

feats executed, generally on the wing, but sometimes on land or water. The drumming of the partridge is a familiar instance of this kind of performance; and though very different in style, the courtship of the chimney swift may be classed under the same head. At all other seasons they hunt singly or in pairs, twittering frequently; but during the latter half of May they are almost always to be seen in groups of three. The twittering becomes almost a continuous trill, and the lines of flight more graceful. Neglecting those zigzag darts after insects which mark their course at other times, and keeping for a long time the same relative positions, the little trio sail low down over the houses and tree-tops in long sweeping curves as if conscious of being on exhibition. By the first week in June these preliminaries are over. The unfortunate rejected has given up the suit and has retired to spend the summer in celibacy, with others equally unlucky, at the tower; and the mated ones at once set about the selection of a suitable chimney, free from fire and smoke, and tolerably clean from soot for the firm attachment of the nest. The few necessary building materials are supplied by any tall tree having dead twigs at the top. The birds while on the wing seize the twigs, and by a sudden twist break off short pieces and carry them away to the site already chosen. These are glued to the side of the flue and to each other with the mucilage secreted in the mouth of the bird as already mentioned, and are formed into a light and strong saucer-shaped nest. No down or other soft material is placed within, but the eggs are laid upon the bare framework of the nest.

On the 3rd July, 1890, I was fortunate enough to discover the nest of a pair of these birds in one of the chimneys of my house. By removing the stopper of a stove-pipe hole and placing two small mirrors in suitable positions in the flue I was able to see a good deal of the household management of my little guests. The nest was about three and a half feet above the pipe hole and eight feet from the top of the chimney; and was when unoccupied nearly hidden from sight by a slight "jog" in the chimney. Although during several weeks before that the birds had been heard in the flue and careful watch had been kept, the operation of building had not been seen; and indeed the exact location of the nest was only made known by the long wings of the bird projecting from it after egg-laying or, perhaps, incubation had begun.