

arrived. She made herself at home immediately and was very soon carting in a variety of grass stems and softer things for nest construction. Her husband lent a beam of wood and then, he also brought an odd morsel of food in the form of a grasshopper or caterpillar, but as a rule he seemed to feel that his duty lay in singing and driving away intruders, rather than in nest building. He proved an adept as a sentry and, astonishing as it may seem, was successful at driving away House Sparrows as he was with less pugnacious offenders. Bluebirds, while they often breed in the vicinity of human habitation, are, nevertheless, of a naturally shy disposition. It is well, therefore, not to disturb them more than is necessary, otherwise they may desert the nest as well as the vicinity.

It was not long before a clutch of light-blue eggs had been laid and in due course six young were clamouring for food. The next few weeks were busy ones for the parents, especially for the female, and a very large number of insects were collected for food. In due course the young left the nest and not so very long afterwards a second brood was being reared. This, like the last was safely brought to maturity and as the shades of approaching winter drew near, the birds departed for their southern home.

The Blue birds were late in arriving the next year, having apparently attempted to nest elsewhere. They soon took to the old box, but had hardly done so before a pair of new comers arrived. These were Mountain Bluebirds, which differ from the others in being lighter blue and having blue instead of reddish upon the breast. The new arrivals decided that they too, preferred the old box and in consequence some severe fighting took place for possession. Eventually, however, the old pair were driven out and the newcomers occupied the premises. Fortunately another box was available outside the limits of the garden and in this the old inhabitants reared their family in peace.

The life of the new arrivals was not without misfortune. When the young were about a week old the beautiful male fell a victim to a Cooper's Hawk and the female was, therefore, left to do the work of both. This she continued to do with marked success. Later she was visited by a new courtier, but since he refused to labour on behalf of the family, his courting met with scant success. He remained, however, in the vicinity and when the family, after emerging from their box, were resting together upon the nearby trees, the new male formed part of their company.

The only other box inhabitants were a pair of House Wrens, true they had with the usual wren industry, blocked various other boxes with sticks, but as this was one of their usual tactics to prevent near neighbours, I freed the boxes from their encumbrances. One could write pages about wrens, their cheerfulness, the house-cleaning of the