

her. This accumulation of nest material, which consists of thistle-down, willow cotton and lichens, has continued through the years. Now the nest extends about six inches above the light globe.

Sitting tranquilly on her two tiny eggs, this midget mother is undaunted by the curious visitors and photographers which her unique loyalty to this nesting place has brought to see her. During the period of incubation nothing can force her to relinquish her duties. In fact, once during the eighteen years the residence was partially destroyed by fire but she went right on with her family duties despite the confusion.

Once that the lazy but extremely exacting days of incubating the eggs are over, the problem of feeding two small but exceedingly hungry children keeps the mother bird continually on the go. Returning at regular intervals of about twenty minutes, she taps one of her babies on the beak as a sign that dinner is ready. She always finds a willing diner.

The rapid growth of the youngsters soon taxes the capacity of the nest. Their constant preening and stretching might have led to danger if the mother did not tie them in. Human mothers who tie their babies in a crib to keep them from falling out may have got the idea originally from the humming-bird. As soon as the young birds have grown to a point where there is danger of one being pushed out of the nest, the mother weaves one foot of each baby to the side of the nest. Closely examined, this bond is found to be so cleverly done that while it accomplishes its purpose, it does not bind or cut off circulation.

Because the young hummers are not able to walk, as they belong to the great group that fly directly from the nest, they must be strong of wing before they leave. By providing this anchor, the mother assured safety for the babies in their practice at "ground flying" and the vigorous exercise of their wings, which was done frequently during the last few days in the nest. Each day or so the binding is removed, the young are shifted in the nest and the binding is replaced on the other leg.

The baby hummers were almost as large as their mother when they were released from their anchor. For a few minutes after the first young bird had flown the other youngster seemed to enjoy the luxury of the nest to himself. Then he launched himself into the world, leaving the nest empty and forlorn.

A world of sunshine and flowers awaits the young hummers. The mother continues to feed them for a few days and then they make their own way. They delight in chasing one another up and down the woven wire fence near the house and giving the shrill piping song characteristic of the Anna.