

habits of birds. On their arrival in spring their song delights him; then there is the mating and building of the nest to observe; the laying of the eggs and the habits of the birds when brooding; the hatching, feeding and rearing of the young; the vacating of the nest; and finally the flight of the fledglings. What more delightful nature studies can we have than these? And these are what will draw us to the woods, where hundreds of such bird studies await us.

The smaller animals, also, receive a share of the amateur gardener's interest and observation. A certain gardener found one morning this autumn that something had been digging holes in various places in his garden. He thought, at first, that some cat had done this, but when night after night new holes were made, he decided to investigate the matter further. He looked about carefully for footprints and found some which did not look like those of a cat. He made a still closer examination, and in one hole a faint skunk-like odor was detected. But what could a skunk be making so many holes for? It was known that he fed on chickens and sucked eggs, but there were none of these here. Did he feed on the roots of plants? What could he be after? It was decided to ask someone who knew, and then the gardener learned that the skunk—which this turned out to be—which occasionally kills chickens and eats eggs, and sometimes annoys by his penetrating odor, is really a friend of gardeners and destroys many injurious insects among which are cutworms. And, if this skunk had been killed and examined, undoubtedly some of these insects would have been found inside it. On again looking at the holes, it was found that they were much more numerous in places where the soil was sandy and warm; and all gardeners know that in sandy soil cutworms are, as a rule, most numerous. Here was a nature study which would never be forgotten, and would lead to further studies of the habits of animals in the fields and woods.

The amateur gardener's joys, which are perennial, receive an annual revival when the New Year's seed and plant catalogues come in. What pleasant hours are spent in studying the names and descriptions of plants from *Abronia* to *Zinnia*, only the lover of plants knows. And then those glorious days in spring-time