

on our house a short distance from a window. The first brood never appeared again after leaving the nest. A few days before the second brood left, something happened to the male parent, for he disappeared; and the female worked incessantly feeding the young ones.

On the second evening after their departure from the nest we were greatly surprised at the return of the mother bird with her brood of four young ones. Very near to the wren house there is a Syringa bush, which contained an empty catbird's nest, vacated earlier in the summer. So this evening, about sundown, when the wren family returned the little birds got into the catbird's nest and there spent the night. The next evening, much to our delight, they returned and spent the night in the catbird's nest as before. The entire family of four young ones returned with the mother each evening for fourteen days. On the fifteenth evening one of the young wrens was missing; on the next evening two did not return. And on the evening of the seventeenth day, after leaving the nest, the mother wren brought her one remaining young one back to the Syringa bush, and induced it to get into the catbird's nest. But the young bird seemed restless, and in a few minutes hopped out into the bush and flew away. The mother called repeatedly, hopping about in the bush and into the nest. Finally she seemed to realize the futility of her efforts and she left the bush not to return again.

The catbird's nest was not much over four feet from the window, so that it was possible for us to see very clearly what went on.

During the day nothing was seen of the brood. Back of the house there is a wooded ravine, and we believe that they followed this and flew some distance away. When they returned in the evening the mother bird would fly ahead from tree to tree, constantly calling to the young ones as they followed her. When they arrived at the bush, she would get down into the nest, and as soon as the young birds reached it, she would leave. Sometimes she would return to feed the young ones, but we never learned where she roosted.

MISS MAUDE MERRITT.

Ottumwa, Ia.

A PECULIAR HABIT OF THE HOUSE WREN.

That important discoveries in the sciences and eminent inventive ideas have occurred simultaneously in widely separated portions of the world is a well known fact. If a certain habit of

the House Wren has been described in ornithological literature prior to 1915, it has escaped my attention. When early in July of last year one of my neighbors related her observations of the previous evening they seemed to be quite unusual. A little before nightfall she saw a mother Wren carrying food into a hitherto untenanted box, that was filled with English Sparrow trash, and from which a narrow board was missing at the back. Moving noiselessly up to the box she found snuggled down for the night a brood of Wrens that had recently left their natal home in a nearby box. Following in point of time these observations were those of Miss Maude Merritt that are described in this number of the WILSON BULLETIN. An examination of the pages of the "Annual of the Nature Study Society of Rockford, Illinois" shows that Mr. Paul B. Riis had made observations similar to those of the two Iowa ladies, which antedated theirs by one year at least. The following excerpts from his account have been taken:

"June 9th. Young hatched in split log. Papa Wren coming in for a great deal of scolding, apparently too clumsy to assist in feeding of young, although he had been permitted to feed Mamma Wren previous to the hatching. Sheepishly and somewhat nettled, he keeps guard over the Chickadee box, possibly for a want of better employment.

"June 26th. Three tiny Wrens emerge from split log, sleeping in bungalow-shaped house for several nights.

"July 1st. Mother Wren takes her babies to the country in the day time, bringing them home to sleep in the Chickadee box just before dark. . . ."

The roosting habits of the second brood of Wrens, under date of August 5th, Mr. Riis describes thus: "In four days after leaving the nest, the young ones were able to go to the country daily for an all day's outing, returning regularly at 7:00 p. m. for a week. The shelter selected by them for the night was a saucer-shaped robin box well under the eaves of the summer house and entirely hidden by vines. A sight it was, indeed, to see this flock of Wrens in their home coming."

ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

National, Iowa.