

In the West Indies the long flower-spathes of the cocoanut palm often hang on the trees in a withered state for many months ; and up inside of these the Palm Swift finds a safe and convenient place to affix its nest, composed of feathers glued together with the same salivary gum. This plan of fastening the nest to the inside of a hollow tube or shaft seems to be a favourite one with several of the American species. Not only is the idea shown in the choice of the chimney swift, but there are two species which actually construct the protecting tube for themselves. *Paniptila Sancti Hyeronima* inhabiting Guatemala, attaches to the underside of an over-hanging rock a tube some feet in length, composed of the seed-down of plants caught flying in the air and glued together with saliva. Entrance to this is from below and the eggs are laid on a kind of shelf near the top, Very similar is the nest of a Brazilian species, *Chaetura poliura*, only in this case the tube is suspended from the branch of a tree and is covered with bright coloured feathers. There is no shelf within to receive the eggs, and it is believed that these are cemented against the side of the tube and brooded on by the bird while in an upright position.

Having thus referred to the characteristics of the family in general, and to some of its more interesting members in other lands, we will perhaps be better prepared to consider the peculiarities of our own bird, the American chimney swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). This bird is about 5 inches in length and 12 to 13 in extent of wings. The general colour is a dull dark gray, considerably lighter on the throat and breast and having a faint gloss of metallic green on the back. On taking either of the specimens on the table in the hand one is at once struck with the singular appearance of the tail, each of the ten quills ending in a strong sharp spine formed by the shaft being produced about a quarter of an inch beyond the vane. Such a form of tail is almost valueless as a steering apparatus during flight, but serves admirably the purpose for which it is used—that of a prop to support the weight of the body while at rest ; for the only position of rest ever assumed by this bird is a vertical one, as it clings to the inside of a chimney or hollow tree braced up by this strong spiked tail. A woodpecker at work on the outside of the tree would assume much the same position, but in his case the spineous nature of the tail is less marked, while the