



## IV. A postscript to the paper "On the Swallow" inserted in No. 246

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IV. *A Postscript to the Paper "On the Swallow" inserted in No. 246. By Mr. GAVIN INGLIS.*

*To Mr. Tilloch.*

Strathendry Bleachfield, Dec. 7, 1818.

SIR, — ON reading my communication *On the Swallow*, inserted in your Number for October last, I find I had omitted one anecdote, which, although trivial in itself, may without impropriety be inserted, as it tends in some measure to elucidate the wisely-discriminating penetration of these wonderfully sagacious little creatures, when deviating from the general habits of their species. The anecdote was connected with, and should have followed,

"I have known both kinds in a bad season, when short of flies to nourish and bring forward their young, abandon whole nests of the last sittings to perish, when the ultimate period of their departure arrived, but never knew them separate and leave the other divisions behind." Neither did I ever know even a straggling deviation, except in one solitary instance, and which must have been the result of deliberation, dictated by the peculiar circumstances of the season, conjoined with heart-ties of the tenderest parental affection.

In the year 1814, by accident the nests with the second incubation of two pair had fallen and the eggs were broken. This misfortune was repaired with all possible dispatch by rebuilding, and a fresh sitting of eggs produced. but by this circumstance, and consequent delay, these nestlings were thrown far behind their twin-kindred of the same brood. And when the period of departure arrived, they had not gained sufficient fledging to leave the nest. The weather however was dry, and the season upon the whole favourable. The parents of both nests, contrary to the practice in unfavourable years, allowed the colony to depart, remained behind after every swallow but themselves was gone, nourished and brought forward their second brood, put them through all their trainings and facings, and, in about fourteen days after their associates had gone, took their departure, directing and protecting the flight of their young to join the departed colony.

I have now to communicate one additional fact, which I consider a complete refutation of their fancied subaquatic hibernation. During the past summer, the servants observing the attention I was bestowing on every movement of the swallows, were quite alive to point out every thing regarding them that appeared any way particular. From the fineness of the season, and no lack of food, the young brood all survived; and towards the period of their hibernating, joined in all probability by other distant colonies, they mustered numbers far beyond what I ever remember

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ber to have seen in any former year, but not a white-tailed one could ever be detected in the assembled multitude. Their gathering song was more than usually cheerful; their training and spiral flights, from their augmented numbers, were particularly amusing; and their merry-making was louder and longer heard after their flight was beyond the reach of the visual organs: perhaps this might be heightened by an uncommonly mild humidity in the air, which being more conductory of sound than a dry atmosphere might aid the vibration of their noisy clamour. At length they took their final departure, leaving "not a rack behind," under all the similar circumstances of former years. On the evening of the seventh day, however, after they had totally disappeared, we had again the unusual pleasure of a revisitation from our old friends. It was a fine summer evening; the exhalations of the meridian sun hovered over our heads in calm serenity; while not a breath of wind nor the rustling of a leaf disturbed the rays of the sun, half smothered, half reflected, glimmering through a misty veil of snow-white brightness, and heightened by the increasing obliquity of the departing beams which threw over the waning day an air of heavenly sublimity. Enticed from the elevated regions (to which I am of opinion they retire, and keep on the wing during the whole of their absence, or through which they wing their flight to distant climes) by the uncommon mildness and calm serenity of the evening, the swallows were first heard but faintly, as at a great distance in the air. Their well-known voice however was instantly recognised, and the sound of the ethereal crowd (of swallows) brought some of the servants from the field, to intimate the return of their old and particular friends. From the *increasing* sound, we discovered they were gradually continuing their descent, till their well-known and familiar tones were distinctly heard in loud clamour by every servant on the field. None ventured to descend below the vapour; consequently none of them were seen, although they remained within hearing for nearly an hour together. They reascended with the going down of the sun, and have never been heard nor seen again.

Yours sincerely,

GAVIN INGLIS.

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V. *On the Manufacture and Uses of Animal Charcoal, known by the Name of Ivory Black, &c.* By the Chevalier CADIT DE GASSICOURT.

THE physical and chemical properties of animal charcoal have been known only for a few years. Formerly bones and ivory were calcined in close vessels merely to procure a fine black for painting;

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