

nest-building, plays just as important a part in the nourishment of the young? What yields such delicious soup for a Chinese mandarin ought surely to make good pap for a young swiftlet. Something analogous to this is well known to take place in the pigeon family where the nestlings are fed with a material disgorged from the crop of the parent and consisting largely of a milky and nutritious fluid secreted by the walls of the crop.

In such works as treat of the swifts the subject of nourishment of the young is touched but lightly, if at all, though some writers express a suspicion—it is never stated positively—that they are in the habit at this season of hawking during the night for insects to supply the often recurring demands of the nestlings. It is true that the roaring of wings in the chimney and the voices of both old and young birds are to be heard several times every night; but I believe this may be accounted for by the movements of the parent birds in exchanging places as they take turns in the care of the young. The mate generally roosts at some little distance from the nest, and, as remarked before, they always move either by actual flight or by a half-flying, half-climbing movement which is sufficient to occasion all the noise that is heard. Moreover, though bats and night-hawks are visible enough any summer night, I do not know any record of a chimney swift having been seen in pursuit of prey, even by the brightest moonlight, after nine o'clock; and so far as my observations extend they seem to show greatest activity and highest flight during the sunniest hours of the day. The presence of the shade over the eye, too, seems to mark this bird as a lover of sunshine rather than of dusk.

The regular complement of eggs is from 4 to 6, but only three were hatched out in this case. The young grew rapidly, however, and soon filled the nest to overflowing.

By the 4th August the stiff tail feathers were plainly visible, and as the young seemed to be crowding each other over the edge, I took a stick and dislodged the nest, catching it and its contents on a cloth fastened across the flue for that purpose. The little birds were not at all injured and started at once to climb up the side again, using claws, wings and tail with much vigor. One taken out and kept in the room a few minutes proved to be about half fledged and was in colour and mark-