

onward motion, with wings raised high above the back like a shuttlecock, drop down into the darkness. This habit of theirs of nesting in chimneys, it may as well be admitted, seems at first to detract much from their claim to an ethereal nature as dwellers in the air, but it should be borne in mind that the swift never makes his habitation amongst soot and smoke, for he is always careful to choose a chimney that is not in present use. Moreover, in the days when the human lord of this continent was living in a wigwam filled with soot and smoke, the home of the swift was the shaft of a tall and hollow tree.

The *Cypselidae* or Swifts are a family of swallow-like birds of medium size and generally of dull plumage. In the classification of the older ornithologists, on account of many superficial points of resemblance, they were closely associated with the true swallows; and as popular language even in the present day applies the name "swallow" indiscriminately to all those birds of graceful flight which live on insects caught upon the wing, it may be well to consider for a moment the reasons that have led to the modern classification; for now while the swallows are closely linked with the finches, tanagers and other singing birds of the Passerine order, so unlike them externally, the swifts on the other hand are placed in a distinct order and as intimately coupled with a family of entirely different appearance, the humming birds. For a vindication of what seems at first an unnatural classification it would be hard to find anything more satisfactory or conclusive than the words of Prof. Garrod as quoted in Cassell's Natural History. At the same time they will give us a glimpse of the internal structure of the swifts which may serve to explain some of their curious habits. I give them in abridged and somewhat modified form:

'Most of us know that unlike the hair upon a quadruped the feathers of a bird are not distributed evenly over the body, but grow in linear clusters, called *tracts*, with narrow naked spaces between. A similarity of the arrangement of these feather tracts in different species has been found to be closely associated with that general similarity of the important organs of the body which leads to the grouping of species together under one order, while the different orders frequently show different patterns in this respect. Now the arrangement of the feather tracts on the swift is found to be almost identical with that of