

in the nest, y dark, his beside him, night. d his first ngs. Both pent much e fly. Sir nice, juicy ghting just ird, show n Tweeter ould and o hard, nself to the short with that he felt ng. After ence, and pleasure ter from r. In a were tak- ges were each day becoming

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helplessly to the ground. There he lay, sick and faint with the pain of his broken wing. The boy hunted among the bushes for a while, but, failing to find his victim, went carelessly on his way, whistling cheerfully. Tweeter lay and wondered what was to become of him. If the monster should come now—ah, the young oriole shuddered at the thought!

But it was not the monster that found Tweeter about three hours later. It was the child who had once before come to his rescue when he was a tiny fledgling—the child with the hair like sunshine. She cried out when she saw poor Tweeter, and, kneeling on the ground, picked him up gently, very gently. He made one or two attempts to escape, but the child held him safely and gently in her small hands, and spoke to him in such a soft, coaxing voice that he really was not much frightened.

Tweeter was carried into the big house that he had often seen from his elm tree. There he was placed on a bed of cotton in a wire cage. The man came—the same one who had put him back in the tree when he was a little fellow and had tumbled to the ground before he had learned to fly. The man felt of the injured wing and did something to it that hurt at first, but somehow the pain was not so bad afterward. Then a small dish of water was placed beside him, and he was left in a quiet, dark corner. He went to sleep before very long.

Tweeter stayed in the wire cage for a number of days. He sulked at first and would not eat, but the little girl brought him such good food that at last he could not help trying it. He grew used to his new home, and, being by nature a cheery, happy fellow, began to make the best of it, and to hop cheerfully about the sanded floor of his cage, the broken wing drooping in helpless fashion.

Meanwhile Tweeter's friends and comrades out of doors had started on their long journey, and were winging their way ever farther and farther south.

When the broken bone had knit, and Tweeter found that he could venture to use the wing again, he hopped and flew from one perch to another, and up to a funny little swing at the top of his wire house. He had learned to like the little girl now, and was pleased to have her come and talk to him and offer him dainties, which he would take from her fingers or lips.

Later, Tweeter was allowed the freedom of the room, and used to fly about, alighting on a picture or a window-sill or hopping over the floor. Sometimes he would perch on the child's shoulder and pick gently at that shining yellow hair. Outside, the great world was no longer green and warm as it had been in the golden summer days. The trees had lost all their pretty leaves, and stood with bare brown branches blown by fierce autumn gales. Still later, Tweeter looked from the window on a new world of white—field and garden and tree and shrub all covered with snow. A few hardy little birds—sparrows, wrens, and snow-birds—were seen at times, foraging diligently for the scanty supply of food to be found.

At last came spring, with that fair, sweet miracle of the wondrous change from a snow-clad world to one warm and green and pulsing with new life.

And Tweeter's breast thrilled with the strange, sweet impulse of the spring, and he longed to be out in the fields and woods. The travellers were coming back from the south. Already the clear notes of the robins were heard. Soon the mornings were vocal with the jubilant chorus of bird notes. One morning Tweeter awoke to hear clear and strong the mellow whistle of another oriole!

Then the child with the sunny hair and the heart of love coaxed Tweeter to her shoulder, and laid her soft cheek against his feathers in farewell caress, and together they went into the glad outdoor sunshine, where Tweeter spread his handsome wings and flew away to seek his old haunts.

Now, as always in the spring, the male birds had been the first to arrive in their northern homes. Their wives and sweethearts, less powerful of wing, or perhaps with not quite such strong, restless eagerness as had led their lords and masters, were coming more leisurely. And somewhere among the hundreds and thousands that made up the steady bird stream of north-bound travellers, somewhere was a little Mademoiselle Oriole coming on and on, her small wings leav-

ing behind mile after mile. Somewhere was one coming who was to bring a new joy to Tweeter's life. He had been with his friends for nearly a week, all joyous, eager, filling the hours with jubilant song, now and then quarrelling among themselves, when the lady orioles began to appear. Then came the sweet, exciting joy of love-making, with sometimes a sharp fight to drive away a rival.

Tweeter was a handsome fellow in his gay plumage, and it was not long before Mademoiselle Oriole gave in to his eager wooing, and agreed to be his little sweetheart.

When the time came for the building of their new home, Tweeter found that his wife had most decided opinions of her own on that subject. They chose a place in an old apple tree, very near the house where the child lived. Some strings of the flax of the silkworm were wound around two twigs of the apple tree, and with thick threads, strings, or whatever would serve a similar purpose were woven in and out of the foundation threads until a sort of hanging-basket had been made. Within this was to be the real nest, warm, neat, and soft.

Sir Tweeter tried to help in the work, but he soon found that Mademoiselle knew better than he how to weave cunningly the sticks and strings in strong, neat fashion, so he spent his time in "skirmishing" around to find the material for her to use. The child helped him. She put some soft cotton strings of different lengths, and bits of pink twine where he could easily find them, and she laid some strands of brightly-colored worsted on an old fence post. Sir Tweeter and his wife were delighted with the pretty worsteds, and helped themselves freely. When Mademoiselle was ready for the finer material that was to line the little home, she found some soft strands of silken floss ready for her.

One day, when the nest was almost finished (they had spent nearly a week in its construction), Tweeter flew to the child's shoulder as she stood near the old tree, and picked gently at the golden hair as he had used to do. Surely that would be a treasure, too, for this wonderful home that he and his wife were making. The child guessed perhaps what Tweeter was thinking, for she ran into the house, and when the orioles saw her again, one shining lock of hair had been snipped from her tresses and lay loosely over her shoulder. She called to Sir Oriole in a coaxing tone, and presently he came, gathered up the golden hair she had cut for him, and flew with it to the nest. It was the finishing-touch to the dear home. When it was cunningly coiled and interwoven in the very heart of the nest, then the home was declared done, and Mademoiselle settled down in soft contentment. Surely it was a gay and beautiful thing to look at, with its bright, pretty colors, hanging pendent from the twigs, like a bright, strange fruit.

The next day there was a little egg in the nest, and every day another was added, until Mademoiselle cuddled five of them beneath her soft breast. They were grayish white, with funny little brownish scratches on them like pen-scrawls. Then came quiet days while Mademoiselle brooded and dreamed over her treasures. In two weeks a soft baby "tweet" was heard, and Tweeter and his wife felt a new joy that was almost too strange and sweet to be true. Their first little one was calling to them, and they stood on the edge of the nest and twittered to each other, and were very happy. There were soon five baby mouths to feed, and Tweeter had to work as never before to fill them all. How he and Mademoiselle Tweeter did work! How eagerly they hunted for every tiny grub and insect, how many, many journeys for food they had to make each day as the babies grew bigger and their appetites increased! Thousands of beetles, caterpillars and other insects fell prey to the voracious appetites of Tweeter and his family through the summer days.

As soon as the little ones had grown large enough to leave the nest, and had learned to shift for themselves, Mademoiselle began at once to build another home. It might seem that the one built with so much care should serve for a second family of babies if need be, but Mademoiselle Tweeter evidently did not think so, although she would have been willing to tear it somewhat apart and use again

some of the material in the construction of a new home. But since a new nest must be built in any case, to suit the feathered pair, the child felt that the old one might well be spared to her. So the man came and cut the twigs that held it, and carried apple branch and gorgeous nest together into the big house, that the child might always treasure it to remind her of her dear Tweeter.

The second brood of young orioles was raised; the summer passed and autumn came. Again began the autumn migration of the birds. This time Tweeter, too, joined the throng. Far they flew, travelling mostly by night, and during the day pausing for rest and to pick up food. On very dark nights they could not see their way, and sometimes camped for a while in some grove, but on clear, moonlight nights they made great progress. They flew high up in the air, because from a greater height they could see far over the landscape spread out below them and could easily trace their way by the valleys or the streams, or by the mountain ranges, or by some familiar landmark. The older birds that had been over the route many times led the way; the younger ones followed their guidance.

After many days they came to the land they sought, the land where it is always summer, where the sun shines, and food is plentiful. From orchards and groves of New England, far, far away to the Central American States, had many of the orioles journeyed.

There they stayed in the sunny tropics, while the fields of the north lay under the icy spell of the winter. The orioles did not forget the land of their birth, the land where they had known the short, sweet joys of courtship, the land where they had built their nests and reared their little ones. When spring approached, the birds yearned to return to their northern home, and again was the long journey taken. Once more the swift rounds of the season passed.

So Tweeter spent several happy years, living out his little life in joy and glad content, singing his sweet songs, waging relentless war on insect and grub, raising families of sweet-throated golden singers. Each year he had found his way back to the same grove where he had first seen the light. Each year the child with the sunny hair watched for her feathered friend.

Then came a year when Tweeter felt that he was growing old, that the strength of his youth had left him, and he found the long journey north almost too much for the wings that had once borne him so proudly, strongly, with never a thought of weariness. This year he lagged somewhat in the procession. Many who had started with him were now days ahead, while he was nearly in the rear, with the youngsters of the flock.

As they neared the end of their long journey, Tweeter and his comrades grew more and more eager to reach the dear home places. Two more nights of travel would bring them to the familiar elms and other favored trees they loved. The night was clear when they started, but in an hour or two the sky began to be overcast. A slow wind hurled a sullen mass of fog around them, surrounding them, muffling them, making them lose sight of the landmarks they depended on to guide their course. They could not distinguish the coast-line they had been following.

The fog grew denser and chillier. It baffled the birds, and they flew around and around calling to one another. It would be necessary to alight somewhere, and wait until clearer weather favored them. But what was that? A light showing dimly through the fog and mist. They turned toward it. Brighter it shone through the haze. Tweeter saw it and steered his course toward its friendly rays. Brighter now it gleamed, beckoning his weary self. Straight toward it he flew. He was very, very tired now.

The light gleamed large and bright. It made Tweeter think of the sunny head of the little child. It was like the glowing orange breast of his father, old Sir Baltimore, as he had seen it hovering above the nest when he was a tiny fledgling. It meant warmth and comfort and sheltering care.

Straight toward the great, gleaming light flew the oriole, weary, wondering, dazed—nearer and nearer, till a great gust of wind came and lifted him up and

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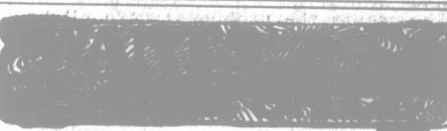
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