

*Sink Paramount  
Pictorial*

*410 ft neg.*

*Jan 10-1934*

FAIRY OF THE FLOWERS (Hummingbird)  
or  
Tiniest Soul in Feathers  
by  
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A long time ago a tribe of Indians lived in a fertile valley below the great mountain they called God. With superstitious reverence the red men watched the changing moods of the mountain that hurled its shafts of lightening and bolts of thunder, that kept the clouds swirling about its summit or gave them the winds, the rain and the snow.

Scenes- Two views of snow-capped mountain.

The forests at its base abounded in game and fur-bearing animals, and furnished them food and clothes. The mountain poured from its glaciers the roaring rivers that gave them fish.

Scenes- Mountain and forest in foreground, and waterfall.

The Indian children played at the edge of the forest. The snows of winter melted in the spring. Then came the flowers. It was the custom to watch for fairies when the meadows were full of color.

Scene- General view of flowers and snow patches, nearer views of flowers.

The fairy of the Indian children was more like a little shooting star. It popped from the earth like a brilliantly colored blossom, or it dropped from the sky like the flying fleck from a rainbow. It hovered at a flower, and was gone.

Scene- Hummingbird at flower.

This was no regular bird like a crow or an eagle. It was too tiny. The wings dissolved into a mist. It moved so fast no Indian child could find it, or it hung suspended in mid-air like a trick of magic.

Scene- Hummingbird lighting on limb.

Then one day a long time afterward came a naturalist who saw the Indian fairy of the flowers. Because of its buzzing sound, he named it hummingbird. And he began to unravel the story of its life. Had this midget strayed away from the tropics and gotten lost? How could it build its nest and feed its young with a bill like a needle? What was its mission in life?

Scene- Near-up of hummingbird on limb.

To begin with, the hummingbird belongs to the most remarkable bird family in the world. It is found only on the

American continents and is the tiniest soul in feathers.

Scene- Hummingbird on spiraea bush.

At times the Indian children couldn't distinguish the difference between two visitors among the flowers. The sphinx or hummingbird-moth is about the same size. When the wings were moving it was hard to tell at a glance that one was an insect and the other a bird.

Scene- Sphinx moth at flower.

In its love for flowers, the hummingbird is like the bee. In its brilliancy of color, it is like some delicate butterfly that lights on a blossom to gather a dinner of sweets.

Scene- Yellow or swallow-tailed butterfly.

The home of the hummingbird is very difficult to find. It is like hunting for a needle in a haystack. The best way is to take a bunch of keen-eyed boys and try to follow the bird when it has collected food and is returning to its nest.

Scene- Boys looking up into tree.

If the nest is high up, the only chance for a photograph is to haul the camera into the tree-top and tie it to a nearby branch if one is available.

Scene- Boys in tree hauling up camera.

The hummingbird is an expert nest builder. She uses spiderwebs to tie the foundation to a limb, then weaves in moss and fibers with her slender bill, lining the inside with feathers and cotton.

Scene- Nest and eggs of hummingbird.

The mother is no bigger than a minute. Her throat is jewelled and iridescent. There are five hundred different species of hummingbirds in North and South America. They are more brilliant in plumage than any other bird. Although associated with the tropics, these tiny birds nest as far north as Alaska and Labrador.

Scenes- Hummingbird on nest, nest and eggs, bird on nest.

Here is the tiny cup of a hummingbird balanced and built as if it were a part of the sycamore limb, and made entirely of the yellow down from the sycamore leaves so it matches the surroundings perfectly.

Scenes- Boys looking into bush, nest side view.

The eggs are the size of little white beans.

Scene- Looking down in hummingbird nest, hand showing below.

This home of the hummingbird was saddled on the branch of an ash tree. The limbs were covered with green lichens so the bird with an eye toward matching the surroundings, also made her nest of green moss and shingled its sides with lichens.

Scene- Nest on branch of ash tree.

By building a blind and hiding with the camera inside, the naturalist discovered the secrets in the home life of this little fairy of the flowers as he watched for days with the nest and mother within three feet.

Scene- Hummingbird on edge of nest attending to young and settling herself in the little cup.

At this time the hummingbird twins were but a few days out of the eggs. When the mother was away hunting one day, they were taken out for a moment and held in the hand, then quickly replaced. They were naked, blind and helpless, and looked more like little bugs than birds.

Scenes- Hummingbirds a few days old held in hand, and close-up view.

The hummingbird differs from all other birds in its method of flight and manner of feeding. The main part of its menu is animal matter and not nectar from the flowers, as most people think. We see it probing the blossoms to get the sweets, but if we were to look more closely we should see the hummingbird picking up many little insects that live about the flowers and on the leaves.

Scenes- View of flowers followed by hummingbird feeding at flowers.

She collects her bits of food which she swallows and then returning home, she feeds the children by regurgitation, pumping the pre-digested meal from her stomach into theirs.

Scenes- Nest and young hummingbirds two weeks old, mother lights on nest edge.

At this age, dinner time looked like the murder of the infants. She braced her tail against the edge of the nest, drew her long, dagger-like bill straight up and plunged it down the baby's mouth to the hilt as if she were stabbing them to death. She gave them several injections.

Scene- Same nest as above, mother feeding.

Another nearby nest was tied to the needles on the end

of a fir limb. Each time the mother fed her young, it looked as if she were puncturing them to the toes. They were not bloody, however, as this was their accustomed method of getting their dinner.

Scene- Nest on fir branch, mother feeding young.

The young hummingbird is not likely to fall out of the nest as some young birds do. These little fellows practice many times a day, preening their feathers and buzzing their wings, holding on with their toes to keep them from rising until the day comes when fully fledged they shoot upward like little meteors.

Scene- Young preening and practicing on nest.

So, before young hummingbirds leave home, it looks like a full house. It is nearly three weeks from egg-hood to full feathers. They are almost as large as the mother. She was nervous about having the camera so near her home.

Scene- Two nearly grown young in nest, mother lighting and feeding.

By this time the twins are ready to break home ties, but as long as they are having twenty meals a day, why leave home? It is a habit in hummingbird families for the male bird never to come near the nest. He never helps build the home, incubate or feed the young. It is always the case of a widow with twins.

Scene- Nearer view hummingbird and young.

The next morning, the mother refused to furnish breakfast until one young bird was so hungry that he buzzed to a nearby limb.

Scenes- Young bird on limb, one in nest; near-up of other in nest.

The time to make friends with birds is when they are starting out in the world. It is not difficult to tame the wildest birds if one is quiet and does not make sudden noises or movements. The mother is sure to bring food to her young wherever they are. At first she gave them lunch on the fly.

Scenes- Hummingbird on child's hand; mother lighting on branch and feeding.

A bird in the hand is always worth more than one in the bush, especially if it is a live bird. We had finally solved the mission of the hummingbird's life. As she probes the flowers for food, the pollen sifts over her head and she carries it to the heart of the next flower. In this way she is an important factor in nature for fertilizing plants.

Scenes- Young birds on limb, woman behind; mother feeding on wing; close-up young on hand.