

THE SWALLOW AND THE OTHER BIRDS

A WISE Swallow, seeing a man sow seed in a field, went behind him and picked up one of the seeds to see what it was.

She found that it was flax. "When this flax has grown," she said to herself, "the man will make it into linen thread and use it to make nets for catching us Birds."

So she went to all the Birds and told them what she had discovered, begging them to come and help her eat up the flaxseed before it should sprout. "This field," she said, "is as much ours as it is his. And while one of us can do but little, all working together can quickly remove our danger."

But the Birds would not listen to her. Not one of them could she persuade to help her pick up the seeds which the farmer had sown.

By and by the flax sprang up, and the Swallow tried again to persuade the Birds to pull the young flax before it grew large. But they all made fun of her caution and let the flax keep growing.

When she saw how heedless all the Birds were, the Swallow would have nothing more to do with them, but left the woods where they lived and came among men, building her nests in barns and along the eaves of houses.