

He is watching where Robin will build his nest. Speak low to your mate, Robin, for blacky has sharp ears as well as eyes. He sees already in the future your nest demolished and all the fluffy fledgelings fluttering on the ground, while he flies off to eat the first ripe strawberry and grin over their discomfiture.

Naughty bird! So unlike your human friends. *We* are always tender over others' feelings, and would never tumble a happy family out in such unkind fashion.

But listen! There is another voice quite different from the grating note of the black bird. It has a mild and minor strain I do not know my friend's name, but I have known him all my life in his quaker coat of gray over his long slender body; a tiny fellow, one could almost hide him in one's hand. His note is much like the meadow lark's, but fainter and sweeter, telling perchance of some hidden sorrow. How we looked for you in the old days, and hunted for your nest, a tiny gray bag caught at the four corners to the swaying apple bough. I remember well the day I climbed that apple tree to take an egg—just *one* you know—with one of my mother's most treasured old silver tea spoons to dip it out of the nest with. How the poor little mother bird fluttered over me, repeating those sad sweet notes as if to beg me not to touch her lovely white spotted treasures! But my young heart was bent on making a collection, and not even that pitiful cry could stop me.

Many childish deeds have been forgotten, but not that flutter of wings and plaintive appeal when I took the forbidden thing. O birdy, wont you sing a more cheery song, and tell me I'm forgiven?

I had almost the same experience with a King bird, but no qualms of conscience with him, for I felt as if I was revenging my friends, the crows. How often I have seen him fluttering around the poor crow's black head, pecking and pecking at him until Mr. Crow was ready to drop from sheer exhaustion or mortification, I hardly know which. Yet recovering himself he would breathe in more air, and make a fresh start, soliloquising, "I will soar in a higher atmosphere and leave these small annoyances far below me."

There is a sweet note, listen! It is our early spring friend.