

THE BANK SWALLOW

sought, "observing" offers a most alluring prospect, and promises to be as easy as bowling down the hill.

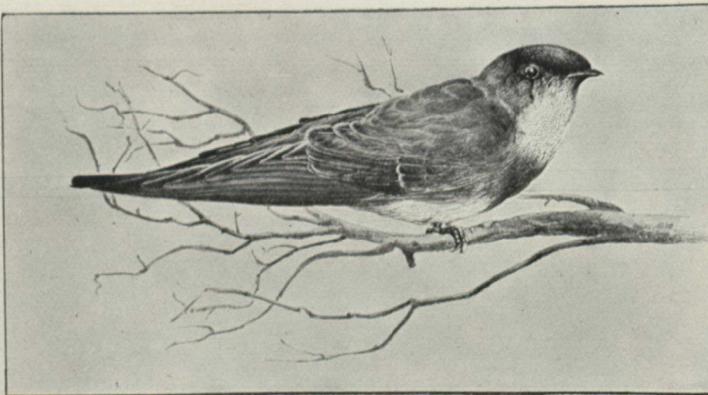
Yet when the débutant starts out provided with a painstaking selection of these "guides, philosophers and friends," his success never comes up to his expectations. After focussing a dozen evanescent and perplexingly varying phenomena, he is happy if he comes home with but one or two assured facts of his own verification. Some experiences in this line leads me to heartily endorse the soundness of the advice to the beginner, to study but one object at a time, and to begin with the commonest in his neighbourhood.

The present paper illustrates an effort in this direction, though it was more accident than design that direct-

ly led to the subject. On a summer walking-tour along the northern shores of Lake Ontario, pity arrested me, all too late, to save a nestling at its last gasp in the placid ripples, and a glance up at the high cliff for its home was arrested by an uncommon sight. In the top fringe, for a long distance, was a fretwork of holes as thick set as the perforations of a sponge, while overhead was a whirl of wings as mazy as a Doré illustration of Paradise.

Between the flying host and the cliff-side was a busy intercourse. Every moment one would start from its airy convolutions and sweep to and fro the face of the cliff till a point was gained for a dart, straight and swift as an arrow, to some destined hole, where, clinging for an instant at the entrance,

half hidden in a little cloud of dust, it would creep in and vanish, while from some mysterious depth in the tunnelled earth another would flash out to be as quickly lost in the bewildering bird waltz; amongst the swaying crowd, short sweeps and sudden tangents of



THE BANK SWALLOW