

NESTING OF THE NIGHT-HAWK IN OTTAWA

A BIT OF NATURE-STUDY ON ONE'S OWN HOUSETOP.

By G. EIFRIG.

The first night-hawks or bullbats (*Chordeiles virginianus*) of the season 1904 that came to my notice, I saw sailing about over the eastern part of the city on May 11th. This interesting bird has of late years changed its nesting habits to accommodate itself to the encroachments of civilization. Many individuals of the species have forsaken their natural nesting or rather breeding places—since they build no nests whatever—that is, dry open fields and rocky ledges, and now simply deposit their usual set of two eggs on some of the many flat-roofed houses in the cities. My house having a so-called deck-roof, with a balustrade around the gravel-covered "deck," I wondered whether this might not prove attractive enough for one of the night-hawk couples to go to house-keeping on it. However, on account of an absence from the city I did not get to look until May 28th. As I lifted the cover from the manhole leading up to the deck, away flew a night-hawk from the gravel. I looked at the place vacated by her, but for several minutes saw no eggs, until I finally discovered one right before me, where I had been looking all the time. It measured 1.20 x .86 in., the ground color was dull olive-gray, irregularly blotched and spotted with blackish-brown and thus being very difficult to detect among the variously colored gravel.

The bird had not flown far, but squatted lengthwise, as this bird and the whippoorwill usually do, on one of the ridges of the roof nearby. No other egg was laid, perhaps, because the bird evidently had been hurt on one wing; some of the greater wing coverts over the secondaries were missing as through a pebble or bullet had passed through, which however, did not incapacitate her from flying. After several visits she did no longer fly off, but allowed of close approach, and as a perfectly quiet sitter before a camera, though only three feet away, would have delighted any photographer. The male, much more conspicuous and pretty than his demure little mate by reason of the white band across the throat and the white spots on wings and tail, would sometimes