

Whether both birds or only the female took part in the nest-building is uncertain, but it appears to have occupied more than a fortnight. During the nine or ten days of incubation the mate did not appear to roost in the chimney and seems to have been rather remiss in his attentions. Indeed, I did not see the two birds together in the chimney during all this time. After the young were hatched, however, which took place on the 13th July, the male became less neglectful of his family duties, taking a fair share of the task of feeding the young, and always spending the night within the flue, not far from the nest. These observations are in accord with the fact that the birds resorting to the tower of the West Block, though somewhat reduced during the latter part of June and the first half of July, still formed a large flock, perhaps half of the original number; while after the time of hatching out they rapidly dwindled,—no doubt, by the calling away of the males to assist in the care of the young. On the evening of the 2nd of August not more than forty or fifty were seen to enter the tower.

For the first week the young were kept constantly covered by one or other of the old birds, who relieved each other at intervals of half an hour or an hour. Contrary to the descriptions given in most of the books treating of the swift, these birds seemed to be but poor climbers. They would flutter down from the entrance with wings half open above the back and alight at some little distance from the nest, generally below it. Then after a moment's rest, they would scramble up to the nest, half climbing, half flying, being never seen to ascend the wall without the assistance of the fluttering wings.

There was something about their manner of feeding the young which struck me as remarkable. When one of the parent birds returned from hunting and took its place on the nest, as I have just described, it would not proceed to feed the nestlings until after an interval of several minutes. Then without uncovering the nest it would put its head down and make a sort of contortion of the whole body, and at the same time the young would be heard to peep. This action would suggest that the food, instead of being carried in the bill, as is done by other birds when feeding their young, is disgorged from the crop after the manner of the vultures and some seabirds. And may it not be possible that the mucilaginous secretion, so useful to these birds in