

## NOTE ON NESTING ROBINS

BY HARVEY MOORE

Will a male bird hatch out the eggs in a nest in the event of an accident to the female? The question never presented itself until a Robin gave me a demonstration.

In the spring of 1938 a pair of Robins built a nest in the crook of a drain pipe that runs down one of our porch pillars. They raised four young without incident, and started in, with the same nest, on a second brood. After three days of joint incubation, we were compelled to notice the loud, strident, continuous singing of the male bird. He sang from various positions on or beside the nest, which he never left. He kept it up two days. Before he stopped, we discovered what the trouble was. Something had happened to the female.

After two days of continuous singing, he settled down to the task of incubating the eggs. No bird could have been more faithful. He seemed never to leave the nest.

Then we "birth controlled" him. We practised the gentle art of "egging" to the extent of removing two of the four eggs. Like all eggers, we did this in the interest of "science." We figured that one lone widower could not take on the job of successfully feeding four young mouths. We reduced him to his proper quota.

If he was aware of our "scientific" interest, he gave no sign. He hatched out the two eggs; fed the young birds to strength; coaxed them off the nest for their first flight, by singing to them softly from a nearby wire; and finished their education between the hedge and a styrax tree. We watched the performance until they lost their identity with complete growth, and merged with the general robin population.