

door he saw two bright tears in Magdalena's blue eyes; amid a deep silence his own eyes gazed into the girl's while the last crimson rays faded away from the woods.

## THE FLEDGELING

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One springtime a quail nearly dead with fatigue--she came from far-away Africa--dropped from her flight into a green corn-field on the edge of a plantation. After a few days of rest she began to collect twigs, dried leaves, straw, and bits of hay, and made herself a nest on a mound of earth, high up, so that the rain would not spoil it; then for seven days in succession she laid an egg, in all seven eggs, as small as sugar eggs, and she began to sit upon them.

Have you seen how a hen sits on her eggs? Well, that is how the quail did, but instead of sitting in a coop, she sat out of doors, among the grain; it rained, it pelted with rain, but she never moved, and not a drop reached the eggs. After three weeks there hatched out some sweet little birds, not naked like the young of a sparrow, but covered with yellow fluff, like chickens, only smaller, like seven little balls of silk, and they began to scramble through the corn, looking for food. Sometimes the quail caught an ant, sometimes a grasshopper, which she broke into pieces for them, and with their little beaks they went pic! pic! pic! and ate it up immediately.

They were pretty and prudent and obedient; they walked about near their mother, and when she called to them "pitpalac!" they ran quickly back to her. Once, in the month of June, when the peasants came to reap the corn, the eldest of the chicks did not run quickly at his mother's call, and, alas, a boy caught him under his cap. He alone could tell the overwhelming fear he felt when he found himself clasped in the boy's hand; his heart beat like the watch in my pocket. Luckily for him an old peasant begged him off.

"Let him go, Marin, it's a pity on him, he will die. Don't you see he can hardly move, he is quite dazed."

When he found himself free, he fled full of fear to the quail to tell her what had befallen him. She drew him to her and comforted him, and said to him:

"Do you see what will happen if you do not listen to me? When you are big you can do what you like, but while you are little you must follow my words or something worse may overtake you."

And thus they lived, contented and happy. The cutting of the corn and the stacking of the sheaves shook a mass of seeds on to the stubble which gave them food, and, although there was no water near, they did not suffer from thirst because in the early morning they drank the dew-drops on the blades of grass. By day, when it was very hot, they stayed in the shade of the plantation; in the afternoon, when the heat grew less, they all went out on to the stubble, but on the cold nights they would gather in a group under the protecting wings of the quail as under a tent. Gradually the fluff upon them had changed into down and feathers, and with their mother's help they began to fly. The flying lesson took place in the early morning towards sunrise, when night was turning into day, and in the evening in the twilight, for during the daytime there was danger from the hawks which hovered above the stubble-field.

Their mother sat upon the edge and asked them: