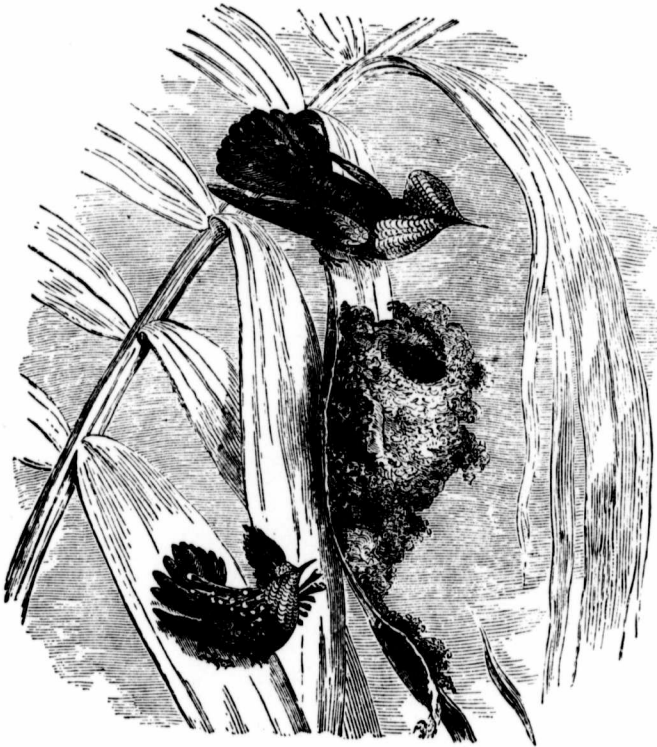


The tiny but beautiful humming-birds of America construct their miniature nests at the ends of leaves. The nests are composed of down, cotton, and any other soft material the birds can collect, and are sometimes covered on the outside with mosses. One naturalist says that instinct teaches one species, which builds its nest on the slender branches which overhang the rivers, to make a rim round the mouth of the nest, turned

roof. When a number of birds agree in forming a habitation or colony, the first thing to be made is the roof of their curious house. A tree having been selected, the birds, numbering several hundreds, commence building operations. Before long the tree begins to resemble a huge, open umbrella; and as soon as the roof is completed each individual pair of birds construct their own nest under the shelter thus



HUMMING BIRDS AND NEST.

inwards, so as to prevent the eggs from rolling out. The trees on the rivers' banks are particularly exposed to violent gusts of wind, and were the nests not protected in this simple manner the eggs would probably be shaken out of the nests into the water.

The sociable grosbeak is found in South Africa. As its name implies, it is fond of company, and great numbers always nest together under one large

provided. In due course the whole under-surface of the roof is covered with the circular openings leading into the curious habitation. Each of these openings or entrances forms a regular street, with nests on both sides at about two inches from each other.

The oven-bird of America builds its nest in the form of an oven. The nest is composed of earth, and, though it is of considerable size, it is often com-