

The female often refuses to accept the first proposal but when she yields consent the pair at once begin nest building. In this they differ also from most quadrupeds, for while the majority of the latter seek shelter for themselves alone the birds build solely for their young.

The female of some few species of birds performs all the work of nest building, but in the majority of cases the male and female join in the work, though the female is usually the artist, and models the structures, while the male merely collects material.

Very soon after the nest is finished the first egg is deposited, followed usually by one in each successive twenty-four hours until the set is laid. In some cases the length of time between each egg is longer, and again in others the period grows shorter between each egg.

Around this question of egg laying, and the power of birds to retain their eggs or increase the number at will, there has been considerable discussion.

The complement of eggs having been deposited incubation is at once begun; indeed, with some of our native birds, particularly those that lay their eggs during the cold weather, the birds sit upon the first egg as soon as it is deposited.

In this work of incubation the female bears the burden of the labor though as a rule her mate is continually in attendance, carrying her food, singing his sweetest songs for her entertainment and taking her place when she leaves the nest. But with all his encouragement and helpfulness he cannot relieve her from much of the tediousness of her close confinement, which must be peculiarly severe to such a restless creature, for birds above all other animals delight in freedom and activity, and we are surprised to learn that their parental affection is sufficiently strong to bind

them to this self-inflicted, torturing captivity.

And without a continuance of the manifestation of this love, their offspring would die after emerging from the shell—for the song-bird's young are among the most helpless of God's creatures. The young bear from the first day of its life is clothed with a full robe of fur; the young sparrow is naked and requires the warm breast of a parent to maintain its life. The colt and the calf can suckle and nourish themselves; the baby thrush must wait until food is brought to it. The lamb can skip and frolic at birth, but the tiny warbler can neither walk nor fly, and is born blind.

The parents continue to feed the brood until the youngsters are full fledged, when they are taught to fly and afterward taught to seek food for themselves. With this last lesson parental care ceases, but as many species bring forth two broods the parents are thus kept employed all summer long. At the end of the summer they moult their feathers, which have been more or less injured by wear and weather, and the production of new plumes causing a severe tax upon a bird's energy, they remain inactive until the growth is completed. By this time the autumn has arrived, and with the first frost the insects seek winter quarters compelling the birds that prey upon them to start southward, and begin that great migration movement which surges north and south every year. They go south, we know, because their food is cut off by the cold weather, but why do they return north when the spring time opens? What impels them to leave their comfortable quarters at the south? What guides them on their journey north, often to the very grove in which they passed the previous summer?

Of these things we are not quite certain. They are among the un-