beginning, there is the crocus, a pretty purplish blue, followed by the buttercup which is yellow and the violet which is blue and the three-flowered aconite which is red, and so on and on and on.

When you have found out, or think you have found out, which color is used most often, write and tell me about it, and I will publish the best of the letters and I should be glad also to see the flowers which you press, if you care to send them to me.

DIXIE PATTON

## ROBIN REDBREAST

You remember, my dears, what I told you about the wooing of Miss Rose Redbreast. Don't you? I know you haven't forgotten—how Mr. Robin asked Miss Rose to leave her apple tree and help him build a nest in the big oak.

Of course you haven't forgotten. And now don't you want to hear how Rose and Robin built that nest? Would you like to have a story about the Redbreast babies?

You see, Rose and Robin were very industrious birds. Yes, "industrious" is a big word. It is just another way, however, of saying they worked hard and carefully.

And they did, too, from the very first. They were eager to get their nest built during the pleasant spring days before the hot summer began. So Robin and Mistress Rose—I call her Mistress now because she is married—searched all over Molly's farm for little bits of twine and for pieces of straw to put into the nest.

You would have been so surprised to see how brave Mistress Rose grew after she was married. When Robin met her she was a shy little bird. But, dear me, now that she had a husband she grew almost bold. Sometimes, really, truly ladies act the same way after they are married.

I'm almost afraid you will think this isn't true, but honestly, one day Rose actually pecked at the hairs in the mane of old Bill, the plow horse. She knew that horse's hair makes nests strong and firm.

Old Bill felt the pulling at his mane. He turned his head quickly. Away flew Mistress Rose, but she had three long strands of hair in her mouth.

At last the nest was finished. Rose and Robin had made it round and cozy and had fastened it across the branch of the oak tree, in just the way your hammock swings. When the roses had just begun to blossom Robin found Mrs. Rose sitting very quietly on her nest. She said she didn't want to leave. After Robin had begged very hard, Mistress Rose flew a little distance away.

See, Robin," she said, "look in the nest and see what I have laid for you."

My gracious, what do you suppose was there? Three smooth little blue eggs!

Robin was delighted. He twittered and sang and flew about in circles. He was so happy he could not keep still. For days after the eggs were laid, Mistress Rose stayed at home. She said she wanted to sit on the eggs and keep them warm. If she left home, they would get cold and that would never do.

Robin missed his wife a great deal. But he didn't forget her. He used to bring her nice, fat worms, and bits of bread, and good seeds to eat.

As I told you, Mistress Rose had stayed quietly on her nest for days and days. So, of course, when Robin left her this particular morning to get the breakfast he had no idea that anything exciting would happen.

But, my dears, he had barely reached the cornfield, when Mistress Rose felt

the eggs moving about under her. Up she jumped. Well, of all things! The shells were cracking! Mistress Rose wasn't worried, tho'. She went straight to the eggs and picked at the cracks.

Oh! One of the eggs popped wide open! And, my precious children, the most wonderful thing happened. Out crawled a cunning little baby Redbreast!

Soon the other two eggs burst. From each one there came a small bird. At first they were rather still. Poor little fellows, they were in a strange world.

It wasn't long before they began to open their mouths and ask for food. Robin, who was now in the potato patch eating bugs from the vines, heard their loud chirping, heard them call "Cheep, cheep." Quickly Robin flew up to his oak tree. There were his brand-new babies!

You would have expected a father to have been proud of three fine children. You would have expected Robin to sing joyfully when he first saw his babies. But, my dears, he didn't at all. He merely said:

"Humph, three more mouths to feed."

"Yes," said Mistress Rose, "they are a noisy crowd, too." She pecked at their beaks to make them hush.

Baby birds are not pretty at first. Do you think they are? Their bodies are so small and their heads and their mouths are so big. And what an appetite they always have!

Mistress Rose set about getting her brood their meals. It kept her busy, too, finding enough for such a hungry family.

When they got a little older she began to teach her children to fly. She would hop a few feet away from the nest and beg the babies to come out to her. Sometimes, if they were timid and afraid to try, she would hold a big, juicy worm in her beak and coaxingly say:

"Come, children. Spread your wings. Flap them like I do. Quick. The first one here can have this worm for lunch."

The little Redbreasts easily learned to fly. One at a time, Mistress Rose would guide them down from the oak tree to the grass. There she would show them how to poke their bills into the earth and find a bug or two. After a rain, there were many worms on the damp lawn.

You must be wondering what Robin was doing all this time. Robin, I am sorry to say, had almost forgotten his children. He let his wife take care of them. Robins are not very kind fathers.

Nor did Mistress Rose watch over her babies long. As soon as they could fly and dig for food and hurry off from bad boys and cats, she turned her children away from the home nest.

Don't think Mistress Rose didn't love her children. Oh, she did, heaps and heaps. She knew, tho', that there wasn't enough food for so many birds in one place.

"You must go away and make your own home," she told her birdies. The birdies didn't want to go, but Robin and Mistress Rose flapped their wings and scolded. The young Redbreasts were frightened. And away they fluttered.

Now, the summer had passed. The weather began to grow chilly. The leaves on the trees changed from green to red and gold.

"I think we will have to be going South for the winter," said Mr. Robin, one blustery morning.

That afternoon Robin and Rose left the oak tree. When they were almost out of sight of their old home, they turned about to look once more at the nest where they had been so happy.

And away they flew to a lovely country where the flowers bloom all the year, where the air is warm and the sunshine bright.

Do you suppose, children, you would like to hear about busy little Willie Woodpecker? Next month I shall tell you how he bored holes in the chestnut tree and made his nest way down inside the bark.

By Helen K. Essary, in The Mother's Magazine.