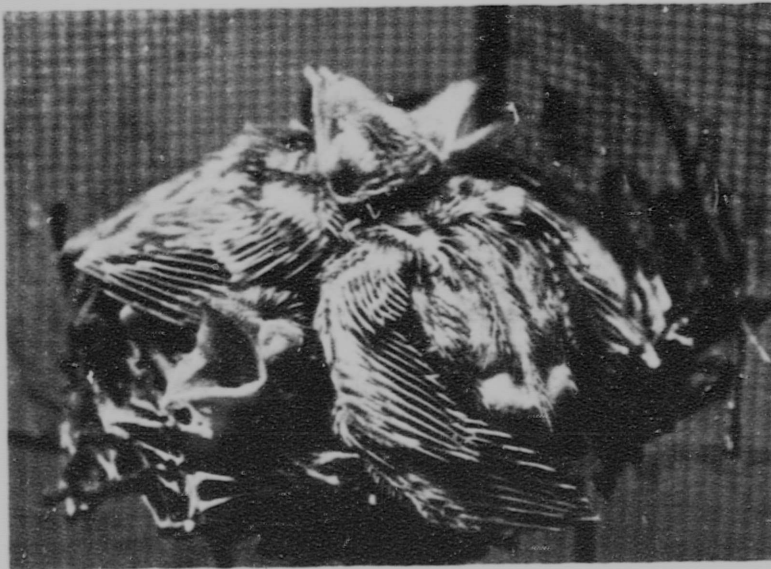


last callous act of the family in the fall before leaving the cottage, is to place a board over the top of the chimney.

According to Audubon, sometimes thirty or more pairs of swifts used to build in the same hollow tree; but nowadays their habit is solitary, and it is rare to find two nests in the same chimney. Both before and after the breeding season, however, they are essentially gregarious, and gather—sometimes in immense flocks—to pass the night together in some large chimney or similar shelter. On such occasions they may be seen at dusk flying over the chimney in a close swirling cloud, which gradually assumes

flocks number only a few hundreds. The swift population of Arnprior divides up in the fall among several chimneys in the town, the most numerous assemblage—perhaps three or four hundred birds—occupying one of the large chimneys of the Roman Catholic Church, while smaller flocks take refuge in a couple of store chimneys.

If the chimney swifts come later in the spring than the martins and others of the swallow tribe, they make up for it by staying longer in the fall. Most years they are abundant around Arnprior until nearly the middle of September, when they suddenly disappear, the whole flock evidently having flown off



Young Chimney Swifts about one week old; natural size.

the shape of a hollow inverted cone; and from the bottom of this living whirlpool, the birds drop continually into the chimney until all are within. Audubon relates that in his time seven or eight thousand swifts congregated thus in a large hollow tree near Louisville, Kentucky. And in his interesting article in the *Ottawa Naturalist* already referred to, Mr. A. G. Kingston tells of the enormous flock that used to gather nightly in a ventilating tower on the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, the number of birds being estimated by Mr. Kingston at from nine to ten thousand. But these are exceptionally large congregations, attracted together, no doubt, by the size and convenience of the shelters. Usually the

to the south altogether. But Mr. Liguori Gormley, who keeps a careful watch on bird doings in this district, informs me that usually, after a period of ten days or so during which not a swift is to be seen anywhere, a few will be observed towards the end of the month flying over the town. These are apparently birds that have nested much farther north, and now, responding to the hereditary impulse of their race, are directing their course like the others for Yucatan or Nicaragua, with that unerring sense of direction, which, although commonly exhibited by many creatures, is a marvel to man because in the course of his evolution, he has largely lost it.