

About this time we were confronted with another question. The parent birds partly walled up the entrance to the nest. Why did they do so only when the young were nearly fledged? So far, the young, as they grew stronger, would sit with heads to the door, waiting for food. It must have been much nicer for them than if they had been only a small hole for a doorway. But the parental love of the old birds ruled all the family affairs, and now the doorway was sealed up to a small passage such as other nests have. Then the young, when crowding to the front, could not fall out, as there was only room for one to get food at once, and an old bird was there to keep that one back.

About a week after, the young were able to fly; they were removed to a locality along a river where there was an abundance of insects. It was at this latter place that the writer had the pleasure of watching them go to roost. There was a flock of about three hundred birds composed of Cliff, Barn and Bank Swallows. After sundown on a damp day they were seen to settle in some tall coarse grass; then, as if frightened, they would all rise, wheel about in the air and be joined by more of their kind. This performance was several times rehearsed, and, while flying about, they would occasionally shake themselves to throw the collected water from their backs. This they could do while flying as well as perching birds could do if standing on a limb or other firm footing. Several were seen to thus shake themselves, and on two or three occasions were within twenty feet of the observer. At last, when nearly dark, all settled into the coarse tall grass again and were at rest.