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**Lieut.-Colonel C. T. Echalaz.**

**WATERLOO MUSEUM,**

**LIVERPOOL.**

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Complete History

of the

**Echalaz Collection.**

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BY

**LIEUT.-COLONEL ECHALAZ.**

LATE INDIAN ARMY.

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ERRATA.

Page 31, line 5.      Read "Godhra" for "Godra.  
 Page 85, line 19.    Read "digression" for "disgression.  
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## PREFACE.

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In compiling this Handbook for the Waterloo Museum, containing as it does a faithful account of the most important facts and particulars in connection with my collection of ornithological specimens, it is incumbent upon me to make the fullest acknowledgment of my great indebtedness to Howard Saunders for much valuable information obtained from his well-known "Manual of British Birds."

The information contained in a Museum Handbook should be based upon what is absolutely reliable and indisputable, and such do I consider Howard Saunders's Standard Work to be. I have therefore taken the liberty of quoting him freely upon all such matters as the nesting habits of our British Birds, the colour of their eggs, the dates of their arrival in and departure from our islands, and their geographical range outside our limits.

Information such as this could not possibly have been afforded from my personal knowledge, which must perforce be only very limited; I trust, therefore, that having stated clearly the authority in connection with each quotation, I shall be pardoned for having made such free use of Howard Saunders's work.

To Mr. W. H. Hudson I tender my best thanks for many interesting paragraphs I have extracted from his valuable book on British Birds. These have helped me materially in making my Handbook not altogether dry-as-dust reading; my only regret is that, being a collector, I shall probably have incurred his displeasure. My thanks are also due to Mr. Swainsland for quotations from his book—"Familiar Wild Birds"—to Mr. Pycraft for several references to his "Story of Bird Life," and to Mr. Henry Scherren for assistance in preparing my manuscript for the press.

CATERHAM VALLEY HOTEL,

CATERHAM.

*September, 1907.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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Having been requested by some members of the Urban District Council of Waterloo to give a sketch of my career by way of preface to this little Handbook to the Collection of Birds, I will endeavour to be as brief as possible.

My father, the Rev. Theodore Augustus Echalaz, was Vicar of Lullington, in the County of Derbyshire, and a Rural Dean.

I was born at the Vicarage on the 9th of July, 1844. In my childhood days I evinced a strong predilection for an outdoor, rather than a sedentary life, or the study of books; and, at about the age of ten, my parents decided that a soldier's life was the one for me; I remember when the subject was broached, and I was assured that it didn't necessarily follow that I should be shot, I was quite satisfied to be a soldier. My parents not being particularly well off, and therefore not in a position to make me an allowance, it was thought advisable, if possible, to obtain a nomination for me in the Indian Army. These nominations were no easy matter in those days, and required a good deal of influence; luckily, my father possessed a good friend in the person of Squire Bracebridge of Atherstone Hall who happened to know Sir John Stuart Mills, at the India Office, intimately, so the matter was arranged.

At about the age of twelve I was allowed a single-barrelled gun, and at fourteen, when staying at Catton Hall, as the guest of Lady Wilmot Horton, I shot my first pheasant on the wing and my first hare running in a wood; shortly after this my father died at Hastings, after an illness of several weeks.

At the age of seventeen, I passed out direct into the Indian Service from the Kensington Grammar School, going up to the India Office for my examination. On the 27th January, 1862, I embarked in the Peninsula and Oriental Company's SS. "Mooltan," for Alexandria, visiting Cairo *en route*, doing the Pyramids, etc., then travelling across the desert by rail to Suez, where I boarded another P. and O. Steamer, "The Nubia," which landed me in Bombay somewhere about a month from the date of departure.

At Bombay I was hospitably put up by the Chief Magistrate till my orders came for me to join the 72nd Highlanders, at Mhow, with whom I remained six months learning my profession, being drilled through the various ranks of private and non-commissioned officer upwards. I then had to march nearly 200 miles in the rainy season and join the 13th Bombay N.I., at Neemuch, and the difficulty and hardship of that journey I am not likely to forget. In the cold weather of that year I marched 285 miles with the regiment to Ahmedabad, in the Province of Guzerat, where I had splendid shooting for about two and a half years; game consisting of an occasional panther, any amount of antelope, and

as for small game—such as Duck, Snipe, Quail, Florican (a small Bustard)—there was hardly a better station to be found in the Bombay Presidency. Then again there was excellent pigsticking and coursing with greyhounds; so that I look upon these two and a half years of my boyhood life as about the happiest in the whole of my military career.

Ahmedabad was the Headquarters of the Northern Division, and was commanded by General Sir Charles T. Van Straubenzee. Owing to the facilities I had of meeting the General in the sporting field I began to know him very well, and, when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Presidency *pro tem*, in 1865, he offered me the post of one of his aides-de-camp on his staff, of which I gladly availed myself.

Getting official orders soon after this, I joined him at the hill station of Mahableshwar, which is about 5,000 feet above sea-level, and the recognized Headquarters of the Bombay Commander-in-Chief and staff during the hot weather. Just after leaving Ahmedabad a most virulent epidemic of cholera broke out, and many men of my regiment died, as well as one officer—so I was lucky to be out of it.

When the rains set in we all came down to Poona, which is on a plateau 2,000 feet above sea-level, and one of the gayest military stations in the Presidency during the season, *viz.*, the monsoon months; dinner parties, balls, gymkhanas, horse racing, boating, etc., etc., being the order of the day. I must say I had a splendid time, but only too short-lived, for in

a month or two I found myself gazetted to the Revenue Survey.

The fact was, I had previously made application for an appointment in the Police, not being aware of the General's intention to select me for one of his aides-de-camp; and the authorities, instead of granting what I had asked for, had appointed me to the Revenue Survey; I had to go, there was no help for it, much as I disliked surrendering my appointment on the Headquarter Staff. These civil appointments in India are often given to military officers in times of peace and sometimes act prejudicially when a chance of active service comes; as in my own case, when the Abyssinian war broke out in 1868, I requested that my services might be placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief, but was met with a refusal by the Superintendent of Survey on the grounds that I could not be spared.

My next move was to Surat, which lies about half way between Bombay and Ahmedabad. There I reported myself to the Superintendent of the Guzerat Revenue Survey, and became an Assistant Superintendent; but it was necessary, before receiving full pay and allowances, to pass the Interpreter's Test in the Guzerathi language. I don't suppose I ever applied myself more studiously to books than I did just at that time—working from ten to twelve hours a day.

Having passed the Staff Test in Hindoostani at Ahmedabad, I managed this language in something over three months, being gazetted as having "passed

with credit." I was then sent out into the districts with an establishment of about twenty-one surveyors, eighteen of whom worked with cross staff and chain and three with theodolite. The duties of the cross staff men were to survey all holdings of the ryots or village leaseholders—the size of their fields being regulated according to the quality of the soil—to make village maps showing all the boundaries of these holdings, together with all details—such as rivers, streams, trees, wells, roads, paths, etc. The theodolite men traversed the boundaries of the villages, the whole being made into district maps in the rains and embodied in the Topographical Survey maps.

My duties were to allot them their several villages, place my camp as nearly as possible in the centre, ride out every morning anything from five to ten miles, and test about ten per cent. of each man's work once every month with a theodolite. It was hard work—especially in the hot weather—as measurements in the field had to be plotted out to scale, areas computed, and any discrepancies investigated; in addition to this, boundary disputes with foreign territories had to be inquired into, evidence being taken in writing, old maps consulted, etc., before any settlement could be effected.

Whilst in this Survey I got my first tiger shooting. In September, 1866, I became seriously ill with fever, contracted, I suppose, in the jungles where I had been "big game shooting." I was laid up at Surat, and very nearly "pegged out." Eventually,

however, I was sent in charge of an officer friend to Bombay, where I was comfortably put up in a Medico's house, and had the advantage of his professional skill. In due course I came round, and, as it was considered unadvisable to work in the same districts again, I was transferred to the Poona Survey, which necessitated my passing in the Murathi language. Although I used to have periodical attacks of fever every year, I was unable to get the Medical Authorities to send me to England on sick leave till the beginning of 1871. I stayed at home two years, had a good time shooting and fishing, and returned to India two stone heavier. I remained in the Poona Survey for a year after arrival, then went back to military duty, joining the Marine Battalion or 21st Bombay N.I. During my stay with this regiment nothing very eventful occurred outside the usual routine of an officer's daily life in an Indian regiment—that is parades in the early morning in the cold weather months, annual course of musketry on the ranges, Courts-Martial, Committees of all sorts, etc., etc.

Perhaps the most notable event was the presentation of New Colours to the regiment by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, our present King, in 1875; also, it might interest some to know that, I with two friends, one being a lieutenant, the other a civilian, attempted to get to the source of the Ganges in the year 1876. It meant ascending to 23,000 feet where there is an ice cave whence the water comes. We started from the hill station of

Mussoorie, where we had to hire thirty coolies with a man called a tindal in command to carry stores, tents, etc. These stores were put into baskets called "kilters," and strapped to the men's shoulders, the Government weight allowed being 66-lbs. ; the addition of a cook and a man servant completed our party.

We took a fair quantity of European stores with us, as the only things obtainable *en route* were fowls, eggs, flour, and an occasional sheep ; in the way of drinkables—nothing but whiskey. An average day's march would be about 12 miles, but we had no hard and fast rule about this, pitching our tent for the night wherever circumstances were most favourable.

To describe these magnificent snow-capped mountain ranges, or the ever changing scenery we passed through, would require the genius of a Blackmore to do it justice, suffice it to say that, below the perpetual snow line of 17,000 feet, the mountains were a mass of luxuriant vegetation in which one would notice the Scotch fir, larch, etc., whilst rhododendrons, wild fruits, and flowers were in abundance creating a perfume all through the air. A glorious country truly ! When we got up to about 11,000 feet we met a man of the Forest Department, and here we made a little diversion, leaving the ordinary track for a couple of days in order to get a little shooting. We divided into two parties, the lieutenant going with him, and the civilian with me. I managed on this trip to shoot a couple of wild sheep

called bharal, which seldom come lower down than 13,000 feet.

Before proceeding further it will be well to explain that our route followed the main tributary of the Ganges, and that as we got farther the mountains converged so closely that it was necessary to carry pedestrians across this stream by means of suspension bridges—backwards and forwards—the Forest Department making the road on whichever side the mountain was most favourable. One of these suspension bridges was a great trial to the nerves, being only three feet in width, 300 feet across, and 300 feet above the bed of the river, suspended from two cables fixed into the ground over two posts on either side ; these cables dropped down in the centre like a skipping rope, whilst the planks of the bridge went up. It oscillated a great deal, and if you lost your head there was nothing to prevent you from falling into the bed of the river below. But I must draw to a conclusion. Finally, we got to a place called Gungotri, about 14,000 feet above sea-level where is one of the most celebrated shrines in India. Here a snow storm came on, obliterating the track for the time being, and not having sufficient leave at our disposal we had to return to Bombay, but I believe having got so far—had the weather been favourable—we should have reached the source in another two or three days.

In May 1878 I went on a year's sick leave to England, being very ill with liver and impaired digestion. Not being fit to return to duty at the



expiration of the year granted, I got three extensions of six months at a time bringing my total leave up to two and a half years. This period was almost entirely given up to sport of some kind, such as salmon, sea, and brown trout-fishing, and shooting, the fresh air thus obtained—coupled with an excellent patent remedy recommended to me by a friend for indigestion—set me on my legs, and I went out to India again in the cold weather of 1880.

In 1882 I was appointed to the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, stationed at Mhow, as second in command, to fill the place of Lieut.-Colonel Henslowe, who had been shot by a native soldier who had “run amuck.” This regiment was one of the unfortunate ones which, like the 66th Berkshire Regiment, was almost annihilated in the disaster which occurred at the battle of Maiwand under the command of General Burrows during the second phase of the Afghan war. When I joined, it was almost entirely composed of raw recruits, and there being no old soldiers left to give the men stability or discipline an unusual amount of leniency, tact, and judgment was required in dealing with them. I must say I rather resented being sent off in what seemed to me an unreasonable sort of way at a moment’s notice, so to speak, putting me to a lot of expense; but being told that I must take it as a compliment, having been selected out of a list of officers by the Commander-in-Chief himself, especially for tact, I was reconciled. It’s difficult to write about one’s self without appearing to be

egotistical, but what I state here is nevertheless true.

After a short period with the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, I was transferred back again to the Marine Battalion in Bombay as commander of the left-half battalion. In March, 1885, all officers were recalled from furlough in England, general leave in India, etc., and had to be medically examined as to fitness for active service, as it was believed we should be involved in a war with Russia over the Penjdeh affair in Afghanistan. So near was it considered to be that most married officers sold their furniture and sent their wives home. The regimental transport and commissariat supplies for the 1st Army Corps of 60,000 troops were in readiness to start at the proverbial "moment's notice," but the war, as everyone knows, never came off, mainly owing, I think, to the sagacity and foresight of the then Governor-General, Earl Dufferin. In October, 1885, I was gazetted as second in command of the 9th Bombay N.I. under orders for Aden. This was one of the two regiments sent from India to Malta when the Earl of Beaconsfield, as Prime Minister, wished to show the Russians—at the time they were threatening Constantinople in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877—that we not only had the English Army to rely upon, but also the Indian forces, who were loyal and true.

We embarked for Aden in a troopship in December, arriving towards the end of the month. We were quartered in what is called the Crater,

which is four miles inland from Steamer Point, where the artillery are stationed. The length of this crater I should estimate at about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and the breadth threequarters of a mile, and it is the mouth of an extinct volcano. The chief feature of Aden is the very strong fort there, which commands the Straits of Babel-Mandeb, the entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean, There is no vegetation to relieve the eye, nothing but volcanic hills, the highest peak of which is 1,700 feet. The radiating heat from these volcanic rocks—often coupled with a breathless atmosphere at night—necessitated the use of punkahs, without which one could not sleep. The place would have been unbearable but for a very genial and hospitable General at Steamer Point, who did a lot for us in the way of entertainment ; and for an AI European Regiment, the 54th Dorsetshire, who did their very best to make the time pass pleasantly. As they were quartered with us in the Crater, we knew them very well, and were very “chummy” together.

At the end of the cold weather, the drill season being over and musketry course concluded, the commanding officer went home on three months' leave, and I, as next senior, assumed command till my retirement from the Service on the 1st of June, 1886. I embarked on the 8th June, travelling by easy stages across the Continent, arriving in England the beginning of July, 1886.

In conclusion, perhaps I ought to mention that I entered H.M.'s Service as Ensign in 1862, obtained

my Lieutenancy in 1863, Captaincy in 1871, Majority in 1882, and was gazetted out Lieutenant-Colonel on my retirement. That it was never my fortune to see active service was due entirely to the fact that the regiment I was with at the time did not happen to be one of those under orders for the front. However, I may say that, having had the experience of facing a wounded tiger, I trust that, had I been called upon to face the bullets of any enemy to my own dear country, I should have acquitted myself like a soldier and an Englishman.

## SOME REMARKS ON THE COLLECTION

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In the year 1878, when on leave from India as a Captain, I was introduced by a clergyman friend to two gentlemen farmers, brothers, who had a sheep farm of about 1,000 acres at Mere, a country town about five miles distant from Gillingham in the county of Wiltshire. The younger of these two, Ernest Baker, was a great sportsman and naturalist ; eventually he became one of the truest and best friends I ever had, and after my retirement from the Service in 1886, I used to shoot with him mostly every year till his death in 1892. He was a first-class shot and fisherman, and many a happy day have I had with him in the field. His death was an irreparable loss to me ; *Requiescat in Pace*. He had a fine collection of birds in his dining-room, and seeing this I really think started the idea with me that I would try and do likewise.

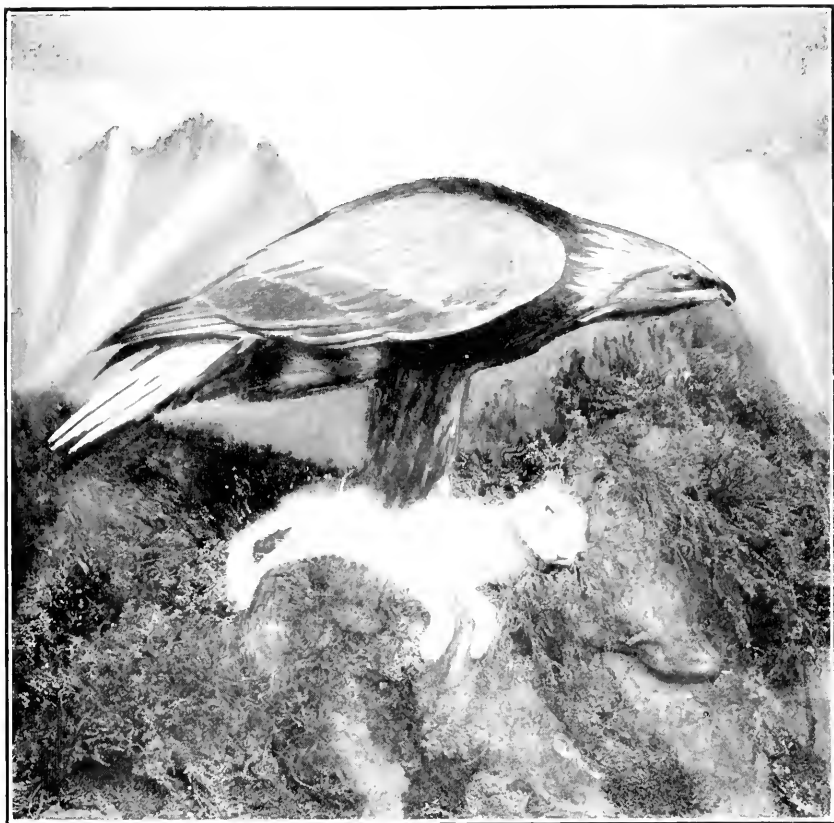
Having once got the idea of employing some of my spare time by starting a collection my next thought was, that to be of any interest and value to myself, it must be the outcome of my own individual effort and observation in the field, and this I have tried to carry out as far as possible. What I claim for the collection is, that most of the birds have been shot by me, or that I have been associated with them in the field when they have been shot or

trapped ; the exceptions to this general rule being very few, viz., the Golden Eagle and the Great Northern Diver. For me to have obtained the former would have been an impossibility, and as regards the latter, though I tried very hard I was unsuccessful ; and wishing to complete my Divers, accepted the one now introduced. Of the others, perhaps the most valuable would be Baillon's Crake and the Spotted Crake ; next in order come the Dotterel and Grey Plover ; those remaining being common and not worth any special mention.

I may also claim that the mountings in the cases—that is, the surroundings in which the birds are placed—are almost entirely my own ideas which have been imparted to the several taxidermists.

The specimens themselves are mostly in excellent plumage, and have been obtained over a wide field, embracing the west coast of Scotland, Wales, the southern counties of England, and the south-west of Ireland.

The mountings of the birds are intended to illustrate, as far as possible in a limited space, the habitat most natural to the particular species. Thus, the Golden Eagle is shown in a mountainous district—depicted in the back scene painting—standing amongst rocks and heather in a characteristic attitude over a Scotch hare—one of the commonest of its victims. The Peregrine Falcons are represented with their eyrie in a cliff with eggs ; in connection with this case I am compelled to admit they are both female birds as I was unsuccessful in



**Eagle.**

Mountain Heather, with Scotch Hare.





getting the male. The Buzzards are treated in much the same manner, but with this difference, that they are with their young. The Sparrow Hawk, being an arboreal species, has a woodland back-scene—the roughly constructed nest of twigs, and the male bird carrying a small bird to feed the hen sitting on the nest, are true to nature.

I do not propose to go all through the cases *seriatim*, but think it will suffice if I speak of some of them in groups—such as the Great Cormorant, Puffin, Guillemot, Razor Bill, Kittiwake Gull, etc., the natural surroundings of which are sea-cliffs, sea-rocks, the mountings being made to accord with this fact.

To show one or two birds of each species in a case would by no means convey the proper idea of these birds as they congregate in groups on the ledges of the cliffs, consequently, as many as are required to give a true representation of what they look like in their natural state are introduced.

In connection with this group of cases, I wish to draw special attention to the one containing the Kittiwake Gulls, which faithfully portrays the nesting site of this species in regard to character of rock-work and small ledges on which the eggs are placed, with merely a little dry seaweed for the nest itself.

To mention another group of birds which confine themselves almost entirely to the sea and its estuaries and creeks, I take the Great Northern Diver, Sheld-Duck, Merganser, Gannet, Pintail, Wigeon, Brent Goose, and Eider Duck.

The back scene of the Great Northern Diver is intended for a distant view of part of the Sound of Mull, with Oban Bay and Castle in the foreground; the bird is supposed to have come up from the open sea with the tide into Oban Bay; one characteristic of this species being to work towards the shores of sea lochs with the tide.

The Sheld-Ducks are shown feeding in an imaginary estuary, with sandbanks on one side; the Mergansers in a Scotch Highland loch, which they often frequent; the Gannets in an imaginary seascape; the Pintail in creek of the sea in Ireland; the Brent Geese in an imaginary seascape, with storm and shipwreck, one Goose standing as sentinel; the Eiders on the margin of a loch and water. To take another group—the Black-Throated Diver, the Red-Throated Diver, Mallard, Teal, Shoveller, Gadwall, Coot, and Moorhen. The first-named two, breeding, as they do, in fresh water, are shown with the eggs close to the edge of the water, the usual situation of the nest; the other ducks are all treated with water and imaginary Highland loch scenes. The surrounding rushes in the two last mentioned cases are quite typical of the haunts of the birds.

The next group I mention are the Crow family—Carrion and Hooded Crows, Jackdaws, Choughs, and Magpies. With the exception of the Jackdaws, all the rest have—as most suitable to their haunts—been treated with cliff and rock mountings; the two most effective being, in my opinion, those of the Hooded Crows and the Choughs. The next group

I take are rather a miscellaneous lot: Grey Lag and Bean Goose, White-Fronted Geese, Herring, Common, and Lesser Black-Backed Gulls, Oyster Catcher, Curlew, Godwits, Skua, and Rock Pigeon. The Grey Lag and Bean Goose are supposed to be in the foreground of some sea loch; the White-Fronted Geese in a valley, with heath-clad mountains and boggy land below; the Gulls amongst rocks near the sea; the Oyster Catchers on the shores of an estuary—one pair with nesting site and eggs, the other with the young birds; the Curlews on a sandy shore, with a receding tide on a summer's evening; the Godwits, Knots, and Lapwings on an imaginary sea loch; the Rock Pigeons on a cliff; but this, I admit, is hardly true to nature, for the mounting ought to have been a sea cavern. The next group—Grouse, Pheasants, Partridge, and Woodcock—needs very little explanation; all I have to say about them is that the surroundings are as faithful to nature as the limited compass of each case will admit of. The Woodcock and Snipe case is a very favourite one of mine, and the treatment is quite self-evident. There are a few other birds to which I will briefly allude. The Bittern has been placed in surroundings almost identical with those in which it was found. The Heron near a loch, by the side of a waterfall, is quite natural to the species. The Water-Ouzel and Kingfisher are both placed in surroundings in exact accordance with their favourite haunts.

The sea cliff of red sandstone showing ledges with small shells and seaweed at its base is an

excellent mounting for the little sea birds introduced; this same remark applies to the case containing the Swallow, House and Sand Martin, etc. I will make one more allusion to the cases for the Spotted and Pied Fly Catchers and Grey Wagtails. These have been copied as nearly as possible from the actual position.

In my concluding remarks on this collection, I think it only fair to mention the names of those taxidermists who have had the principal share in it. To Mr. Cecil Bisshopp, of Oban, belongs the credit of all the earlier part. Many of his cases have back scene paintings by a clever artist, which are made to accord with the mountings in the foreground, thus very materially enhancing their general artistic appearance. To select some of these, I take the Sheld-Duck, Merganser, Pintail, Brent Goose, Kittiwake, Common Cormorant, Razor Bill, Puffin, Woodcock, Kestrel Hawk, Heron, Black Throated Diver, and Hooded Crow.

Mr. Pickin, of Manchester, who has confined himself principally to small birds, has done some nice work in the way of stuffing. As an illustration of one of his cases, I will mention that of little sea birds on a red sandstone cliff. I have already borne testimony to Mr. Charles Thorpe, of East Croydon, for the very artistic cases he has turned out for me, notably the Tiger. Next to that the Water-Ouzel and Kingfisher cases. It now only remains for me to mention the name of Mr. W. R. Hine, of Southport. In the following cases, viz. :—The Eagle,

Peregrine Falcons, Buzzards, Coots, and Moorhens, the credit of making them what they now are entirely belongs to him. They were not his work in the first instance it is true—the back scenes not being his—but they have been so altered and improved as to be very different to what they originally were. In all of them, with the exception of the young birds, the work involved relaxing of the skins and re-stuffing. In addition to this the cases have been much enlarged in breadth, the mountings very much improved in regard to character of rock-work and general detail, and in one or two instances entirely altered. Again, much credit is due to Mr. W. R. Hine for the improvements made in the Sparrow Hawk, Great Northern Diver, and Partridge cases, all three having been very much enlarged. This relaxing, re-stuffing, and bringing the attitude of the several species more into conformity with what is natural to them has been no easy task, and Mr. W. R. Hine has earned my best thanks for what he has done. Besides these, there are a fair number of cases of Mr. Hine's own work, which are very satisfactory. I therefore confidently recommend to the Urban District Council of Waterloo his appointment as taxidermist to their Museum, knowing that in him they get a first-class man, who lives only a few miles away from Waterloo, and an artist who will give every satisfaction.

I cannot more fitly conclude these remarks than by stating my reasons for presenting to the town of

Waterloo what I now consider to be a valuable collection of ornithological specimens.

Well, I think it was mainly because I had more associations with the town than with any other in England, my mother and brother having resided in the place for a good many years, and a married sister at Blundellsands ; that since my retirement from the Service in 1886 I had practically made it my headquarters, so to speak, when not away on some sporting expedition, and consequently that, not only on the ground of family ties, but on social connections as well, I came to the conclusion I could not make the offer to any town more deserving of my consideration.

In making the offer I stipulated for a well-built, properly-lighted Museum Room, and suitable fittings for the several cases, all of which conditions, I must frankly confess, the Urban District Council of Waterloo have carried out to my entire satisfaction. It only remains for me to add that my object in offering this collection as a free gift to a public institution was, that all the labour and expense that has been expended on it might not be thrown away, but that the Museum Room might prove a valuable adjunct to the Carnegie Library, and not only serve a useful purpose from an educational point of view, but also afford to all those who are fond of ornithology an opportunity of whiling away an hour or so very pleasantly.

## MY FIRST TIGER.

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It's only a short story. In the hot weather months of the year 1866, I—being 21 years of age at the time—was working in the Guzerat Revenue Survey in a district called the Punch Mahals, which lies some 200 miles north of Bombay. Godra was the principal town, and there all the civil authorities in the judicial, revenue, and police departments resided.

In those days there was no railway in that part of the Bombay Presidency, and as there were splendid teak wood jungles all round, it was a noted place for good tiger shooting. So far as my memory serves me—for it's a long time to look back to without any notes—it was at Godhra that I first met Major Bonnor, who was Superintendent of the Police of that District. The Major was an A1 sportsman and a first class rifle shot, and had, I believe, bagged a fair number of tigers in his day. Seeing that I myself, though only a youngster, was anxious to be initiated into the sport of "big game shooting," he very kindly asked me to join his camp for a few days in the month of May on the chance of getting a shot at a tiger. Needless to say, I found my way over from my camp to his without much delay after getting the invitation.

There were four of us in our party—Major Bonnor and a young brother of his (a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery), Colonel Walker, R.A., and

myself. Very soon after I had joined the Major's camp his shikaree brought in news of a tiger, tigress, and one or two cubs—a family, in fact—on a hill, surrounded by dense teak wood jungle a few miles from our camp.

Arrangements were then made for an army of beaters with tom-toms (native drums) and antiquated guns to shoot blank ammunition, etc., etc. A few native policemen also accompanied us to superintend the beat. When all was in readiness we mounted our steeds, and rode off to the hill where the tigers had been located, and after the Major had decided upon his plan of campaign, and assigned to each one of the guns the positions they were to take up, the beat began.

The guns were formed in a sort of semi-circle at the base of the hill, Colonel Walker being on the extreme right, I next to him, young Bonnor next to me, and the Major on the extreme left.

I was in a tree some 12 feet from the ground, with about three yards in front of me pretty clear, beyond that dense jungle. On my right there was a small clear space; on my left I think was jungle.

The beat had now begun, and my excitement as a boy can better be imagined than expressed. On came the yells of the natives with the beating of the drums, and occasional discharges of blank ammunition. At last one of the tigers broke cover with two or three ominous roars, followed by a perfect yell of excitement from the natives. Bang! bang! from Colonel Walker on my right. Then I could





Tiger coming through Jungle.



distinctly hear the crashing of the tiger through the jungle coming straight on to my position. The sound came nearer! nearer! My rifle was already up to my shoulder, when I saw a great head just emerging from the cover into the open space in front. Bang! from my right barrel at his bullet head; bang! with the left in quick succession as he passed under my position. No result; the tiger went on as if untouched. "Strange! I thought I was on him, too!" such was my mental reflection. We then assembled again to discuss matters, and I was freely chaffed by the Major for missing. Whilst we were talking a native came up with a report that there was a "Bagh" or tiger 500 yards off. I said at once, "I don't believe that that is any other tiger than the one that passed me," adding in a rather superior manner, "and I believe I've wounded him, too." My hopes now began to run high. The Major was inclined to agree with what I said, and consequently decided that we should follow him up before trying to get the other tiger, which had remained behind with the cubs on the hill. so, with the native leading the way, we all followed together in close formation, our second gun bearers being immediately behind us ready for any emergency. When we got to within about 150 yards of the place where the tiger lay concealed in the forest there were one or two terrific roars, the depth and volume of these notes seemed to impress me with the idea that, if this grand beast got in amongst a crowd, he wouldn't be long before he made short

work of them. The animal's keen sense of hearing too struck me very forcibly ; as long as we stood still and didn't venture to take another step he remained quiet, but the slightest movement forward, even touching the ground lightly with only the toe, was enough to make him roar again, telling us plainly : " Thus far shall you come but not an inch farther." We all knew now that the tiger must be wounded, and the Major—under whose command we were—feeling the responsibility he had with inexperienced guns, decided upon taking up new positions, and trying to beat Master Stripes out of the place where he lay by means of blank ammunition and drums—the beaters being instructed to keep at a distance and to scale up trees in case of necessity. I had not been long placed in my position before there appeared to be great excitement amongst the natives, and on my inquiring of my second gun bearer as to what it all meant, he replied that the beaters said the tiger was so badly wounded that he could not get up. The Major then ordered us all up to where he was, and we four, with rifles cocked and gun bearers behind, walked up to where this grand old tiger was ; he was paralysed, but had plenty of life in him. He had a splendid flowing beard beneath his head, and looked every inch of what he was—the Monarch of the Forest. Major Bonnor then said, " I think it is my turn to have a shot," and gave him his *coup-de-grâce*. On first examination of the skin Colonel Walker imagined on seeing a bullet hole between the tiger's hind legs

that it was his. I said, "Wait a bit, turn him over and see where the other bullet hole is." This was found to be in his neck at the back of his head, so I at once said, "I don't quite see how you, Colonel, firing a broadside shot at eighty yards distance could have managed to hit the tiger at the back of his head for the bullet to make its exit between the hind legs, whereas I, who was immediately above the animal as he passed, could have hit him in no other way." The Major at once conceded that it was my tiger and that there could be no doubt about it, and I felt very proud.

It was too late that day to do any more beating, so the trophy was carried back to camp in triumph by some ten or twelve natives—for it took that number to carry him—and then a war dance was executed round the animal in the evening.

In my introduction to this Handbook I mention having had to face a wounded tiger. This was on another occasion not many miles from these same jungles when, with a civil engineer friend, I followed up a wounded tigress, tracking her by her blood for half a mile through dense forest with high grass through which we had to cut our way till we came suddenly on her. My friend was the first to see her as she was in the act of charging; his firing a shot turned her from the direct line on us to one at right angles, when we pegged into her at about twenty-five yards off as fast as we could. In her mad course she jumped up at a tree, put her fore legs round it and clawed and bit it; whilst in this

position I gave her one behind the shoulder which dropped her. We then re-loaded, walked up to her with rifles at full cock, threw something at her to see if she was quite dead—this being a necessary precaution, as they sham sometimes. In the present instance she was dead. On examining her skin we found she had received one or two fatal bullets.

My best bag in tiger shooting was when with a friend, Captain McRae, and another civilian; we had a tigress and three full-grown cubs marked down. My luck was in that day; killing the tigress galloping through a bamboo jungle with one shot—a bullet behind the ear—and bowling over two out of the three cubs afterwards.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate and pay a tribute of praise to Mr. Charles Thorpe, Naturalist, East Croydon, for the very clever manner in which he has turned out of an old mounted tiger rug which had been in my family for about forty years, and which had been rather roughly used, the very realistic head and shoulders of the animal you see in the case. The skull is the actual one belonging to my first tiger—you therefore see part of the animal as near as it can be made, but, of course, a good deal of the brilliant marking of the head is gone, and the beard has been lost. Still, however, a fair remnant has been left.

Mr. Thorpe has had a hard task to perform, has succeeded admirably, and earned my gratitude and thanks for preserving to me in a very pleasing manner the first and very best trophy of my life.

# CATALOGUE OF BIRDS.

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## CASE 1.

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### THE SHAG OR GREEN CORMORANT, THE BRIDLED AND BLACK GUILLEMOT.

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#### THE SHAG.

*Order, Steganopodes. Family, Pelecanidæ.*

The Shag, also called the Green or Crested Cormorant, is fairly abundant in suitable localities. It is essentially a marine species, and unlike, therefore, the Great Cormorant in that particular respect. "Its favourite haunts being rugged coasts honey-combed with caves, or islands margined with fallen rocks and large boulders, amongst which it often makes its nest." (H.S.) Localities such as the above abound on the western coast and islands of Scotland, on the western and southern coasts of Ireland, and also, though in a minor degree perhaps, on the western coasts of England and Wales.

My own observation of and contact with these birds has been more in the western islands of Scotland than any other part of the British Islands. In suitable weather, I have often sailed down the rocky coasts of the islands of Mull, and there I used to see these birds sitting on all the jagged points of the cliffs, and emerging out of deep

caverns that abound in that storm and weather-beaten coast line of the Atlantic. They were literally in hundreds, all busy in their breeding occupations, either hatching or attending to their young. The specimens in the case were, however, not obtained there, but in the year 1891 at the same time as the Eiders. I was out one day as usual in my sailing boat when I came across some of these birds, in beautiful plumage, as you see them in the case. This is quite worth careful notice, for you will then perceive how satin-like in smoothness are the feathers, also the distinct bronze and purple reflections of colour according as the light strikes them.

Well, as my boat approached, these Cormorants left the open sea, and retreated into a sort of channel between some high rocks that formed part of a rather rugged looking sort of an island. I followed after them into this somewhat dangerous passage—for the farther I went the more did I become aware of the suction of a strong current; however I managed to secure my birds without any mishap. It seemed to me as if I were being impelled towards some mysterious cavern that lay underneath that island, and I was not particularly sorry when I got out of what I felt to be an awkward predicament.

The nest in May is "formed of seaweed and grass, matted and plastered together and emitting a horribly fetid smell, is often placed in cliffs or amongst fallen rocks and large boulders; but frequently it is on a ledge near the roof of a cave,



and so far in that the sitting bird can scarcely be discerned amidst the gloom and spray mist" (H.S.). The eggs are like those of the Great Cormorant, though smaller and rough: pale greenish-blue in colour, which shows through a chalky incrustation: number usually three, but four are often found. Food: sea fish, for which it dives, and when necessary the bird uses its wings as well as its feet to propel itself through the water.

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#### THE BRIDLED GUILLEMOT.

*Order, Pygopodes. Family, Alcidae.*

As this bird is merely a variety, it does not appear to be necessary to treat it under any other heading than that of the Common Guillemot, from which it is distinguished by the larger white ring round the eye and the white line running backwards behind it. The specimen in the case was obtained in the year 1891 when staying at the Castlebay Hotel in the Island of Barra; the bird was shot from a sailing boat.

I am afraid I have nothing very exciting to record in connection with that particular shot, as the bird being fairly confiding, the whole matter was easy enough, but although I have nothing particular to say in regard to my annexing the specimen for my collection, I have something to say about the species itself. To begin with, the Guillemot is a member of the Auk family. I don't suppose there

are many visitors to this Museum who have not heard something about the extinction of the Great Auk, and that the market value of the egg of that bird in the present day is about £300; as for the bird itself it would not be far off the mark to set the value at £600 to £700.

Well, there is no fear, I think, of this particular Auk becoming extinct. Anyone who has been a traveller in the steamers that ply between the main land of Scotland and the western islands that lie out in the Atlantic will on a fine spring morning, when the sea is like glass, have noticed hundreds of Guillemots swimming along, and diving quickly down as soon as the steamer got within 50 or 60 yards of them. You will see them in early spring, but after that they are only to be found in their breeding-haunts, where they all congregate together in large colonies for breeding purposes. There are many such places amongst the western islands of Scotland, parts of the west and south coasts of Ireland, and the east coast of England. Flamborough Head is a noted place, and in connection with this particular locality I append a short extract from Mr. W. H. Hudson's book: "Of all the birds that breed in communities they are the most social, or, at all events, crowd closest together. Where they breed on the side of the cliff, as at Flamborough, they may be seen standing in close rows and groups on every ledge or jutting rock large enough to afford them a footing."

The same author further on remarks: "The single egg of the Guillemot is deposited on the

naked rock, without any nest, often dangerously near the edge. The sitting birds when leaving the rock are very careful to push the eggs from under them ; but when startled suddenly, as by the report of a gun fired from a ship or boat for the amusement of cockney excursionists, the eggs may be thrown off the ledge, and in some instances have been seen to fall in a shower down the cliff side. The Guillemot lays a handsome pear-shaped egg, very large for the size of the bird. No bird lays eggs so various in colour ; so greatly do they vary that two eggs cannot be found quite alike even amongst hundreds. The ground-colour in different specimens is white, cream, stone-colour, pale blue, reddish, and many shades of green, from a strong bright green to olive-green. The egg is spotted or blotched with brown, black, deep red, and grey. The Guillemot when incubating does not lie on its egg like most birds, but stands with the egg between its legs, which are placed very far back, as in all Auks, Divers, and Grebes."

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#### THE BLACK GUILLEMOT.

This bird is dealt with on page 193, Case 38, being devoted to the species.

## CASE 2.

## THE CURLEW.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Scolopacida.*

This species, probably familiar to most of us, is very widely and plentifully distributed over our islands in localities suitable to its requirements. Those are estuaries of the sea, marshy lands, mud-flats, creeks, and sand-banks from which the tide has ebbed and left uncovered seaweedy rocks.

In spring the Curlew goes a considerable distance inland to breed, choosing wild moorland tracts and hills.

The nest, according to Seebohm, "is on the flat and boggy parts of the moor, and not unfrequently placed amongst reeds or rushes." No doubt, too, the nesting-place is often in heather. I know that, although it is not supposed to be a concealed nest, it is an uncommonly hard one to find, as the parents are so artful in putting you off the spot.

There are generally four large eggs, in shape like a pear—ground-colour, shades of olive-green to buff, blotched with brown, with underlying markings of purplish-grey.

Now in regard to this bird's call-notes, for it can hardly be said to be gifted with a song, to me they are most fascinating, especially when they are breeding on the moors. Many a time have I stopped to listen to them; I don't know any bird with such flute-like notes, or one possessed of so plaintive

a cry. I have also often listened to the sweet gurgling trill of the Curlew's call on summer nights.

The above is one side of the picture, *i.e.*, courtship, love, sentiment ; but take the other, when the Curlew intends to alarm every other winged species within a mile or so of an impending danger, then his call-note is harsh and shrill. I don't fancy there is any bird on our British list that troubles himself so much in watching and jealously guarding the safety and welfare of all his friends and companions. Be the species what it may, it doesn't matter.

I know that when any Curlews are about it is hardly any use trying to stalk anything ; the bird seems to take a delight in spoiling your shot for you. The following instance of the Curlew's regard for the welfare of others is recorded by Howard Saunders in the fourth edition of Yarrell's "British Birds" : "The Editor has seen a Curlew, after shrieking wildly over the head of a sleeping seal, swoop down and apparently flick with its wings the unsuspecting animal, upon which the stalker was just raising his rifle."

As soon as the breeding-season is over, I think Curlews are fond of the fields not far away from the coast ; they are quite partial to stubble and turnip fields.

The specimens in the case were obtained in some fields not far from the shores of the Atlantic, and five or six miles out of Castle Gregory. I was out one day with young McCartie, mentioned in my particulars of

the Brent Goose Case. I think I had been out to see a ship that had just been wrecked, and driving back saw a flock of Curlews feeding in some fields. As their position was decidedly a weak one, I thought I could manage to surprise them, and I did, getting a right and a left as they rose on the wing.

In regard to the habitat of this species abroad, Howard Saunders says: "It breeds more or less plentifully in Scandinavia, Russia, Poland, North Germany, Denmark, Holland, and Flanders, as well as on some of the wastes of Brittany. Gätke has described the immense flights which cross Heligoland on migration; and throughout Central and Southern Europe this species is well known on passage, ranging as far west as the Azores. It winters in Africa from the Mediterranean to Damara Land and Natal, and visits Madagascar."

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### CASE 3.

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#### RICHARDSON'S SKUA.

*Order, Gaviæ. Family, Laridæ.*

This species, also known as the Arctic Skua, breeds in small numbers in Sutherlandshire and Caithness, also rather more plentifully in the Outer Hebrides and Orkneys. There are two varieties, one a sooty colour, the other with light under parts. The former is often called the Dusky Skua to distinguish it from the lighter-plumaged bird, but both inter-breed, that is to say, dusky-coloured birds

breed with those like themselves as well as with the light-coloured ones, and the latter do the same.

In regard to the nesting habits, I quote Howard Saunders as follows: "The eggs, two in number, are laid in the hollow of the moorland moss; they are of an olive-green colour, blotched with dark brown." The same authority says: "The flight of this Skua is rapid, though somewhat devious; and any intrusion upon the breeding-ground is resented by swoops directed from behind or sideways, for, although the bird will actually strike with its wings, I have never seen it make a frontal attack."

The Skua is, as a matter of fact, a Gull-hawk, and a regular pirate by nature. Too lazy to work for his own food, he prefers to watch other Gulls working on their own account; and when they have scored a success in the way of a fish, this robber makes for them at once; and although they may have actually swallowed the fish they promptly disgorge the same for his benefit, so terrified are they of him. In addition to this, the Skua "preys upon wounded birds, and is said to plunder the eggs of sea-fowl" (H.S.).

In my trout fishing trips to the Hebrides I have seen many of these Skuas breeding on the moors, and once when returning with a keeper and my ghillie over a large tract of moorland in one of the western islands of Scotland I came across a pair of them, which I got with a right and a left; they are the lighter-coloured ones you see in the case. The dusky one I purchased.

CASE 4.

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THE HERRING-GULL, THE COMMON  
GULL, THE LESSER BLACK-BACKED  
GULL, THE OYSTER CATCHER.

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## THE HERRING GULL.

*Order, Gaviæ. Family, Laridæ.*

This species is fairly distributed over the British Islands, and is partial to the rocks and stacks of our coasts, the chalk cliffs of Kent and Sussex, where it may be said to breed. Nests are also found on marshy ground, and there are colonies on the small islands in Scotch lochs, especially in the Hebrides, where it is found in company with the Lesser Black-Backed and the Common Gull. The specimen in the case was, as far as my memory serves me, shot on one of the lochs in the Hebrides when out on a day's trout fishing.

The species would appear to have acquired its epithet from the habit of following the herrings to sea. In my expeditions amongst the western islands of Scotland I have repeatedly seen large flocks of these Gulls settled on one particular spot, where they appeared to have discovered a shoal of herrings sufficiently near the surface to enable them to feed to their hearts' content. But, although the Herring-Gull may be fond of fish, it does not by any means confine itself to that diet. Howard Saunders says: "Like other large Gulls it is a great



robber of eggs ; and when at some noted and accessible breeding-place of sea-fowl, such as Lundy Island, a gun is fired by a tourist party for the childish pleasure of seeing an immense number of birds on the wing, then is the opportunity of the Herring-Gulls, and every unprotected egg of Guillemot or Gannet is swept from the ledges in an instant." The bird's principle food is obtained, no doubt, on the sea-shore, though at times it is known to follow the plough.

The nest, made of herbage or seaweed lined with grass, sometimes on the ledge of a cliff, or may be on the ground, contains two or three eggs of an olive-brown colour, blotched and spotted with dark umber. The young in the first year are of a mottled-brown plumage, and do not come to their proper adult plumage of French grey and white for two or three years.

"This species is abundant on the coasts of Scandinavia and the Baltic, while immense numbers nest on some of the low Frisian Islands, especially on Sylt, where from 40,000 to 50,000 eggs are taken for eating in a season ; and southward it ranges down the western sea-board of Europe, stretching out to the Azores " (H.S.).

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#### THE COMMON GULL.

*Order, Gaviæ. Family, Laridæ.*

Owing to the "Wild Birds' Protection Act Bill," this species has immensely increased ; so much so

that it is a question whether farmers do not suffer a good deal in consequence. Although this Gull follows the plough in spring time picking up grubs and worms, it does not confine itself entirely to that sort of food, but roots up the seed after the field has been sown. This, however, is only my own opinion. According to ornithological books these Gulls would not appear to be so plentiful, but my own experience scarcely bears this out. Whenever I have taken passage in any of the coasting steamers about our British Islands I have always found myself accompanied by these very graceful birds. How graceful they are may best be tested by throwing scraps to them on the water, in order to watch their turning, twisting evolutions, poising and gently dropping with uplifted wings and drooping legs, till with the most perfect balance they manage to seize with their bills the scrap of meat or biscuit or "what-not" just thrown out to them.

When fishing in the islands of the Hebrides, particularly South Uist, it used to be the one great amusement of the hotel sportsmen there, when having lunch on the shores of some trout loch, to collect all the Gulls in the vicinity by giving them a share of the meal. Very often tricks were played upon them in the shape of tying a bit of string to the piece of food, which the innocent Gull would swallow, and then find he had got something else which he couldn't digest. Birds of this species soon get very tame and confiding if constantly fed. There were very numerous nests on the islets in all

the lochs in those islands, grassy to rocky spots being preferred for nesting purposes. "Eggs, usually three in number, olive-brown in ground-colour, spotted and streaked with blackish; but pale blue, straw-coloured, and light green varieties are not uncommon" (H.S.). This species does not go far out to sea, and when stormy weather approaches is generally found in meadows, marsh, and cultivated lands inland; in fact, when you see them thus in large flocks inland it is a very good indication of a coming storm, or certainly of rough weather. The specimen in the case was obtained on a loch in the Hebrides.

"It is numerous in Norway up to the North Cape, as well as in Sweden and in Northern and Central Russia. During the colder months it occurs on the shores, lakes, and rivers of the rest of Europe down to the Mediterranean; also on the African side of the latter as far as the Suez Canal" (H.S.).

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#### THE LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.

*Order, Gaviæ.*

*Family, Laridæ.*

This species is much more predatory and rapacious in its habit than either of the foregoing. Not content with its proper marine diet, such as fish, crabs, molluscs, etc, it is a great destroyer of the eggs and young of moor-game, sea-birds, and water-fowl; in this respect it resembles, though in a minor degree, its congener the Great Black-Backed

Gull, than which there is hardly a more destructive bird on the list of British Birds. Nothing comes amiss from the carrion to the greatest delicacy; it is, I think, a fact that the Great Black-Backed Gull will attack and kill weakly lambs, but some credit must be given to it for its services as a scavenger. However, this is somewhat of a digression.

The Lesser Black-Backed Gull is resident all the year in the British Islands. "It is more local than the Herring-Gull in its distribution during the breeding-season, owing to its liking for grassy slopes, flat-topped islands, or stacks of rocks, rather than precipitous cliffs" (H.S.). There are colonies of these birds in the south of England, Wales, and the Isle of Man, but my personal observation of them has been principally confined to the islands that lie off the west coast of Scotland. The nest is made of grass, seaweed, etc. The eggs, usually three, are much the same as those of the Herring-Gull, though rather smaller, and perhaps more varied in colour. Booth, in his interesting "Catalogue of Birds in the Brighton Museum," in allusion to the way these birds congregate in the North Sea and attack the herring nets, says: "I have been assured by some of the masters of the luggers that they have frequently been deprived of a last of herrings, and occasionally up to four or five times that quantity by their depredations. A last is over 10,000." Again, he remarks further on: "The number that they swallow is small compared with those they bite and shake from the nets. I have

myself repeatedly observed as many as a thousand or two of the larger species of Gulls attacking the nets of a single boat; at times taking hold of the lines in their beaks, they rise in the air and attempt to shake out the fish. The small boat is occasionally sent to drive off the birds, but if disturbed from one part of the nets they rapidly commence operations on another."

The specimen in the case was shot near some islands that lie out 20 miles south of Oban. I had to hire a steam-launch for the occasion, rather an expensive item. A companion, whom I will call B, accompanied me. As he was fond of bird life, and did something himself in the way of natural history, I fancy he enjoyed the day's outing as much as I did, since the Lesser Black-Backed Gull was by no means the only specimen we secured on that occasion.

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#### THE OYSTER CATCHER.

This bird is dealt with in Case Six, page 54.

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### CASE 5.

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#### THE KITTIWAKE GULL.

*Order, Gavia. Family, Laridae.*

This is one of the most graceful, as well as one of the most plentiful species of Gulls breeding on our British coasts and its surrounding islands. The

Kittiwake can at once be distinguished by the blackish feet and the absence of a hind toe. It is, with the exception of the Little Gull, with vermilion feet and the head and neck deep black in breeding-plumage, the smallest of the Gull tribe. It may usually be found where the coast line is rugged with precipitous cliffs, and also where islands of that character exist.

The Bass Rock and Flamborough Head are noted places for these birds, and Howard Saunders says. "In the Orkneys and the Shetlands thousands of birds whiten the precipices."

The nesting-habit of this species is entirely confined to the cliffs, for, so far as I know, they never breed on the ground like the Common, Lesser, and Greater Black-Backed, or even the Herring-Gull. They are late breeders; and I note the lament of some ornithological writers in regard to the destruction of these birds for plumes for ladies' hats, thousands being wantonly slaughtered for this purpose, an object, in my humble opinion, which does not justify the act in any way whatever, still less the cruelty with which it was often attended, the wings being frequently torn from wounded birds.

During one of my visits to Salen Hotel, Mull, I took my old boat at the village of Gribun, and sailed out into the Atlantic to an island already mentioned in connection with the Puffin case. It was a beautifully calm day, the sea like glass, with only an occasional puff of wind—barely enough



**Kittiwakes.**  
Cliff Nesting - Site, with Eggs.





to fill the sail ; so it took us a long time to get out to this island, a distance of five good miles.

The boatmen were able to land me as the ground swell was only slight. I then had to climb up the jagged rocks, some 200 feet or so, till I got to the top ; this I managed to do with the aid of the boatmen, and found a sort of gorge with precipitous cliffs on either side, on one of which were these birds. Well, of course, it does not require much skill to shoot a Gull, so it will suffice to say that I got as many as I wanted ; and in regard to eggs, I obtained them through the agency of a native of the Island of Mull.

Whilst touching on the subject of gathering a few eggs for museum purposes, it would be as well to mention that the natives, principally the boys, that live in the islands off the west coast of Scotland, make a common practice, whenever they can get hold of a boat, of visiting all islands where sea-birds are breeding, for the purpose of depleting what nests they find of their eggs. When trout fishing at Loch Boisdale, in South Uist, the lessee, Mr. Simon Mackenzie, was often subjected to much inconvenience and annoyance in consequence of these boys taking his trout fishing boats from their moorings and using them for collecting sea-birds eggs ; as the boats very often got a good deal damaged by the rough treatment they received at the hands of these ignorant lads. The fact was well known to all the visitors.

The idea, in this case, has been to present to the visitor, as nearly as can be done in a small compass, the natural breeding-habits of a Kittiwake on a cliff; one bird would not have given the proper effect, therefore several are introduced.

This species has a very wide distribution abroad, but, perhaps, of all localities, given in Howard Saunders' Manual: "The most frequented are the cliffs of the Faroes, Iceland, Norway, where a vast colony exists near the North Cape, Spitzbergen, Novaya Zemlya, Franz Josef Land, and wherever suitable localities present themselves in the Siberian Arctic Ocean. In Europe it does not nest farther south than the coast of Brittany."

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## CASE 6.

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### THE OYSTER CATCHER.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

This bird, another name for which is the "Seapie," is, I think, pretty familiar to most people who have had opportunities of seeing anything of our sea coasts; the very striking black and white plumage, the long stout vermilion red bill, and the pink legs arrest one's attention immediately.

The species is resident with us and is widely and evenly distributed in most localities in the British Islands which are suitable to its habits.

I have found it on rough rocky sea coasts, sandy strands, etc., but, perhaps, the most favoured locality would be something like what I found on the coast line of the Island of Mull, which runs from Salen in the direction of Tobermory. Here I found long ridges of low-lying rocks, the tops of which would be nearly covered during high spring tides; this sort of ground alternated with sandy slopes and shingle. The specimens in the case were obtained when staying at Salen Hotel.

After hiring a boat at Salen with a couple of men, I sailed down the coast in the direction of Tobermory, and also in the opposite direction. Parading this shore as I did, I found occasional opportunities of getting these birds, although I did not find them very confiding; and as they are compactly built, with tight dense feathers, they required to be hit very hard before they would come down.

These birds make their nests on the rocks above high water mark. When I say nest, there is very little indication of anything beyond a few small stones set round. In the event of eggs being laid on the shingle nothing would be necessary.

The idea has been to show one pair of birds with their young and another with their eggs.

Howard Saunders says he thinks the word Catcher is a corruption of an old Dutch word which means Magpie; but why the species should be termed Oyster Catcher I can't understand—oysters forming no part of its food. This bird may always

be seen retreating with the incoming tide and advancing with the outgoing, picking up all it can find in the way of shrimps, sea worms, etc.

With regard to the strength of this bird's bill, Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "With his strong wedged shape bill he strikes the limpets from the rocks and scoops out their contents, and he opens the mussel shells by driving his beak between the closed valves and prising them apart."

In continuation of this same question, a friend told me—when staying at Arthog Hall Hotel, near Barmouth, in the winter of 1906—he had seen these birds flying over the railway bridge that spans the estuary and drop mussels on to the footpath that runs parallel to the permanent way in order to break the shells. On examining this footway to verify the assertion I found plenty of broken mussel shells scattered about, which seemed to support my friend's statement. It is well known that some other birds break mussel shells in this way.

According to Howard Saunders, "the Arctic circle forms the northern limit of its range in Asia in the summer," and "Burmah, Ceylon, India, Baluchistan, and Persia during cold weather."

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## CASE 7.

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### THE PINTAIL.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This very elegant graceful Duck, often called by the local name of "Sea Pheasant" from the length

of its tail, is a regular winter visitor to the British Islands, and in some parts has, to a small extent, become resident. Ten years ago nests were discovered in Scotland, and it is said to have bred in Ireland. These Ducks, unlike the Wigeon, with which they are fond of associating, go in small parties of from ten to a dozen. They prefer shallow water, and feed, with their heads below the surface, on insects and their larvæ, molluscs, and crustaceans, and succulent water-plants.

When staying at Glenbeigh in the winter of 1893-4, I heard of a man named Michael Casey, a boat-builder, living at Cremorne, five miles off, who possessed a single-handed punt-gun; so I sent for him and asked whether he could arrange to go out with me some day. After discussing terms and fixing a day, I started one fine morning, jumping on to an Irish jaunting car with Jack Shea (Mrs. Shea's only son, a fine handsome man of about 40) as my companion. I also took care not to go without plenty of provisions for the inner man, both eatable and drinkable. The latter is most essential when you go out with the Irish, porter being their favourite beverage, of which they can stow away gallons. But they're not at all averse from whiskey, either. Now, since, in addition to Michael Casey, I had two boatmen with an extra boat which was required to follow up and polish off crippled birds, the lunch provided was quite a feature.

The Pintails you see were on the shores of a wide estuary that runs to Killorglin, and were

feeding at the edge of some seaweed-covered rocks. They are naturally a shy and timid species, and consequently very difficult of approach. Michael Casey, however, was up to every stratagem, so when he saw their position, he so disguised his boat by piling up masses of seaweed all over it, that when he dropped gently down with the tide to where they were, the birds allowed him to come within a reasonable distance of them—say to about 70 yards. I never saw anything prettier or more clever in my life. As soon as he loosed off, there were one or two wounded to polish off, these I followed up in my boat.

The drake in the case wanted several shots before he would succumb.

This species “breeds abundantly in the northern portions of Europe” and in the “cold season it is found over the rest of the Continent as well as in Northern Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Indian region as far south as Borneo, China, and Japan” (H.S.).

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## CASE 8.

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### THE GADWALL.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This species is a comparatively rare visitor to the British Islands. There are only two places where they may be said to breed in any number—the

preserved estates of Mr. A. Fountaine, at Narford Hall, and of Lord Walsingham, at Merton, both in the county of Norfolk.

Howard Saunders, writing in 1885, says these are "the descendants of a pair of pinioned birds, introduced some thirty-five years ago, have so far multiplied and induced perfectly wild Gadwalls to remain and breed, that, at the present time, the numbers on one property alone are annually computed at 1,500."

"There are one or two places in the Midlands as well as Radnorshire and Breckonshire where the species has been in evidence; also it is not unfrequent on the west of Scotland and the Hebrides" (H.S.).

Sir Ralph Payne Gallwey thinks that the Gadwall is more numerous in Ireland than is generally supposed. So far as my own experience goes, I am not aware of having met with them anywhere but in Ireland, and only one of the specimens in the case—the duck—was obtained in that country. During my stay at O'Donnell's place in Castle Gregory, which I have mentioned in my account of the Brent Geese (page 186), there were a lot of Duck in the neighbourhood, and the only way to get a shot was by flighting at night.

Having no notes, I can only say I am under the impression that this particular duck was obtained on one of my evening expeditions in company with young McCartie. I could only get a shot when the birds came in from the sea to the creeks and

marsh-lands, and when daylight had almost entirely disappeared.

The drake, not a particularly good specimen, came to hand through an agency of my taxidermist ; so that it forms an exception to my general rule. This species has a very wide range, and is plentiful in Northern India during the cold weather. I shouldn't be surprised if I have shot it out there and not known what it was.

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## CASE 9.

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### THE COOT.

*Order, Fulicariæ. Family, Rallidæ.*

One often hears the expression "Bald as a Coot ;" this, probably, is due to the white frontal plate formed by the base of the upper part of the bill extending to just above the eye, which makes the bird look as if it were bald in front.

This species is very generally distributed over our islands, and may be found almost anywhere in localities suited to its habit, such as lakes, ponds, large sheets of water, and mud-flats near the coasts. It is abundant on the Broads of Norfolk, Slapton Ley in Devon, Southampton Water, Poole Harbour, and the Fleet near Abbotsbury. The nest is generally among reeds, rushes, osiers, and aquatic vegetation : it is, as a rule, built up from the bottom, but is sometimes moored to neighbouring objects, and when detached will float about without any



apparent inconvenience to the builder. Mr. R. Kearton records an instance of this kind which he saw on a large reservoir in south Yorkshire.

Sir Thomas Browne, writing of the birds of Norfolk, somewhere about 1635, said: "Coots are in very great flocks on the broad waters. Upon the appearance of a Kite or Buzzard I have seen them unite from all parts of the shore in strange numbers; when, if the Kite stoop near them, they will fling up and spread such a flash of water with their wings that they will endanger the Kite, and so keep him off again and again in open opposition." The late Lord Lilford confirmed this observation from his own experience in the Epirus.

The best sport obtained with this species is by making up a party and having a "Coot Drive." This consists of five or six guns going out in separate boats, and each taking up a position amongst the reeds and rushes that generally surround the lake where the birds are. When the guns are in position, another man, a ghillie, in fact, is sent forward in another boat to drive the birds out of the reeds. Two ghillies, each with a boat, would, of course, be better than one. When driven out the birds fly about in all directions in their endeavours to find some quiet retreat in which to settle down again, but are met with shot after shot from the various guns.

Anglesey was a good place for driving Coot, and in bygone years it was a favourite sport with the visitors at Maelog Lake Hotel.

The specimens in the case were got by my friend Hampson and myself in a "Coot Drive" we organized when staying at the Valley Hotel, on one of the lakes there, after leaving Cotterell's place, Maelog Lake Hotel, in November, 1902. They are selected as the best out of about a dozen birds.

The young birds were hatched by a keeper in Argyleshire, who obtained the eggs from a friend of his. The keeper was hatching out some pheasants at the time.

The nest was procured for me by a keeper at the Valley Hotel from one of the lakes belonging to the shoot.

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## CASE 10.

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### THE MOORHEN.

*Order, Fulicariæ. Family, Rallidæ.*

The Moorhen, also known as the Waterhen, is quite common over the British Islands.

The name Moorhen appears to have originated at a time when "moor" meant mire or marsh, thus we get Marsh-hen or Moor-hen.

The favourite localities for this bird are ponds and ditches with running water; it is much more domesticated than the Coot, but, at the same time, it is a very artful species, and knows perfectly well, when being hunted with sporting dogs, how to take care of itself, unless surprised in the open, and compelled to fly before it has had time to get to its

retreat amongst reeds, rushes, and other coarse herbage.

There are few birds which give so much trouble to spaniels, for they run forward, double back, and dive, remaining submerged under the water for a considerable time by the knack they possess, as Mr. Hudson says, of "grasping the weeds at the bottom with their claws, and keeping their nostrils above the surface."

In open weather Moorhens leave the shelter of the ditches and ponds, and go out into the fields to feed; in frosty weather they go to running streams and take shelter in plantations, hedgerows, and thick bushes.

"The nest is generally built in wet places, among reeds, sedge, and other aquatic plants, or roots of alders, but it is often placed on low-lying trees over the water. The materials employed are dry reeds, flags, and sedge, matted together, and the birds have been known to raise the structure when an inundation was threatened. Incubation, which lasts three weeks, sometimes begins in March, and two, if not three, broods are produced in the season; the young from the first nest assisting their parents in building another, and even in taking care of the second brood" (Howard Saunders).

This species has a fairly wide distribution abroad.

The specimens in the case, which represent a family, were obtained in Argyleshire, where a keeper of a large estate in that county gave me much valuable assistance.

## CASE 11.

## THE GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.

*Order, Pygopodes. Family, Colymbidæ.*

I have met with examples of this splendid bird in the western islands of Scotland, all round the west coast of Mull, particularly in the tidal creeks and sea lochs ; also I found them in the Sound of Barra in the Hebrides. From ornithological books they appear also to visit the south-west coast of England and Irish Channel.

This graceful and beautiful bird is the largest of the three species of Divers which visit Britain. It is really a question which is the handsomer of the two, this or the Black Throated. I confess to preferring the latter, but this is only a matter of taste after all.

I have often watched these birds coming in with the tide to feed, their principal diet being fish. They glide through the water at a great pace if they choose, without making the slightest disturbance, often submerging themselves so that little more than the head appears above the surface. They disappear, too, without creating a ripple, and can dive for very long distances—probably half to three-quarters of a mile—without coming to the surface. On hot sunny days it is very pretty to see them sunning themselves—*i.e.*, raising the breast up to the sun, and leaning over to one side—the satin-like gloss on the breast, when the sun's rays catch it, presents



**Great Northern Diver.**  
Surroundings near Oban.



much the same sort of sheen as you see on a window pane when the sun is on it.

I was once after this species with Simon McKenzie, lessee of the Castle Bay Hotel, Barra, in a sailing-boat in the Sound. Whenever the Diver disappeared below the surface, which it generally did on my sailing to within from 200 to 300 yards of it, I used to put the sail well up to wind and try and overtake it, so that the next time it came up I might chance to be within shot. The bird, however, was always too dodgy, for instead of diving straight away in the direction it had been swimming in it would double back or strike off at a right angle to the left or right, with the result that, when it came to the surface, I would find it far away to the rear or to the right or left of the boat. McKenzie lent me a very heavy, badly-balanced, double-barrelled 12-bore to shoot with; on one occasion I shot at two of these birds on the water, one being just in front of the other, the distance being about 120 yards. Owing to the ground-swell and the clumsiness of my weapon, my shot just fell about an inch too short. They were both under the water like a flash and dived away, and I saw nothing more of them.

Once when sailing by myself I believe I wounded one of these Divers, but never got it. You must shoot them right through the head with rather large shot to have a chance of getting them. They generally keep along the shore just out of range, but sometimes come in nearer to land off rocky points

and in narrow channels. The best chance is to lie up amongst the rocks at some likely spot for two or three hours and await the incoming tide.

When I was staying at Salen Hotel, Mull, I saw a good many of these Divers, but never got any chance.

They do not breed around our islands.

In winter "it is found along the Atlantic seaboard of Europe; visits the Mediterranean and Black Seas," etc., etc. "In Iceland one or two pairs nest on nearly every lake; and it also breeds plentifully in the southern districts of Greenland" (Howard Saunders).

Having been unsuccessful in my attempts to obtain this species, although I had tried very hard, and wanting to complete the series of Divers, I accepted an offer of this bird made to me in Scotland. I did this the more readily, since I had been a good deal associated with the locality where it was obtained.

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## CASE 12.

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### THE GANNET.

*Order, Steganopodes. Family, Pelecanidae.*

Gannets, or Solan Geese, are fairly well distributed around the coasts of the British Islands, but in the spring they mass together into what are called colonies for breeding purposes. These



colonies, according to the authority of Howard Saunders, are situated on Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel; Grassholm, off the coast of Pembrokesbire; Bass Rock and Ailsa Craig, in Scotland; Boreray, in the St. Kilda group; Sulisgen, or North Barra, on which 2,000 to 3,000 birds are sometimes taken in a season; and the Stack of Suliskerry, about forty miles west of Stromness. In Ireland there is a colony on the Bull Rock, off Dursey Head, in county Cork, and a small one on the Little Skellig.

In the breeding-season Gannets present a wonderful sight, the cliffs where the colony is having the appearance of being dotted with snow flakes. In 1903 I was making my way down to the south of Ireland by steamer from Glasgow; *en route* we passed close by Ailsa Craig, which was whitened with these birds on their nests. For the amusement of the passengers, the Captain sounded the foghorn pretty loud, at which the Gannets, Guillemots, Razor Bills, and other sea-birds rose in one dense cloud, darkening the sky for a time.

In describing the colony on the Bass Rock in the breeding-season, Seebohm says: "The scene is a most imposing one. Thousands of Gannets are sailing to and fro before the mighty cliff; every part of the rocks that can support a nest is crowded with birds; birds are constantly coming to and leaving the cliffs. The harsh notes of quarrelling Gannets sound in all directions; whilst numbers are to be seen sitting quietly on the greensward on the top

of the rocks or fast asleep with their bills and heads almost hidden amongst their dorsal plumage."

The sight of this bird fishing, however, is quite as interesting as that when breeding, and I have had many opportunities of witnessing this amongst the western islands of Scotland.

To begin with, the Gannet is very strong on the wing and possessed of an unusually powerful bill. No day seems too stormy for it, and it is at such times that the bird arrests one's attention more than at others; for rising to a height of a hundred feet or so, and poising for a second or two, it plunges perpendicularly down with closed wings into the sea with tremendous force, and never seems to fail in obtaining the fish it has spotted from aloft, so keen is its eye and unerring its aim as to overcome even the difficulty of the roughest of seas.

I used to be amazed when watching these birds fishing in stormy weather to see their marvellous power of eyesight.

In Gowan's Nature Books, No. 1, entitled "Wild Birds at Home," there is something very interesting about the Gannet, which I append *verbatim*: "The Gannet is provided with a wonderful apparatus in the shape of a series of small sacs lying immediately beneath the skin of the breast. These sacs it can at will inflate, thus forming a pneumatic cushion to enable it to resist the impact caused by meeting the water after its headlong descent from on high, and also rendering its return to the surface more easy on account of this added bouyancy."

Mr. Pycraft, in his "Story of Bird Life," in making allusion to the force with which the bird plunges below the surface, says: "Sailors often tie a fish to a plank and set it adrift near these birds, suddenly there is a wild plunge and the bird is slain. The force with which it strikes the wood breaks its neck."

My remark upon the above is that it is a very cruel form of sport.

In the Island of St. Kilda there is quite an industry amongst the natives in the capture of these birds, a man being let down the cliff with a rope, who then proceeds to snare the sentinel birds by some sort of strategy; then when these are accounted for the rest are easy enough, as the birds are asleep, and the man can wring their necks at leisure without creating any alarm amongst them. I believe Gannets, which are killed in thousands in St. Kilda, are one of the principal articles of food, the feathers being sold. The adult specimen in the case I shot off a small island—near Barra, in the Hebrides, in 1892—as it flew past me; it dropped into the sea, and there was an exciting chase in a boat after it, as it had plenty of life left.

The young immature bird I got through Mr. W. R. Hine's agency. The adult of this species does not attain to its full plumage under five or six years. Habitat abroad, "Faroës, Iceland, and the islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and in winter it ranges over the Atlantic down to North Africa and Madeira on this side and the Gulf of Mexico on the

other ; but it seldom enters the Baltic or goes far up the Mediterranean " (Howard Saunders).

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### CASE 13.

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#### THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ,*

I am afraid I cannot lay claim to knowing anything about this grand species, from the fact of its being hardly in evidence in any part of Great Britain south of the Lowlands of Scotland.

On such a question as the Golden Eagle, I don't think I can do better than afford you what information I can by quoting from Howard Saunders' "Manual of British Birds": "About two centuries ago it bred in Derbyshire and Wales, and almost within the last hundred years in the Cheviots and Lake District. . . . To the Lowlands of Scotland the Golden Eagle is even now not an unfrequent visitor in the cold season; but its breeding-places are confined to the Highlands and the islands on the western side, where, owing to the protection afforded by many of the proprietors of deer forests, its numbers, severely thinned in former years by grouse-preservers and sheep-farmers, have to some extent recovered. In Ireland only a few pairs remain, in the north and west.

In regard to nesting-habit, the same author says : "The nest, generally placed on the ledge of a craig

in mountainous regions, but often on a tree and occasionally on the ground, is a large platform of sticks, lined with softer materials and the fresh tufts of the wood rush. The eggs, laid early in April, are usually two, and sometimes three, in number. Some are dull greyish-white or mottled-buff while others are streaked and blotched, and often richly suffused with every shade of reddish-brown and lilac, etc. Food: mountain hares, lambs, grouse, and other birds, occasionally fawns, and the calves of red deer, nor does it despise carrion when pressed by hunger."

The Duke of Argyle's keeper told me that in an eyrie of this species on Ben More, the highest mountain in Mull, they found a lamb, seven hares, and a brace of grouse. The parents evidently intended their young shouldn't starve. This pair of eagles were most religiously preserved by the Duke.

The fine specimen in the case was obtained through the agency of the taxidermist in Scotland, who had done a good deal of work for me. The bird came into his hands from a keeper. I believe it had been caught in a trap set for a fox, and in any case would have to have been destroyed.

This species has a very wide range abroad, extending to three or four continents where mountains and forest growth predominate. "Over this vast area considerable variations in size and plumage are observed" (H.S.).

## CASE 14.

## THE BUZZARD.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ.*

What a difference between this bird and the Peregrine Falcon in character! Amongst all the Hawks of which I have any practical knowledge the Buzzard is the most timid, and I may say contemptible coward. This opinion will be found to be fully justified after a perusal of all the difficulty I experienced in obtaining the specimen.

There is no doubt that the species is not nearly so plentiful as it used to be; probably owing to its destruction by gamekeepers, who by no means are agreed about its being perfectly harmless in its habits. One prey I can vouch for myself as to its being very fond of, and that is young rabbits.

Howard Saunders says: "That at one time the Buzzard used to be very plentiful in Norfolk, and other counties where there was much ground-game and partridges, but with the increase of pheasant-worship the bird's doom was sealed."

So far as I can gather from personal observation it is more in evidence in Scotland and Wales than elsewhere, for I have come across it in both those countries wherever suitable localities existed. The nests that I have seen have usually been on the face of a cliff with a lot of overhanging growth. Ivy, for instance, is a favourite nesting site; the bird also builds in trees where the district is woodland. The nest itself is a very large bulky



**Buzzards.**  
Eyrie in Cliff with Young





structure, composed of coarse twigs ; the one I had dealings with was lined with rabbits' fur. The eggs, generally three in number, are of a dirty white colour, being blotched here and there, but sparsely, with a sort of reddish-brown or lilac ; they vary a good deal, too, in markings, some having hardly any at all.

Breeding takes place about the middle of April.

While staying at Salen Hotel, Island of Mull, I met with a gentleman who was passing through on his way to Oban. He was the proprietor of one of the islands in the neighbourhood called Ulva, and hearing that the Buzzard bred on his property, and that he used to pay his shepherd—a sort of general keeper—sixpence for every young bird brought to him, I thought he might give me permission. This he readily did on my promise to confine myself entirely to that species. I then put myself in touch with the shepherd in question through the agency of another man—one Peter McDougall, who acted as keeper to any gentleman who rented the sporting rights on the property from the owner, who was not a sportsman.

In a few days I got intimation from Peter that the shepherd had located a Buzzard's nest in a cliff ; so I drove over to Ulva, a distance of 11 miles, Peter meeting me with his boat to convey me across the ferry—a distance of about 300 yards—which separated the island from the mainland.

A five-mile walk over a hilly road brought me to the shepherd's house. We then proceeded to the

nest, which was situated in a sheer sea cliff, and surrounded by a lot of vegetation. On this first occasion, so far as I can remember, the bird was off the nest at the time of our arrival—at any rate I don't remember getting a shot at her. What I do remember is that she kept a respectful distance off all the time we were there, which took the best part of an afternoon, changing her position from point to point on the surrounding rocks, and uttering a plaintive sort of cry all the time. The cock bird kept even farther away, soaring to an immense height in the sky, his gyrations in the air being very interesting to watch. All this time we lay concealed amongst the rocks, but notwithstanding the fact that the hen bird couldn't see us she wouldn't venture on coming to the nest ; so I had to give it up for that day. Twenty-two miles of a drive and ten of a walk—*i.e.*, taking both ways—on a very bright, hot day, should have carried with it a better reward. On the second occasion I instructed the shepherd to bring his spring rabbit traps with him ; this time the bird was on the nest, but we didn't know it ; as when standing below the cliff and shouting and clapping our hands to flush her off, she wouldn't leave her post. Just when we had given it all up, thinking she couldn't be there, off she went !! taking me completely by surprise ; and thus getting further off than she otherwise would have done I practically missed her.

Then we got into a perfect place of concealment—in a narrow gorge between some high precipitous

rocks, a place that hardly any bird but a Buzzard would be likely to penetrate. The cock was, however, equal to the occasion, as, soaring to a tremendous height and wheeling and circling in every direction, he came right over us, penetrating with his keen eye every nook and corner. After that there was no use staying any longer for the hen to come on her nest, so, giving up the idea of shooting as a fruitless task, I had recourse to my traps, which the shepherd had brought with him. The nest being at no great distance from the top of the cliff, we managed to let Peter McDougall down to it; it was lined with rabbits' fur, the contents being three young ones, and five or six young rabbits.

Setting the trap on the edge of the nest where the bird showed evidence of alighting, chaining it to a small shrub, and covering it with rabbits' fur, we left it to do its work. Another trap we set hard by, and baited it with rabbit; so, between the two, we expected to do execution somewhere.

Before leaving the shepherd I instructed him to make periodical visits to the nest to see whether the hen was in the trap or not, if so, to take her out and set it again for the cock; this he did, and, in regard to this matter, I may mention that two or three visits were paid, and that it was not until about 9 or 10 o'clock on the next morning that the hen returned to her young and he found her caught.

He then set the trap for the cock, and, in about two or three hours, that gentleman met with the same fate; his timidity had, in fact, been his own

death knell; for had he not kept too far away altogether he would have seen the difficulty his partner had got into and thus have avoided her fate.

Why I used the words contemptible coward in connection with the Buzzard is because the parent birds left their young starving for the best part of a day. Surely, when no human being was about, they might well have ventured during the silent hours of the night to come to them.

In regard to this species' habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says as follows: "The northern breeding limit of the Common Buzzard appears to be about latitude 66 degrees in Sweden, but in Russia it is seldom found to the east of the Baltic Provinces. From Poland westward the Common Buzzard is generally distributed throughout Europe." In regard to the plumage, the same author says: "Very handsome varieties, ranging from cream colour, mottled with brown, to pure white, are often found on the Continent."

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## CASE 15.

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### THE PEREGRINE FALCON.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ.*

This splendid Hawk, the boldest, most fearless, and rapacious of them all, the one that dates far back to the days when falconry used to be an absorbing pastime amongst our sporting fore-fathers,

is pretty generally distributed in the British Islands, being found in suitable localities, *i.e.*, sea cliffs, especially also cliffs on the mountain sides which exist on the south coast of England, west coast of Wales, mainland and west coasts of Scotland, and Ireland.

The Peregrine probably is, however, more in evidence in Scotland, especially amongst its western islands, than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In spite of the attention it receives from game-keepers—due to its destructive tendencies—it manages, owing principally, I imagine, to the un-get-at-able position generally selected for the eyrie, to maintain itself fairly well from anything like extermination; this fact, together with fresh stocks of birds that arrive from the Continent during the autumn months, serves to keep the stock up in our islands. Before proceeding to describe the circumstances under which I obtained the specimens in the case, the reader must pardon me if I make some allusion to the sporting hotel and its inmates where I took up my quarters for the time being.

Being very anxious to obtain this species, and hearing that the Island of Mull would be likely ground, I obtained a sort of introduction to the Duke of Argyle's keeper, whom I found to be a most civil and obliging man, and very pleased that I should assist him in destroying the nest of a bird that was so detrimental to the preservation of Grouse on the moor. Taking steamer one fine morning I landed at Salen Hotel, which is beautifully situated on the Sound of Mull, and about 10 miles from

Tobermorry. I found the inmates of this hotel to comprise Mr. Malcolm McRae—a fine well-set-up type of a Scotchman—his good wife, and three charming nieces, the Misses Leeds, who assisted their uncle and aunt in all household duties, as the times were not sufficiently good to warrant the expense of a large staff of servants. I can honestly say that I never met with kinder-hearted people in my life, or people that did more to make you feel comfortable and at home; nor have I often been at a more prettily situated hotel, the windows of which looked out upon the placid waters of the Sound of Mull—enlivened as it was by numerous pleasure-steamers and sailing-craft of all kinds plying backwards and forwards.

Soon after my arrival I received word from the Duke's keeper that his under-keeper, Peter, had located a Peregrine's eyrie in the Gribun (pronounced Greebun) cliffs, about 10 miles from Salen Hotel. These celebrated rocks, which constitute one of the points of interest for visitors, are of a very curious sort of formation of what is called "friable rock." They are from 700 to 800 feet above sea-level, their base sloping at an angle of 45 degrees, and the last few hundred feet sheer precipice, rather overhanging in character. They lie on the direct road to Iona.

The under-keeper's report was that the hen was sitting hard, and, therefore, the business would admit of no delay, because one could not be quite sure how soon the young birds would hatch out,

when our chance would be gone. It is only when the hen, in her determination to hatch out her offspring, and knowing, as she does, that if she allows the eggs to get cold they will not come off, strains every effort to carry out her purpose, returning again and again to the nest after having been repeatedly driven off, that operations are likely to be successful; so, our chance being the pertinacity of the bird, I, without delay, arranged to go out, taking a huge luncheon basket with me furnished with all the good things that Mrs. McRae, in the generosity of her heart, knew well how to do. There was a big pie, plenty of sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, sundry bottles of beer, and plenty of whiskey; something, in fact, that appealed to the good, healthy appetites of the keepers.

The dogcart came round about 9 o'clock, and off I started, picking up the keeper—who lived four miles off—as we passed his house.

When we arrived at the rocks we were met by Peter, who pointed out the particular spot in the cliffs where the eyrie was. We then all climbed up the slope till we got almost directly underneath the eyrie situated in the precipitous cliffs, which seemed to overhang us. The spot looked like a hole surrounded by a lot of damp green mossy sort of stuff; so arranging ourselves underneath the place at intervals—there being three guns altogether—we made all sorts of noises to induce the female to leave the nest. When she did, she shot over our heads like a Snipe, so quick was she; we all loosed

off at her, six barrels in all, but no one touched her. The fact was she was too directly over us, this with the steep grassy slope we were standing on made the shot doubly difficult; as in trying to throw the gun back one stood a chance of rolling down the incline. Having failed, the next step was to go into concealment away from the place, and allow her to return—making use of our time by partaking of a very good lunch, which the keepers thoroughly enjoyed. Giving the Peregrine from two to three hours' rest, we made a second attempt, ranging ourselves as before, the result being the same with this exception that, in attempting to throw myself back for the second barrel, I toppled over and rolled down the slope for some distance. I then made a mental note that if ever I got a third chance it should be from an entirely new position.

The third attempt was not made till 6 p.m., and was our last chance. We had, in the meantime, been joined by a young fellow named Todd—a visitor, like myself, at Salen—and, wishing to have a shot, he took Peter's gun.

On this occasion I placed myself some 40 to 50 yards to the right of where I stood before, so that I had the nest on my left. It was some time before the Peregrine came off, but when she did I got a cross shot at her against the face of the cliff, and, getting well forward on her, pulled the trigger, the result becoming immediately apparent, for she very silently began to lower herself down the mountain side.





**Peregrine Falcons.**  
Eyrie in Cliffs, with Eggs.



I said to the keeper "She's done! I have got her!" She then flew out to sea, getting lower all the time, and wheeling round again in a sort of semi-circle she made the land on our side, about a quarter of a mile away, just managing to reach the shore before she dropped.

A shoulder of the mountain coming in between us and where she fell, and thus preventing our being able to mark the spot, made the finding very difficult; the shore, too, being thickly studded with boulders and ferns, increased our difficulty. Peter and I looked in one direction, and the keeper and the young fellow in another. After about a quarter of an hour's search, and just as daylight was going, from the other side came a shout of triumph, Todd had found her! Fallen between two boulders of rock lay the dead falcon! covered with blood. All honour to this courageous bird that faced so many guns sooner than desert her eggs. Thus ended this eventful day.

Not long after the above incident information was brought to the keeper of another eyrie about 25 miles from Salen Hotel—a long distance, certainly, but not too long to attempt for such a bird as the Peregrine. Accordingly, a day was fixed to try our luck once more. Peter went out the night before.

I hired the dogcart as usual, and a start, with a good luncheon basket, was effected at about 9 o'clock, picking up the keeper *en route*. We got out as far as we could by the trap—*i.e.*, 21½ miles in

3½ hours—having to do the rest of the journey on foot. Young Todd was to follow on, on his bicycle; unfortunately for him, poor fellow, one of his tyres burst when some considerable distance out, so that he had to make his way back to the hotel as best he could.

We got out to the cliffs where the eyrie was about 2 p.m.—a very sheer cliff it was, too, with a steep slope at its base. Profiting by my experience gained over the first nest, I again placed myself on the right instead of directly underneath. Peter on this occasion did not make use of his gun, but climbed on to a higher level than we were, and, thus, was much nearer to the nest. When the keeper and I were ready we gave a signal to flush her off. Out she came!—a high cross shot. Getting well forward again, I bowled her over in the air with my right barrel, much to my delight. She dropped about 1,000 feet down the mountain side, landing on a ledge of rock. The keeper never even got a chance of a shot at her. She was a very fine handsome bird,—as indeed both were for that matter.

We stopped an hour or more after this to try and get the male, but all to no purpose, as he never came near us. I did not get back till 11 p.m., and I think Mr. and Mrs. McRae were beginning to get rather anxious owing to the distance this eyrie was away from the hotel. Had I not been successful with my first attempt we should never have had time to pursue the tactics we did with the first bird.

In connection with this particular species, the keeper gave me a couple of very interesting facts, which he vouched for as being quite true. One was, that if these Peregrines had been permitted to hatch out their eggs and bring up their young, that they would have entirely destroyed his grouse moor for letting purposes, killing more birds than a couple of guns would be able to manage. The other was the mode adopted for killing its prey, which appears to be unlike that of other Hawks. He said when the Peregrine gets above its prey, and the time arrives for making the stoop, it descends with tremendous rapidity, and by sheer weight and force with the shoulder of its wing decapitates the bird, and that the head of the victim falls on one side. With regard to this last matter, however, Mr. Henry Scherren, F.Z.S.—a well-known authority—says that the more usual method is for the prey to be gripped in the talons, and that decapitation is the result of accident not of design.

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## CASE 16.

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### THE SPARROW HAWK.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ.*

This is a very bold and destructive species; deadly on young game and poultry chicks, and the enemy of all game-keepers.

It is pretty generally distributed over the British Islands; its favourite localities being plantations and wooded districts generally. No doubt its numbers are immensely reduced to what they might be, simply from the attention the bird receives from most game-keepers who do something for their wages.

Mr. Hudson thinks this Hawk has become rare owing to this "persecution"—as he terms it—by keepers.

In my sporting expeditions, with the exception of those in the Hebrides, I have met with it pretty constantly, especially in the woodlands of Wales, where I should imagine it was almost plentiful.

Howard Saunders says: "In autumn the Sparrow Hawk is frequently observed at our lightships and stations on the east coast, and immense numbers sometimes cross Heligoland on their way from higher latitudes; the young passing first and the adults following." With regard to its nesting habits, the same author says: "Like the Gos Hawk, this species usually builds its own nest composed of sticks with a slight lining of twigs, and invariably places it in a tree, and often on the branches close to the bole or at the top. Sometimes, however, it adapts and adds to the deserted abode of a Crow, Wood-pigeon, or other bird. Its food "consists principally of small birds, which it snaps up in an instant as it glides with rapid though stealthy flight along hedges or the skirts of woods. Like all other short-winged species, it feeds on the

ground, usually under the shelter of a hedgerow or bush, and the small close heap of feathers unmistakably mark the place where it has dined."

I was staying at the Crown Hotel, Oban, kept by Mr. and Mrs. McGillivray, very excellent people, who make their visitors very comfortable, and charge most moderately for everything. I don't know any hotel in Oban where you can get better value for your money than you do at The Crown; for the bedrooms are nicely furnished, everything in the hotel is scrupulously clean, the table is good, and the landlord and his wife most civil and obliging people.

I have recommended this hotel to many friends and others; as in a place like Oban, where most of the hotel charges in the season are exorbitantly high, it is something to know of a place where you will be well treated and not fleeced.

You must pardon me reader for this digression.

Well, I had made the Crown Hotel my headquarters, so to speak, making trips from there to islands on the west coast, and returning again in two or three weeks' time.

During my stay I made the acquaintance of a head-keeper, who had charge of a large shooting in Argyleshire. When I told him I wanted the Sparrow Hawk, he was only too ready to give me his assistance, as it was a bird he was in the habit of regularly clearing off the property wherever he could find a nest.

After some little time he succeeded in locating one, and I went out by train to his place. We had to walk about a mile to the nest, which was pretty high up in a tree, situated in a wood principally of small birch trees. I shot the hen, and then stayed for the cock to come, but although we heard him calling all round in the wood, and waited for him till the evening, he never would show himself so as to give any chance of a shot.

I then saw what a mistake I had made in shooting the hen first. However, next morning I went out from Oban again, and the keeper and I kept in hiding near the tree where the nest was. Although we could hear the male bird in every direction, still never a chance would he give us ; so after waiting several hours in the wet—for it was raining all the time—I decided to give that nest up and find another.

A week or two after this event, I was staying in the Island of Mull, when I received intimation from the keeper that he had found another nest, so taking steamer back to Oban, it was not long before I arranged to try my luck once more.

The nest was situated in a wood with somewhat similar surroundings to the first, and in a fairly high tree. Profiting by my experience of the mistake made in shooting the female before the male, the keeper and I placed ourselves amongst some boulders in a fairly concealed position, at the same time within gunshot of where the hen bird was sitting. Now the usual custom with this species



is for the male to forage for the female and supply her with food, so we waited for the return of the cock bird with probably a small bird in his claws.

Talk about patience! If ever it was wanted, it was in this particular instance; for when I tell you that at about 2 p.m. we were ready in our position, and that it was close upon 7 p.m. before the cock bird returned, you can imagine we were fairly tired out.

The keeper, understanding that if he got the chance instead of myself, he was not to wait for me but to take it, just caught a glimpse of the bird, took a snap shot at it in the wood, and, luckily, brought it down. It was a difficult shot and a good one. It was too late to do anything more that evening. As it was I had great difficulty in catching the last train back to Oban.

Next morning I was out again at the same spot with the keeper, and after selecting a position in the wood which I thought would give me a good shot at the hen if he drove her off her nest, I whistled or made a sign to him when ready, the result being that she flew past me in the wood, and I got her.

Howard Saunders says: "The breeding range extends as far north as the limits of forest growth, and southwards it reaches to the Mediterranean. It is resident in the Canaries, North Africa, and Egypt as far as Assouan. In Asia it is found across Siberia to the Pacific and Japan, and even breeds sparingly as far south as Cashmere and the Himalayas," etc.

## CASE 17.

## THE RED THROATED DIVER.

*Order, Pygopodes. Family, Colymbidæ.*

I think I must say something by way of preface in connection with these birds. Whilst staying at Castlebay Hotel, in the Island of Barra, which is the southernmost of that string of islands that lie off the mainland of Scotland, about 80 miles west in the Atlantic, and called collectively the Hebrides, I met with a very obliging and useful man—a Government Official, who, being a naturalist at heart, quite entered into the spirit of what I had to say in regard to my one wish, to make a collection of ornithological specimens for Museum purposes.

I do not think it necessary to give the name of my official friend, but I may say this, that I obtained from him the promise that he would use his best influence with a gentleman in one of the islands that lay to the north, with whom he was on very friendly terms, and who had power to accord permission. The result of this interview proved my friend to be as good as his word, for shortly afterwards I got a letter to the effect that I had permission to shoot one or two specimens, one of which was the Red Throated Diver. In that letter he recommended to me a ghillie suitable for the purpose I had in hand, as I should find him quite a reliable man. Just the man! thought I. Armed with permission and such a ghillie I felt rather

sanguine, and it was not very long after receipt of this communication that I left the Island of Barra for the island mentioned as lying northwards. On arrival at the hotel there, I sent for the ghillie who had been recommended to me, told him that in addition to trout fishing I had "other fish to fry." Although I had permission to obtain the specimens, I did not wish to satisfy the curiosity of inquisitive people, who are always trying to mind other people's business instead of their own. So, in the first instance, I impressed upon my ghillie the importance of the good old proverb of a "Silent tongue making a wise head," and, next, I proceeded to solve the problem of how to take a shot with presumably nothing more than the general paraphernalia that accompany the ordinary trout fisher of the present day. I did, however, solve it; what the solution was, I haven't the least intention of telling you, but leave you to work it out for yourself.

Having brought you up very gradually by a long explanation, I will now lead you to the very day on which I obtained the two specimens in the case. It was, as far as I remember, several days after my arrival before I met with the birds on a small tarn, on a vast stretch of moorland, which you might say was made up of numberless lochs and little tarns. It was a fine bright day; my ghillie, whom I will call Mac, that being part of his name, had a very fine pair of marine glasses, and not very much escaped me when looking through them. We were

standing on a high sloping piece of grassy moorland, and looking down this about half to threequarters of a mile away we saw distinctly these two birds, who weresunning themselves,—that is raising their breasts up sideways, and exposing them to the warmth of the sun.

Having located the birds, the next thing was to get within shot of them—no easy matter in an open, barren, and treeless country. However, by dint of going a long circuitous route, taking advantage of all undulations and going on my hands and knees up a sort of rivulet course some considerable distance, I at last got to a point beyond which I could get no farther, and the birds were still 80 yards off!

What was I to do? Well, as this particular species, owing to their small wings and getting no spring from their legs, are very slow in rising on the wing, I thought my only chance was to jump up suddenly and run as hard as I possibly could, and then take my shot. This I did, and before these Divers could realize their danger I had run to within shot of them. They were both swimming, one just a trifle in front of the other. I took a quick shot, bowled one over, and waited for the other to rise, but he wouldn't do anything but dive; the fact was he wouldn't desert his fallen comrade. Now these birds on the wing are easy enough, but when diving they go under to the flash of the gun; and I may tell you that when the bird was watching me I could not kill him, as although the whole

charge would go on the top of him he would be under before it reached him. Having thus fired something like five futile shots, I told the ghillie to watch till the bird's eye was, to some extent, averted, and then give me the cue to pull the trigger. This he did, the result being satisfactory. This Diver is the smallest of the British species, and breeds principally in the western islands of Scotland, although a good many birds, mostly immature, or in their winter plumage, which means an entire absence of the red throat and the striking markings on the head, are found on most of our coasts in the autumn and winter. The nest is generally situated on the edge of a tarn, *i.e.*, small lake or pool; there is little or nothing of a structure about it, indeed, the two eggs, which are olive spotted with umber, are often laid upon the bare ground.

Howard Saunders says: "When disturbed from her eggs, the female glides into the water and at first swims very low, then, bending her head and neck forward, disappears with a gentle plunge, which hardly leaves a ripple; but I have noticed that if my stay near her nest was prolonged she would swim high, snapping her mandibles and turning her head with a jerky action, and occasionally stopping to drink." This species has a very mournful sort of note, rather harsh in tone; and when frequent utterance is given to it, it is supposed to foretell rain or stormy weather, for this reason the bird is often called the Rain Goose.

## CASE 18.

## THE MALLARD.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

The Mallard, or the Wild-Duck, is probably the most plentiful of all our fresh water ducks, being resident with us in suitable localities, and also supplemented by large flocks which visit us from the Continent during the winter months.

It is an early breeder, that is to say, incubation takes place towards the end of March or the beginning of April. "The nest, made of grass and lined with down, is usually on the ground near fresh water, though not unfrequently at a distance from it; but grain-fields, hedgerows, stacks of faggots, forks or hollows of trees, and even the deserted nests of other birds are often resorted to. The eggs, 8 to 12 in number, are pale greyish-green, or greenish-buff." (H.S.)

In the breeding-season the drake casts all his quills and is unable for a time to fly. At such times he goes into concealment, knowing the danger he is in. When he assumes his feathers again he puts on the dress of the female, but by the middle of October he has resumed his proper plumage.

Although I have many times come across the male of this species, I don't think I have ever met with him when he was actually incapable of flight, but to meet with him in the dress of the female was not at all unusual. From ornithological books I cannot find it anywhere recorded that the drake is anything but

helpful to his partner during the breeding-season, but I remember once on coming across a Mallard's nest in a wood, the eggs of which happened to be concealed from view by having a covering over them, being told by a man whom I took to be a keeper, the reason for the nest being covered was that the drake would smash the eggs all up if he found them in the duck's absence—in the opinion, however, of Mr. Henry Scherren, F.Z.S., this would appear to be a libel on the drake.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "The Mallard begins to cast off all his feathers immediately the eggs are laid, that up to this period he is not less loving and solicitous than any other male bird, and that if by any chance his moult should be delayed he continues to guard the nest and share the labours of incubation." He mentions this fact as one of the strangest things in bird history.

Of all British Ducks this species probably gives the most sport, which is in a great measure due to its being more of a fresh water species than any of the others. By this I don't mean to imply that Mallard do not go out to sea, because in open weather in the winter they do go out, but by night-fall generally come into the marshes to feed; then you get that extremely fascinating sport of fighting on the wane of daylight. Mallard may almost always be found during the winter on edges of lochs in Scotland, loughs in Ireland, and lakes, etc., where reeds and marshy swamps abound. I have met with them even in small pools on the bogs of Ireland.

When the weather is stormy and rough, or in times of snow and frost they frequent dykes and ditches, where the water is not stagnant but running, which intersect most marshy lands. I believe much sport is to be had with these species by the aid of artificial decoy-ducks.

One of the ducks was, as far as my memory serves me, shot on that sea-wall mentioned in connection with the Wigeon case, and the drake and other duck with Michael Casey and his boat. On that occasion there had been a fine spring tide, leaving many banks and promontories of sand exposed after a few hours ebb. On a place of this sort we spotted about a dozen Mallard feeding. Casey soon took stock of their position, and going under cover of any banks he could get, he approached to within shot of them, the result being several cripples which I followed up and polished off afterwards.

The day being rough and the sea very choppy, it was a matter of considerable difficulty to make out the drakes on the water, as they have an artful way of submerging themselves up to their beaks. This species "is abundant in Iceland during the summer and is generally distributed throughout Europe, south of the Arctic circle, breeding in suitable localities down to the Mediterranean, and also in Northern Africa. In Asia it is found wherever the water does not freeze for any length of time, from Turkestan to China and Japan. Visits India in the cold season, and inhabits the temperate portions of North America." (H.S.)



## CASE 19.

## THE KINGFISHER.

*Order, Picaria. Family, Alcedinidæ.*

This beautiful species is, without exception, the handsomest of all our British Birds ; indeed, in its plumage it may be said to resemble a bird of tropical countries, and when seen flying away with strong sunlight on its back, lighting up all its colours to their fullest extent, it undoubtedly can hold its own with some of the very best of them.

It is, according to Howard Saunders, very generally distributed, being found in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where localities are suitable. It cannot, I think, be looked upon as a plentiful species ; although I do not agree with some pessimists who talk as if the bird was almost extinct. No doubt it suffers some persecution, chiefly from the use of its feathers for making artificial flies.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says : " It is found in suitable localities throughout Great Britain, where it has not been exterminated to gratify the vile taste that prefers a mummy to a living creature." In reply to this, I say that few people who have to earn their own living have leisure and opportunity to study bird life in the field. To do that would necessitate their exploring every part of the British Islands, from the fact that only certain birds are found in certain localities. Under ordinary circumstances, were there no Museums for instruction, their knowledge would

probably be confined to such birds as were plentiful in their own immediate locality; a very limited knowledge, truly!! In reference to the word "Mummy," a good taxidermist, with practical knowledge, who puts life and attitude into his birds in their setting up, is presenting to the public something very much better than a "Mummy"—something, in fact, very closely allied to the real thing.

Now to the specimens themselves:—I had for a long time wanted to obtain them for my collection, but somehow or other I never seemed to come across them. I mean by that, an occasional odd one that I might see never gave me any chance; for no sooner had I become aware of its presence than it used to disappear, not to be seen again.

In North Wales, however, late one autumn, I found there was a real good chance of getting what I wanted, as there were several pairs on the estuary which runs from Barmouth towards Dolgelly, as well as on the sea-coast not many miles away.

It would take far too long to describe all the difficulties that I experienced in getting these birds. They are ever so much harder to negotiate than the Dipper, owing to their extremely restless habits and the numbers of haunts they have for fishing purposes. Probably when you visit one place they are at another, and when you wait for and expect them they don't turn up; or, perhaps, on the very day you haven't your gun with you, they give you a shot; or, again, when you have been waiting for an hour or two, and have given up all hope, they come





from somewhere behind you, pass you like lightning, and are out of range before you have time to put your gun up; thus it was with me. Whatever I did was wrong, always wrong; one thing I had to be most careful about, and that was never to shoot the bird unless I could collect it; not very easy to carry out when they were feeding principally on tidal waters. To make a long story short, it must have been getting on for two months before I managed to secure my first Kingfisher. I had gone some distance up this estuary to a place where a sluice runs underneath an embankment. At high tide the water came through this and overflowed a lot of oozy marshland intersected with innumerable little rivulets; this was a very favourite haunt. Just on the inner side of this sluice were a lot of posts and palings on which the Kingfishers perched and spotted their prey coming in with the tide. Adjoining this marshland was a wood, in which I concealed myself one afternoon, having the sluice and palings within view and shot of my position.

Often on former occasions I had had to wait for hours at a stretch without any result; in this particular instance, however, I was in luck's way, for, after about a quarter of an hour's waiting, a splendid Kingfisher, coming through the sluice from the estuary, settled on one of the palings, but only for a second or two at the outside; then he flew up the main creek of the marshy ground. I was up with my gun in a second, and got a cross shot; it was difficult owing to the overhanging bough

of a tree that came down from the wood, almost touching the edge of the creek, and materially intercepting my sight of the bird. When I fired I had no idea of the result of my shot, for I could see nothing come down. As I climbed up the embankment, preparatory to departure for the hotel, I thought I would just cast one farewell glance up the creek from a bridge that spanned the sluice. To my astonishment, I saw something blue lying in the mud! on the edge of the creek. Reader, the tale is told—it was the Kingfisher! and my luck, after much patience and perseverance, had come at last. They say everything comes to him who waits. So it was in this instance, for I had waited nearly two months.

Exactly one week had elapsed after the above event when I was lucky enough to secure my second bird. One frosty bright day in the early days of November I took train to a station up the line and walked back part of the way towards my hotel until I came to a little mountain stream, which runs under a bridge to the estuary, about a quarter of a mile above the sluice where I obtained my first Kingfisher. Underneath this bridge is a favourite place for lying in wait for Ducks during the winter season, for they come up feeding with the tide, which, when the springs are on, reaches even beyond the bridge.

The concealment here is perfect on account of the wooden supports to the bridge, which run up at every sort of angle; but although it is a splendid

hiding-place, it is by no means easy for a quick flying shot, owing to the amount of timber that obstructs one's view in the case of a bird going through either up stream or down the estuary. This difficulty would not present itself in the case of Ducks sitting on the water. I had previously paid several visits to this spot, but without any result. On this occasion I was more fortunate. I had been sitting there for an hour or more, when something flashed through the bridge on the far side from where I was sitting; looking down stream, I observed the blue plumage of the bird going away—Kingfisher! says I to myself—knowing the restless habits of this species, that it would not be content to remain very long where it had gone, I fixed my eyes steadily down stream for its return; probably something like half an hour elapsed before I saw it in the distance returning up stream. Waiting till it got to within 20 or 30 yards of the bridge, I put my gun to my shoulder, and as it shot through on its way up the river, I just managed to get on to it before it got round a bend, and so managed to annex it. Thus endeth the second chapter.

In regard to distribution abroad, according to Howard Saunders, "The Kingfisher is found from Northern Germany southward in suitable localities throughout Europe down to the Mediterranean. It occurs in the Canaries and Madeira; in Morocco and Algeria it is said to breed; and it inhabits Egypt during winter."

Mr. Thorpe, of East Croydon, has fully justified my confidence in him by placing these little Kingfishers in a very natural and artistic habitat.

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## CASE 20.

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### THE DIPPER.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Cinclidæ.*

The Dipper, or Water-Ouzel, is distributed in suitable localities over the British Islands, and the study of its habits has been peculiarly interesting to me.

Probably it would be found to be most abundant in Cornwall and Devon, Cumberland and Westmoreland, Wales, and Scotland, where geographical features so well fulfil the requirements of this spritely-looking little bird, viz., the rivulets and running brooks in Wales especially, the bold rocky streams and burns of Scotland; these latter are the ideal home of the Dipper.

I don't think in the whole of my collection there is any bird whose habit in the breeding-season I have studied more than this particular species. The first opportunity came when staying at Dolecoed Hotel, Llanwrtyd Wells. Soon after my arrival I was informed of there being a Water-Ouzel, or Dipper's nest, within a stone's throw of the hotel door. The front of the hotel was on the main road to the grounds where the Sulphur Springs were, and



this road skirted the banks of the river Irfon—protection to the public passing that way being afforded by a stone wall which, in fact, was just outside the hotel on the far side of the road. Several feet below the top of this wall was a waste-pipe, which emptied itself into the stream below. On the top of this pipe was the nest, one side of it being firmly fixed against the wall—curious sort of a position, wasn't it? When I first got information of this nest the young could only just have been hatched. I watched it during the whole time the parents were feeding their young, till one fine morning they took flight. Knowing the habit of this species, that after educating their young in the art of fishing for themselves, and thus getting their own livelihood, they return to the old nest, lay some more eggs, and endeavour to bring up a second brood, I was anxious to prove this characteristic of these little birds by personal observation. True to what has been recorded of them they returned to the old nesting-site after only a few days absence, and the female began to lay eggs again; during this period the male was attentive to her wants. I was watching the nest carefully all the time; knew, in fact, how many eggs there were. Early one morning when returning from a walk in the grounds, what was my surprise to see a group of people assembled round the spot, a ladder let down into the bed of the stream which was dry, and a lady and gentleman hard at work taking the eggs out of the nest; and, not satisfied with that, but doing their best to

destroy it altogether by poking a walking-stick through it in several places, and thus rendering it useless for the birds to adopt on some future occasion. I was very angry—not unnaturally, you will admit—at the behaviour of these Bank Holiday visitors.

The next occasion was when staying at Arthog Hall Hotel. A gentleman and his two sons—very fond of natural history—told me that in the rocky mountain stream called the Church Stream, which meets the tidal water of the estuary at Arthog Station, they had noticed a pair of these birds, and thought they must have a nest somewhere, giving me a fair indication of the particular spot where I might find them. I went next morning and took up a likely position. I had not to wait long before one Dipper made his appearance on a boulder of rock. It was evidently the male, so I waited and waited for the female; as she did not show herself for some hours I concluded she must be sitting on her eggs somewhere. At last my patience was rewarded by seeing her amongst the boulders, by which I knew that the nest could not be far off. Where? that was the point. After two or three days watching for hours at a time I formed the conclusion—owing to the fact of seeing both birds out on the rocks together—that the young birds must now be hatched, and that the parents had commenced feeding.

I think it was something like the fourth day of watching that I began to get an inkling of the whereabouts of the nest, as the birds seemed to me to

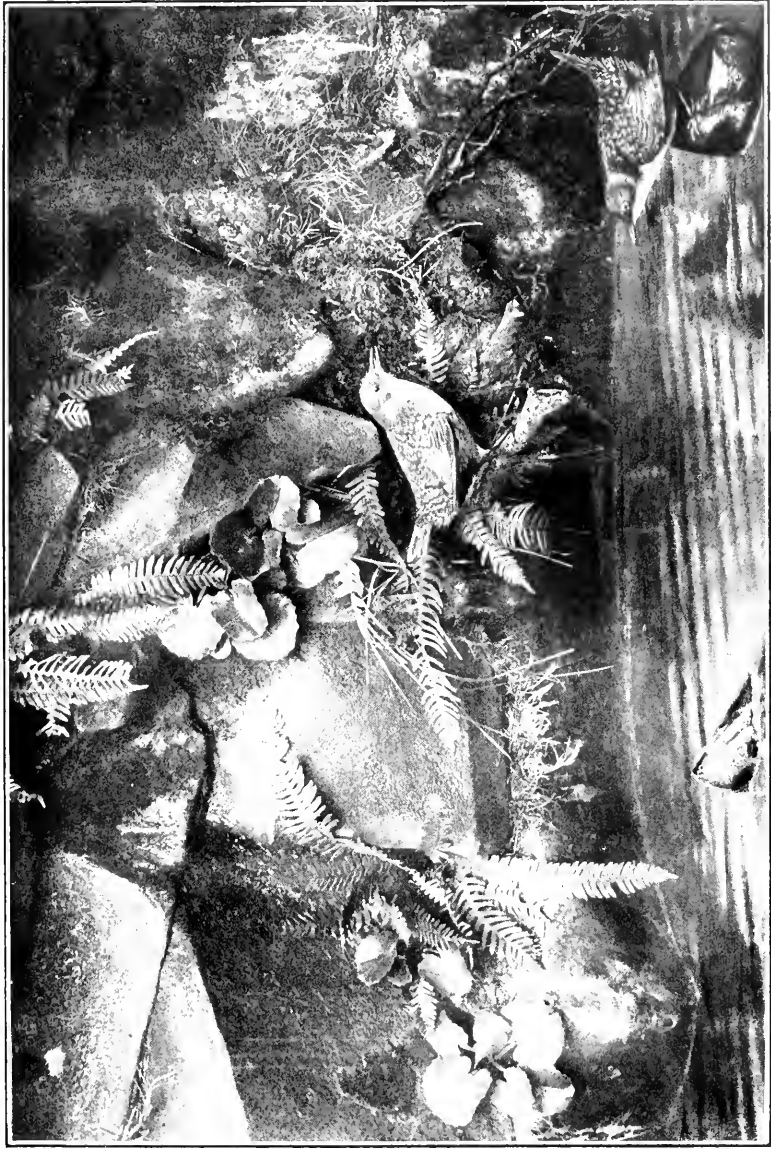
make more in one direction than another, and by occasionally altering my points of observation I practically decided that it was under a boulder, either at the back or side of a cascade coming from a sort of basin in the river, the water flowing through an aperture to the rocks below. Having got this far with my conclusions I asked the landlord of the hotel to accompany me next morning, and see what he could make of it, but he was non-plussed. Not wishing to keep him from his hotel duties I told him not to stay any longer, but that I was determined to find the exact locality myself before returning.

Now, the habit of the Water-Ouzel is to feed the youngsters for 10 to 15 minutes, go away then for half an hour and return, so availing myself of their absence I built up a little screen of oak-leaf boughs in the bed of the river, whence I could look straight up in the direction of the cascade where they had always disappeared from view—owing to my inability to follow them with my eye any further. I had just comfortably settled myself in my new position when one of the birds appeared on the top of the cascade with food in its beak. I was looking through the interstices of the leaves of my screen; it was most interesting to watch the bird's diffidence about going to the nest; it kept bobbing and curtseying as these birds do, and looking well about it before entering; then it dropped down into some rocks below the fall, hesitated again for some time, then making up its mind rushed up an incline in the rocks to a boulder that lay on one side of the

cascade, just introduced its beak underneath one particular spot which I carefully marked, and not waiting to deliver all the food went rapidly back again to the top of the cascade before making up its mind about delivering the remainder. I never saw anything prettier in my life than these two birds feeding their young. When the food was too hard for the youngsters to digest properly they would break it up on the rocks before giving it them.

Before continuing this story I must mention that the landlord of the hotel and I had made an attempt to dam up the aperture through which the water was coming from the basin of the river in order to approach the nest more easily ; this was carried out on his first visit to the place with only partial success.

To return to my narrative. The morning following the day on which I had located the nest, the landlord went up with me again—I being anxious to know what was in the nest—and divesting himself of his clothes,—as there was too much water for any other mode of procedure,—I directed him to the exact spot, the result being that he found it under the boulder near the edge in the right-hand corner ; in fact, where I knew it must be. There were three youngsters : he said they felt very clammy to the touch as if they had not much feather, so I instructed him to leave them alone—this being a Friday. On Sunday afternoon a thunderstorm broke over Arthog, bringing on with it a perfect deluge of rain. On Monday morning I asked the landlord whether he would mind going



**Water = Ouzels,**  
Nesting = Site in Rocky Bank.



to the Dipper's nest before breakfast, and seeing how things were after the storm; this he very kindly did. What do you think, reader, was his report when he came back? I don't think you'll guess—owing to the rapid rise of this mountain torrent and to our interference with nature in trying to dam up the natural outlet, the increased volume of water—when undue pressure was brought to bear at that spot—being unable to make its way, had forced itself round at the back of the rock, and so displaced the nest. I was greatly disappointed, as no one could have divined all that subsequently took place in connection with this nest. Its easy enough to be wise after an event. However, although no old birds or young were visible after the disaster occurred, I firmly believe that the young were in a sufficiently forward state, with the help of their parents, to make good their escape, and consequently that no harm happened to them.

In conclusion, I was never able to make out where their second nest was, for presumably they had one, as I used often to see them up and down the stream.

In the following October I followed the Church Stream one fine cold sunny day almost to the base of the mountain. During my ramble I came across the two specimens you see about half a mile apart from one another, which I honestly believe are the pair I watched so closely in the nesting-season.

The nest in the case,—which required a lot of mending,—is the identical one that I took from the

waste-pipe near the Dolecoed Hotel. The root of a tree in the bank of a river is a very common site for the nest of a Dipper, and in the present instance I have selected it as being probably the most effective way of dealing with the subject.

The eggs shown in this case were obtained by purchase, and are merely placed on the rocks for exhibition purposes, as they could never be seen, under any circumstances, owing to the peculiar construction of the nest. Mr. Thorpe, of Croydon, has carried out my ideas in connection with this case exceedingly well.

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## CASE 21.

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BULLFINCH, CHAFFINCH, GREEN-  
FINCH, HOUSE-SPARROW, HEDGE-  
SPARROW, LINNET, YELLOW  
BUNTING, BRAMBLING.

*Order, Passeres.*

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THE BULLFINCH.  
*Family, Fringillidæ.*

This is one of our handsomest little resident birds,—probably familiar to all. I do not suppose Bullfinches are anything like as plentiful as Chaffinches, or so widely distributed; still, there are a good many more than one would suppose, owing to their habit of confining themselves to woods and



plantations, large tracts of thick bramble, set hedge-rows, from which they do not emerge much into the open. As they are not ground-feeding birds, this characteristic can easily be understood. The food consists of insects and their larvæ, and berries of all sorts in the winter. In the spring they do a great deal of damage to the fruit trees by picking the buds off; in fact, I don't think one could find a more destructive little bird than the Bullfinch is at that time of the year. The species is not gifted with anything more than a little warble of a song, which cannot be heard unless one is quite close. It has a very plaintive little call note, sounding like "diu, diu." The nest, a sort of platform of twigs, with a lining of roots, sometimes mixed with softer materials, is situated in hedges, thickets, or on the lower branches of trees. Eggs,—four to six, greenish-blue, spotted and streaked with purplish-brown. Some naturalists believe that when this little bird takes a wife unto himself, he takes her for better or for worse; that he doesn't change his mind, but sticks to her from year to year. According to Howard Saunders, "This species inhabits the countries south of the Baltic and west of Central Russia as far as the northern portions of the Spanish Peninsula, and in Italy reaches to Naples and Sicily."

The specimens were shot in orchards adjacent to park-lands near Warlingham, whilst they were busily engaged in attacking the fruit trees.

## THE CHAFFINCH.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

The Chaffinch is well known to most people, being resident, in suitable localities, all the year round. Notwithstanding our plentiful supply, many more arrive on the east coast during the autumn; and at this season of the year there is this peculiar characteristic about this species, viz, that a "partial and temporary separation of the sexes takes place, and, owing to this fact, the name *Caelebs*, or bachelor, was used by Linnaeus in reference to the deserted males" (H.S.).

The song is very abrupt, with a ringing clearness about it, composed only of a few notes. Although I know it very well, I should find it very difficult to express the same in words. Howard Saunders puts it thus, "toll-toll, pretty little de-ar." The bird commences with high notes, and descends in the scale; it has also several sharp call notes, sounding like "pink, pink, pink." The nest of this species is one of the most beautifully constructed of our small birds,—a perfect work of art, in fact. As I like Mr. Pycraft's description of it in his "Bird Life" best, I quote it. He says: "It is constructed for the most part of wool and hair, matted together so as to form a very perfect felt. On the outside of this are fastened, or rather woven, mosses, lichens, and spider webs. The whole so completely harmonizes with its general surroundings as to make it very difficult of detection." The nesting-site is often in the fork of some fruit-tree in an orchard, or in some high sort

of hedge. Four to six eggs are laid—in colour, greenish-blue, spotted with reddish or purplish-brown. Two broods are reared. In regard to habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says: “It is generally distributed during the breeding-season throughout the temperate regions of Europe down to the Mediterranean. . . . In winter our Chaffinch occurs in Egypt; it breeds on Hermon and Lebanon, and in the forest region of Persia, and has been found as far east as Omsk in Siberia.”

The specimens were, I think, shot near the Caterham Valley.

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### THE GREENFINCH.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

This species more resembles the Hawfinch in shape and bill than any other of our Finches. It is resident and pretty common throughout Great Britain and Ireland, its usual habitat being in the vicinity of wooded districts which are surrounded by a good deal of cultivation. It has been suggested by Mr. W. H. Hudson that this particular Finch does not get half the appreciation that is its due—that we think more of the Chaffinch—I am inclined to agree with him about this. As regards beauty of plumage, if the Greenfinch be viewed under favourable conditions of light—as when it is sitting on a branch of a tree in full leaf, with the sun shining, lighting up the olive and bright yellow which are in such complete harmony with general surroundings—then, I think, our little Greenfinch can hold

its own against most others of the Finch family. It is, moreover, a very sociable little bird. "All the summer long, even when they are engaged in breeding, they may be seen in parties of three or four" (W. H. H.). The nest is something after the character of that of the Chaffinch, though more loosely constructed; it is generally placed in a hedge, a bush, or shrub. Eggs—four to six, greenish-white, spotted or blotched with reddish-brown; sometimes the nest is in a tree, in regard to which, Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "Two or three nests are often found on the same branch, or in close proximity. The passions of jealousy and anger so common among birds in the pairing-season seem not to exist in this species." The Greenfinch is not particularly strong in singing, although it has a few pretty little warbling notes. Howard Saunders describes its call note as "a long drawn twe-e-eer."

This species is, no doubt, like the Bullfinch, very destructive to fruit trees in the spring; in the autumn large flocks arrive on our coasts, and, joining with the resident birds, distribute themselves over our cultivated fields, often associating themselves with Sparrows and Chaffinches. "It is more or less sedentary in suitable localities throughout Europe. Eastward it is found as far as the north-west of Persia and Turkestan" (H.S.).

The specimens, I think, were shot near Warlingham, Surrey.

## THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

This bird does not require much introduction from me, still, as a distinct species, it has to be dealt with. Now, the Sparrow thrives and multiplies just as well in the blackest and foulest atmosphere of our manufacturing towns as in the pure air of our country villages; and as its one idea seems to be distinctly amatory, bringing up family after family, from early spring to very late autumn—provided conditions in temperature are not too unfavourable—I say, that with such indisputable facts as these, the probability is you know the bird only too well. The nest is usually a large oval ball of straw and hay, mixed with bits of string, old rags, paper, etc., lined with feathers. Eggs—four to six, colour, bluish-white, spotted or blotched with ash or dusky-brown. The site may be almost anywhere—from roofs of houses, ivy, trees, etc., to holes in walls or banks; the bird is very artful, preferring some position that is not easily get-at-able; often it has the audacity and impertinence to oust useful species from their pet spots—to wit, the House and Sand Martin.

Considering the filthy mess the Sparrow makes with the scattered materials of its nest all about a house, together with its prolific habit, and its general cuteness in the breeding-time, it has become a veritable pest and nuisance in our country, and it would be a good thing if its numbers were greatly reduced. Moreover, nothing comes amiss to it in

the way of food. Sparrows are certainly most destructive in the cornfields, for I have seen them sitting in flocks upon the heads of wheat or oats, and eating for all they were worth; no doubt they do a lot of damage to fruit trees. Although there is hardly a spot in our islands where the Sparrow is not present in thousands, I must say, that when fishing in the Hebrides I don't remember seeing one, but they are probably there by this.

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#### THE HEDGE-SPARROW.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

This is a jolly, homely little bird, quite a little pet; not quite so domestic, perhaps, as the Robin, but still in the winter time, when there are any scraps near our windows, this little chap is not likely to be far off. Then it is such a symmetrical bird, so perfectly proportioned with such dainty legs and feet, that how it could ever come to be named after our common cheeky House Sparrow is not easy to understand. To begin with, it is not a true Sparrow, being in a family almost exclusively its own, nor is it in form or general habit anything like one. When one pictures the Hedge Sparrow it is generally in connection with some of our thickest thorn hedges, wherein it delights to dwell, flitting about from twig to twig. Its nest is generally made in such a hedge or tangled bushes not far from the ground. The materials are roots and moss, with hair and wool for a lining—a very neat little

structure, containing four to six of the most perfect blue eggs possible to imagine.

The species is an early breeder, two to three broods being reared. There is an old and popular belief dating back as far as Shakespeare's time, that this little bird is the favourite foster-parent to the young Cuckoo; but the Meadow-Pipit could put in an equal claim. The Hedge-Sparrow does no damage anywhere in the matter of the food it selects—only good, for it is content to live upon insects, spiders, worms, etc. The species is resident with us and generally distributed. Many birds, too, arrive on our Lincolnshire and Yorkshire coasts in late autumn. "Throughout Europe south of the Baltic it is generally distributed in summer down to the northern districts of Spain. Its south-eastern breeding-limit appears to be the Caucasus" (H.S.)

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### THE LINNET.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

The Linnet is resident and plentiful in most parts of our islands all the year round, being supplemented by large flocks in the autumn, which arrive from the Continent. This species is gregarious in its habit, being seldom seen alone, except when breeding. The plumage varies very much according to the different seasons of the year. On that account it is sometimes called the Grey, at others the Red or Brown Linnet. I am not quite sure what the specimen in the case would be termed. The Linnet

is partial to rough moor, uncultivated lands, and furze-covered waste tracts.

“ The nest is made of fine twigs, moss, and grass stalks, and lined with wool, hair, vegetable down, and sometimes a few feathers. It is generally placed in gorse or juniper bushes, though often in hedges; eggs—four to six in number, are bluish-white, blotched, speckled, and streaked with reddish-brown and purplish-red. Two broods are often reared in the season. The food consists of soft seeds, especially those of an oily nature, such as the various species of flax and hemp, grains of charlock, etc., knot-grass, and other weeds also being largely consumed; in winter various kinds of berries and even oats are devoured ” (Howard Saunders).

This bird has a sweet and agreeable song, and, as a consequence, has received much attention from bird-catchers with their lime, nets, and other paraphernalia for making large captures for caging purposes. It is often crossed with the canary when in captivity, the result being very successful. The proper plumage for the cock in the spring would be blood red forehead, grey head, chestnut mantle, and carmine breast. “ Resident all over Europe, also in North-Western Africa, the Canaries, and Madeira. Eastward as far as the Altai Mountains ” (H.S.)

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#### THE YELLOW BUNTING.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

This bright-plumaged little bird, the more common name for which is the Yellow Hammer,



must be very familiar to most of us; the word Hammer originates from the German word "Ammer," which means Bunting. It is pretty widely distributed over the British Islands, extending as far as the Hebrides. The nest, generally placed in hedgerows or bushes, or tangled masses of herbage, often in banks, is composed of a mixture of grass and mosses, with a lining of fine roots and hair. Eggs—four to five, which are beautifully marked and subject to a good many variations; to give the best authority, "As a rule they are purplish-white, streaked, spotted, and clouded with reddish-purple, and scrolled with long hair-like markings, from which, in some parts, the bird has acquired the name of Writing-Lark" (H.S.). To people who live in the country this bird shows itself very quickly from the natural habit it has of perching upon the highest point of a hedge, where its gay plumage makes it very conspicuous. The song is not of much account, but the string of notes to which it gives utterance have been put into words by various ornithologists as sounding like "a-little-bit-of-bread and nō c-h-ē-ē-s-e." In summer the Yellow Bunting feeds on insects, in autumn and winter on wild fruits, seeds, and grain. Habitat abroad: "In Norway up to about 70 N. Latitude, etc.; south-eastward as far as the upper valley of the Yenesei. In temperate Europe it is generally distributed, except in the northern districts it is resident" (H.S.). The specimens were shot in Surrey or in Radnorshire.

## THE BRAMBLING.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

The Brambling, or Mountain Finch, is an autumn and winter visitor to Scotland, "and migrants from Scandinavia may be found in small parties among the Highland glens long before their arrival is noticed in England, where their presence and relative abundance depend upon the severity of the weather on the Continent" (H.S.). It is generally to be found in the vicinity of beech woods. It leaves us about the middle of March for its more northern breeding-grounds, but occasional nests in this country have been recorded. "Mr. E. T. Booth states, that in June 1866, whilst fishing in the river Lyon in Perthshire, he had occasion to climb a beech tree to disentangle his line when he disturbed a female Brambling from her nest with three eggs. . . . As a rule, the Brambling breeds at higher altitudes than the Chaffinch, and its nest, largely composed of birch-bark, is usually placed where a branch meets the stem of a birch or fir tree. . . . The eggs—six to seven in number, laid late in May or early in June, are, as a rule, rather greener than those of the Chaffinch, and have more definite markings. . . . Its food consists of insects small seeds—especially those of the knot-grass — beechmast, and the kernels of nuts.' " (Howard Saunders.)

The specimen in the case was obtained in the vicinity of some beech woods between Caterham and Godstone, when out for a stroll with my friend, Mr. Charles Thorpe, the Naturalist, East Croydon.

## CASE 22.

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STONECHAT, WHINCHAT, WHEATEAR,  
REDSTART.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Turdidæ.*

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## THE STONECHAT.

This species is very widely distributed over the British Islands, very common in Ireland, and penetrating as far north as the Outer Hebrides. It is mostly resident, migration being only partial; still, a good many birds find their way over from the Continent in the spring. Its habitat is usually on open moors, heath-lands, and furze-covered wastes. One of the male birds in the case was shot on mountain heather in South Uist.

In connection with this species, I am forcibly reminded of a little incident which occurred in my boyhood days. Being very fond of birdnesting, I had on one particular half-holiday found a Stonechat's nest with only one egg in it. I calculated that in three or four days' time there would be from three to four eggs. Unfortunately, the next half-holiday all the boys were expected to play cricket. The ground being some little distance off, I gave the masters the slip *en route*, but alas! being missed, I was subsequently found out, had to "own up," and was sentenced to commit to memory 500 lines of Livy. Howard Saunders says: "The nest, constructed very early in April, is concealed

amongst the herbage on broken ground, . . . and is composed of dry grass, with a lining of bents, hair, and feathers. The five or six eggs are of a bluish-green, spotted and zoned with pale reddish-brown. The parents display considerable anxiety when the nest is approached, flitting from bush to bush and uttering a sharp chack. It requires great patience to eye the female to her nest. This species breeds in Spain, even in the hot plains of Seville, and is plentiful in the south of Europe. Migrants from the north go down in winter to the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Palestine."

The hen bird in the case was obtained from a taxidermist in Manchester.

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#### THE WHINCHAT.

The Whinchat is fairly well distributed throughout England and Wales. It also visits parts of Scotland, being common in Sutherlandshire. This species is non-resident with us, but comes over from the Continent about the middle of May, returning in the autumn. Its habitat is very much that of the Stonechat, *i.e.*, frequenting heaths and commons, but the two species are seldom found occupying the same locality in numbers. It is very fond of pasture lands, tufts of coarse grass being a desideratum on which the little bird delights to perch itself; from this partiality for grass-lands the local name of "Grasschat" has arisen.

“The breeding-season is from the beginning of May; the nest is on the ground, or, at most, a few inches above it, among the stems of a small bush or in coarse herbage and thick meadow-grass. It is a loose structure of dry grass and moss, with a lining of finer material; the eggs—usually six in number, being greenish-blue, sometimes dotted and zoned with rust colour. . . . The bird has an agreeable song, uttered on the wing or when sitting on some low branch, accompanied with a fanning movement of the tail. It roosts on the ground” (H.S.). This bird’s migrations are somewhat similar to those of the Stonechat in regard to winter and summer quarters, only, perhaps, with a somewhat wider range.

The specimens in the case were shot in Radnorshire.

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#### THE WHEATEAR.

The Wheatear is about the earliest of our spring migrants. It arrives on our coasts by the middle of March, and departs early in October, though some few may remain in the country during mild winter. It distributes itself very quickly over the British Islands. From my personal observation, extending from the north and west of Scotland, parts of England and Wales, to the south of Ireland, there was hardly a spot where this little bird was not in evidence. In its flight it is easily recognizable by the white patch just above

the base of the tail feathers, which, when the wings are extended, is very noticeable.

“The name Wheatear has no connection with wheat, but is a corruption of *white*, and of the Anglo-Saxon *ærs*, for which the modern equivalent is rump, and, in fact, as White-rumps this species and its congeners are known in every European language. About the middle of April the loose nest, of dry grass, lined with rabbits' fur, hair, and feathers, is placed in rabbit burrows, crevices of stone walls, peat-stacks on the moors, or under rocks and fallow clods. The eggs—five, six, and often seven, are of a very pale blue. Two broods are produced in the season. The old birds are wary and do not easily betray the situation of their treasure. The song of the male, often uttered on the wing, is rather pretty, and the bird also displays considerable powers of imitating other species. Its food consists of small spiders, insects—often captured on the wing—and their larvæ. This species breeds throughout Europe, Siberia, Mongolia, and at suitable elevations in Asia Minor and North Africa. Its winter migrations extend to a little south of the Equator” (H.S.).

The specimens in the case were shot in the western islands of Scotland.

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#### THE REDSTART.

This species is migratory and non-resident, its arrival being, to a certain extent, influenced by the



**Sparrow - Hawks.**  
Nesting - Site with Eggs.





prevailing temperature in the spring. In one respect the Redstart resembles the Warblers, that all males come over to this country in a flock together, preceding the females by several days; after that they select their partners for the breeding-season. The southward migration begins about the end of August. It is fairly distributed in our islands, being plentiful in England and Wales, and rather "local in Scotland, breeding in Caithness and Sutherland" (H.S.). A few pairs are known to nest in Ireland. Its habitat is generally where woods and streams abound.

Howard Saunders says: "The nest is generally placed in hollow trees or in the holes of walls; exceptionally in such localities as the inside of an inverted flower-pot, or in the gable ends of inhabited buildings. It is loosely constructed of moss, dry grass, and roots, with a lining of hair and feathers; the eggs—usually six, being of a light blue."

The nests that have come under my own observation have generally been in the corner of a verandah, in the space between the wall and the roof. The last I saw was in the verandah of Arthog Hall Hotel, a place much frequented by tourists. This verandah being in constant demand for ladies' afternoon teas, it was very interesting to watch the parent birds trying to feed their young under such adverse circumstances. The cock and hen birds would take up their positions some little distance off, sitting on the branch of a rose tree or

whatever might be handy, and when the young ones called out for food, answer by a sweet little plaintive note, expressed as near as possible by the word "Wheet, wheet," as much as to say "Wait a bit, I'm coming, it's all right." To quote Howard Saunders once more: "The food consists of flies, gnats, small butterflies, and other insects, spiders, etc., the young being largely fed on caterpillars. This species is sometimes called the Firetail, the second syllable being derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Steort*—a tail.

On the Continent the Redstart is found in summer from the North Cape to the wooded regions of Central and Southern Europe, its winter migrations extending to North Africa, the Canaries and Madeira, Senegal, Abyssinia, Arabia, Palestine, and Persia. These little birds, when sitting on a branch, have a very peculiar habit of twitching the tale, which vibrates as if caused by an electric current down the back.

The specimens were shot in Radnorshire.

## CASE 23.

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SONG - THRUSH, MISTLE - THRUSH,  
BLACKBIRD, FIELDFARE, REDWING,  
ROBIN.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Turdidæ.*

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## SONG-THRUSH.

Who is not acquainted with the notes of this bird's enchanting song in the early hours of the spring days? Howard Saunders says: "The much admired song, characterized by a distinct repetition of its three or four component notes, may be heard on a warm bright day very early in the year, continuing till the moulting-season, and being often resumed in autumn; it is frequently uttered on fine nights." This bird nests early in March, rearing two to three broods, in regard to which, the same author says: "The well-known nest, with its water-tight lining of rotten wood and dung, is generally placed in the middle of a thick bush or among ivy, and not infrequently in a moss-covered bank; the eggs—four to six, are of a shining greenish-blue, blotched with black or rusty-brown. Its food—nine months of the year—wild berries, insects, worms, and snails,—in summer time a good deal on fruit." This species is resident, but its numbers are supplemented by a good many others which come over from the Continent in late autumn.

## THE MISTLE-THRUSH.

This is the largest of our native Thrushes. I don't know that it has any particular merit as a songster, but its notes are heard early in the year, and in rough, stormy weather; hence the local name of "Storm-Cock" has arisen; it is also called the "Holm-Screech," because it feeds largely on the berries of the Holm or Holly, and from its unmusical notes. It is generally distributed over England and Wales and its range is extending in Scotland and Ireland. It favours wooded districts more than others.

"The nest, which, when placed in the fork of a tree, has a considerable foundation of mud, is lined with dry grasses, and composed externally of bents and lichens, but although the colour of the latter may resemble that of the branch on which the structure is placed—bushes being seldom resorted to—there is often no attempt at concealment. The eggs—four to five in number, are greenish to tawny-white, blotched with reddish-brown and lilac. Its food consists rather of the berries of the yew, holly, mountain ash, hawthorn, ivy, etc., fruit when obtainable, also worms, snails, insects, etc. Although shy of man—except when its nest is approached—the Mistle-Thrush is bold and tyrannical towards other birds, fearlessly attacking Jays, Magpies, and other species superior to its size: occasionally, it has been known to carry off nestlings. This species is found pretty well over the continent of Europe, and as far eastward as Turkey, the Caucasus, Asia Minor

Turkestan, breeding in localities that are suitable" (H.S.).

The specimen in the case was shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, in the winter of 1893.

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### THE BLACKBIRD.

This is one of our best known songsters; so liquid are its notes and so varied its song that it is difficult to say whether it or the Song-Thrush has the greater merit; both are much in request for the cage. This species also possesses, in no small degree, the power of mimicry. Its distribution over our Islands is wide, being resident in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, and generally extending its range to the north and west. As in the case of the Song-Thrush, the resident birds are augmented by immigrants from the Continent in late autumn. The Blackbird breeds early in March, bringing up two to three broods.

In regard to nesting, I append the following from Howard Saunders' excellent book: "The usual nesting-places selected by the Blackbird are bushes, especially evergreens and hedgerows; occasionally the ground, but the nest differs from that of the Thrush in being lined with dry grasses. The eggs—four to six, are of a greenish-blue, spotted and streaked with reddish-brown. The old birds are much more shy during the breeding-season than the Song-Thrush, but the cock at pairing-time is very quarrelsome."

The food is very much the same as that of the Thrush, but in the summer time, as a rascally thief in a fruit garden, the Blackbird would take a lot of beating. This bird has the habit of jerking up its tail immediately after perching on a set of palings or branch of a tree.

The specimens in the case were obtained at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, during the winter of 1893, and the pied specimen on the bogs near Waterville, co. Kerry, when out Snipe shooting some years later.

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#### THE FIELDFARE.

This winter visitor comes over to our islands usually about the end of October, "the date of its arrival, however, depending a good deal upon the autumnal temperature in those northern regions of Europe which form its principal breeding-ground. It breeds abundantly in Scandinavia, Finland, Northern Russia, Siberia, Central Russia, Baltic Provinces, and Poland, and, of late, in Moravia, Bohemia, and Bavaria. Its migrations extend to the African side of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Palestine, Persia" (H.S.).

This bird, familiar as it must be to us during frosts in winter months, goes northward in the spring to breed.

The specimens in the case were shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, during the winter of 1893.

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#### THE REDWING.

This, the smallest and most delicate of the British Thrushes, may easily be recognised by a broad white

streak across the eye, as well as by the rich orange-red of the flanks and under-parts of the wing. It is exclusively migratory, and its arrival is much about the same time as that of the Fieldfare. It is not, however, nearly so hardy as that bird, and though able to stand frost fairly well, countless numbers would perish if exposed to a protracted severe winter with a continuance of heavy snow. In winter large numbers go past our shores. The southerly movement from the breeding-haunts in northern Europe extends to the south of Europe and the north of Africa; stragglers have been met with in the Canaries and Madeira, while the eastward limit appears to be in the neighbourhood of Lake Baikal. Redwings are said to have been met with in Britain in the summer, and there are reports of their having nested, but the evidence is not convincing. The nest, however, has been found by Herr Müller in the Faroes, whither the birds no doubt wandered from Iceland where the species is generally distributed during the short summer.

The specimens in the case were shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, during the winter of 1893.

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#### THE ROBIN.

What shall I say about this little bird, so endeared to us during the long winter season—so cheery, so confiding, coming to the window sills of our houses to be fed, so tame—when hard pressed by hunger, as to take food out of our hands? What shall I say

about our British pet, so familiar to all English hearths and homes? Well, you mightn't think it, but he is the most pugnacious and domineering of little birds. Often when feeding birds in hard weather I have found that the Robin was best man amongst them, driving all the rest away whilst he remained champion of all around him. The species is resident, widely distributed, but its numbers are supplemented by a good many more which arrive from the Continent during early winter.

Howard Saunders says: "Southwards it breeds throughout Europe down to the south of Spain, North-Western Africa, the Caucasus, Madeira, and the Azores; eastwards across Russia to the Ural Mountains; its winter migrations extend to the Sahara, Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, North-Western Turkestan. The nest, made of dead leaves and moss, lined with hair and a few feathers, is placed in a bank, holes of walls, amongst ivy, and hollow trees; whilst pages might be filled with details of the extraordinary sites sometimes selected. The eggs—five to six, are usually white, with light reddish blotches, but sometimes they are pure white. Nesting begins in March, two to three broods are produced in the year. Its song is musical, but of little compass. The food is mostly insects and worms, but berries and fruit are by no means despised."

The specimen in the case was shot in Surrey, and the idea of associating him with the Thrushes was because their surroundings were suggestive of



winter weather, and, therefore, of this little bird. You observe that he is singing, which he probably likes doing in bright frosty weather better than on a hot summer's day.

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## CASE 24.

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### THE PIED FLYCATCHER.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Muscicapidæ.*

This is a far rarer bird than the Spotted Flycatcher, being migratory and non-resident, and arrives earlier than its congener.

Its distribution is very local. Broadly speaking, it is found in the northern counties of England, Wales, and the south of Scotland. Mr. R. Kearton knew of a ruin in Yorkshire where this species nested within a few yards of the Redstart.

The leading naturalist of Barmouth district—Mr. Haines—who has a very fine collection of eggs, and is, in fact, the authority on all matters ornithological, with whom I had several pleasant discussions, assured me that the Pied Flycatcher was quite common in that locality.

The specimens in the case were, like the Spotted Flycatcher, obtained in county Merionethshire. From what I saw in my peregrinations in that part of North Wales, I am able to endorse the opinion of the leading naturalist in that district, viz., that this particular species is fairly plentiful. I have

noticed two different kinds of nesting-sites—one in the hole of a tree, another in the crack of a wall, the latter has been selected to represent this little family, and Mr. Thorpe, of East Croydon, has done full justice to the subject. The eggs of this species are blue, of a pale greenish shade. Its food consists of insects, which it often takes on the ground, instead of catching them on the wing, as the Spotted Flycatcher always does.

This species' habitat abroad is more northern than that of the Spotted Flycatcher.

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## CASE 25.

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### THE SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Muscicapidæ.*

This species, exclusively migratory, is one of our latest arrivals, not reaching us much before the middle of May, and departing again in September.

It is very widely distributed over our islands. It does not attract the attention much owing, probably, to its sombre plumage, but whenever you see a little bird with a hammer-shaped head, rather out of proportion to the rest of its body, sitting on some post or paling in a park or on the outskirts of a wood, suddenly leave its perch, make two or three twisting evolutions in the air in the capture of some gnat or small fly, and return to the same spot—you may easily recognise it as a Spotted Flycatcher.

They sit silent, almost motionless, watching every sort of insect life as it passes and comes within range, then, when the opportunity comes, out they go with a dart! As the Kingfisher is in regard to a fish, so is this little bird in respect of a fly.

Mr. Pycraft, in classing their habit with that of the Swallows and Martins, says: "Not one of these will deign to touch the earth to take from it one morsel of food, but captures it in passing through the air."

I have watched the aerial performances of this little bird times without number, and what has struck me most has been the persistence with which they stick to one spot till the supply of insects around seems to be exhausted.

The nest of this species is composed of fine grass and moss, with a lining of hair, wool, feathers, etc. I have generally seen nests in some creeper, such as ivy on a wall, but Mr. Kearton says, "they occur in almost every conceivable situation," and gives the picture of one in the trunk of a tree; Howard Saunders gives "a hole in a wall or a tree, or often on a beam in an outbuilding." Number of eggs, four to five, dingy white, spotted with pale brown, but varying considerably.

The specimens in the case were obtained in county Merionethshire. The nesting-site of ivy and a wall being a very common one for this species, it has been selected as most effective and suitable for this family. Mr. Charles Thorpe, Naturalist, East Croydon, to whom the casing of

these birds was intrusted, has, I think, well carried out the general idea.

This species has a very wide distribution abroad, extending far to the east.

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## CASE 26.

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### THE YELLOW AND THE PIED WAGTAIL

*Order, Passeres.      Family, Motacillide.*

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#### THE YELLOW WAGTAIL.

This species is arriving on our south coast in March or April, going southward in September, and distributing itself afterwards.

I confess to having little or no knowledge of the bird; I am sure I have met with it, but generally when I have been merely on a walk without a gun. From what I can gather from ornithological books it would seem to be somewhat plentiful in England and Wales, to be in evidence in the south of Scotland, and very local in Ireland, "the district about Lough Neagh and the vicinity of Dublin being the only part in which it is known to breed up to the present time" (H.S.). The nest appears to be often made on the ground, being well concealed, or at the bottom of a wall amongst coarse herbage, or perhaps in a bank. Number of eggs—five to six; colour, whitish, mottled with various shades of brown. The bird nests early, and sometimes rears two broods.



Coots.  
Nest, with Young.



The specimens in the case were given me by my friend, Mr. Charles Thorpe, the Naturalist of East Croydon—one who knows a good deal about this particular species, and to whose charge the casing and mounting of these with the Pied Wagtail has been entrusted.

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### THE PIED WAGTAIL.

From my own observations, and from ornithological books, I should say that this is a much more common and widely distributed species than either the Grey, or even the Yellow Wagtail, for I have come across it almost everywhere. It is evidently a resident, though there is a southern movement in winter.

Mr. E. Booth, in describing the cases in the Dyke Road Museum, Brighton, wrote thus :—“ A few of these birds remain with us during the winter, though by far the greater number are only summer visitors to the British Islands. All through March and the greater part of April they may be observed on fine still mornings landing on the south coast by thousands; they never appear to be in the slightest degree fatigued or exhausted by their passage, as after alighting for a few minutes at some brackish pool, or on newly-ploughed land, they invariably continue their journey direct to the quarters they intend to take up for the summer. Although hundreds might have been observed within a mile or two of the shore during the early morning, it is seldom that

more than a pair or two will be met with after 2 o'clock in the day, the whole of the birds of passage having made their way inland."

Howard Saunders says: "These birds are generally distributed in England, ranging to the north of Scotland, where they breed, and on the approach of winter that there is a general movement all along the line in a southerly direction." The nest is made in such places as holes in banks, walls, crevices, roofs of buildings, etc., and is constructed of dry grass, moss, roots, etc., with a lining of hair and feathers. Number of eggs—four to six, colour, white, spotted with brown.

The specimens in the case, with one exception, were obtained in the pasture-lands near Barmouth, in the winter of 1906, clearly showing that these birds intended remaining with us.

The Pied Wagtail is a very noticeable and familiar object running about on our English lawns, especially where the grass is well kept. It also is amazingly fond of the companionship of cattle, who don't seem in the least to mind these little birds running about all over their bodies in search of insects, etc. It used to interest and amuse me very much to watch them.

This bird occurs in western Europe, but the White Wagtail, with which it was at one time confounded, is much more common on the Continent.



## CASE 27.

## THE GREY WAGTAIL.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Motacillidæ.*

Although this species breeds regularly in the southern counties, it is not very common, and chiefly frequents the neighbourhood of streams in mountainous and hilly ground. It is, I think, when in full plumage, the most beautiful of all our Wag-tails, and having a much longer tail than the others, presents, when running up and down boulders of rocky mountain streams with its dainty little feet, in pursuit of every sort of insect life, a very elegant and graceful appearance.

A very marked characteristic of the Grey Wag-tail is that, unlike its congeners, it makes a habit of perching on trees.

The first I ever shot was when staying with a friend at a Shooting Lodge on Loch Scammadale, about 15 miles out of Oban. Just outside this Lodge was a small burn, and one morning, seeing a Grey Wagtail, I annexed it with my little "Collectors" gun. It is the one you see on the shingle in the Swallow case, and is in quite a different plumage to the others in another case; probably this is owing to its being an older bird.

The nesting-site is, more often than not, in the bank of some rocky mountain stream, of which there are plenty in North Wales. It was in such a locality as this, with the aid of a local man, that I obtained

the specimens in the case. The nesting-sites on this mountain stream were various, some being situated in overhanging growth on the face of a cliff by the side of a cascade, whilst others might be in the root of a tree in a bank ; the latter site has been chosen for this family. Mr. Thorpe has done his best with the subject, which, to represent faithfully, is no doubt a somewhat difficult task.

According to Howard Saunders, the Grey Wag-tail has a very wide distribution abroad, being common in the mountain regions of southern Europe. Eastward, "is found in summer across Asia, south of about 67 N. latitude to Persia, Turkestan, the Himalayas, Northern China, and Japan ; wintering in India, Burmah, Palestine, and Northern Africa."

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## CASE 28.

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NIGHTINGALE, WHITETHROAT, CHIFF-  
CHAFF, WREN, WILLOW-WREN, GOLD-  
CREST, REED-BUNTING, GREAT, BLUE,  
COAL, AND LONG-TAILED TIT.

*Order, Passeres.*

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THE NIGHTINGALE.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

The Nightingale arrives on our shores from the middle to the latter end of April, returning to

southern climes in August and September. Although the song has been celebrated by writers in all ages, some persons prefer that of the Thrush or Blackbird; others, perhaps, that of the Lark or Black Cap.

Mr. W. H. Hudson, in making allusion to its particular merits or demerits, says: "The song is, nevertheless, exceedingly beautiful, its phrasing is more perfect than that of any other British melodist; and the voice has a combined strength, purity, and brilliance, probably without a parallel."

Now, the above faithfully represents this bird's great singing qualities. I have listened to its song intently under very different circumstances—on a bright sunny afternoon, when I have concealed myself in a coppice of hazel bushes, and heard the male pouring out its rapturous notes to the female, who, probably, was sitting on the nest not far off; also as late as 11 and 12 on some clear moonlight night. Under these latter conditions, viz, the stillness of the night, the soft pale moon, the starry sky, etc., when one is not too close to the bird, I think the song sounds heavenly.

In Mr. Pycraft's "Story of Bird Life," the reason he assigns for so much singing on the part of the males during courtship is, he says, "primarily for the purpose of winning a mate, and for her delectation during the period of incubation. It seems certain there exists a great deal of rivalry amongst the males of each particular species in the neighbourhood as to which shall sing best, the judges being

the females of the same species settled near the trial courts."

The nest of the Nightingale is either on the ground or close to it, under thick hedgerow bottom or thicket, or may be bank of a coppice; the materials are dry grass and leaves—number of eggs, four to five, colour, olive-brown. When the young birds are hatched the parents display great solicitude on their behalf. The males of this species, like the Redstarts, precede the females by several days. The breeding locality of the Nightingale in our islands may be said to lie south of a line drawn through the Midland counties. They are never seen either in Scotland or Ireland. In regard to the habitat abroad, in summer it may be said to occupy the southern portion of the European Continent, and in winter to go as far south as Abyssinia.

The specimens in the case were shot in the neighbourhood of the Caterham Valley; the district all round affording a very suitable habitat.

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#### THE WHITETHROAT.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

The Whitethroat is migratory and non-resident; comes to our islands much about the same time as the Nightingale, *i.e.*, latter end of April, returning, however, somewhat later, *viz.*, towards the end of September. It is much more widely distributed than the last named species, being found pretty well

over England, Wales, and Ireland, also Scotland, with the exception of the extreme north and the Hebrides. This little bird is no mean singer, though, of course, it cannot in any way be said to compare with the Nightingale. To me, however, the song is very pleasing—a babble of notes, very liquid in quality, and uttered in short snatches, finishing off very abruptly, and resumed again almost immediately.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says about this bird: "It inhabits the wood-side, the thickets, the rough common, but, of all places, prefers the thick hedge for a home. Shortly after the bird's arrival, about the middle or near the end of April, he quickly makes his presence known to any person who walks along a hedge side. The intruder is received with a startled grating note—a sound expressive of surprise and displeasure—and repeating this sound from time to time the bird flits on before him concealed from sight by the dense tangle he moves amidst; presently, if not too much alarmed, he mounts to a twig to the summit of the hedge to pour out his song—a torrent of notes uttered apparently in great excitement—with crest raised, the throat puffed out, and many odd gestures and motions. Sometimes he springs from his perch as if lifted by sheer rapture into the air, and ascends singing in a spiral, then drops swiftly back to his perch again."

The materials of the nest are grass stems, with a lining of bents and horsehair, generally placed two or three feet from the ground in the tangle of thickset

hedges, coarse herbage, furze bush, etc. ; five eggs are laid of a greenish-white blotched with grey and brown. One brood is reared.

Howard Saunders says : " This species breeds southwards throughout Europe down to the Mediterranean, etc., also the Canaries and Northern Africa are frequented in winter." Again, " Eastward it breeds in Turkestan and South-Western Siberia, wintering in Egypt, Abyssinia, and Arabia."

The specimens in the case were, I think, shot in Radnorshire, if not there, in the county of Surrey.

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#### THE CHIFFCHAFF.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

This small bird is a very plucky little chap indeed, for he braves the rigour of our English climate before many other migrants, being one of the first to arrive, about the middle of March. My experience in regard to distribution over our islands is, that Chiffchaffs are nearly everywhere, conveying to my mind that they come in flocks of countless thousands. They can't sing one little bit, but they seem to be quite satisfied with their performance, repeating over and over again the same string of notes. They always seem very contented happy birds, feeding on insects and larvæ which they obtain on the trunks and branches of trees, and singing when not eating. This song, too, unlike most of the other warblers, is continued through the summer.

Howard Saunders says: "The oval-domed nest of the Chiffchaff is generally placed near to, but a little above the ground, in rank vegetation and ferns. The entrance hole is rather nearer the top than the middle; the materials are dry grass, leaves, and moss, with an abundance of feathers as a lining. The eggs—commonly six in number, are of a pure or creamy-white, spotted with purplish-brown with underlying blotches of violet-grey."

Abroad, the Chiffchaff ranges in summer up to the Arctic circle, and as far east as the valley of the Volga, southwards to the Mediterranean region, and is more or less resident beyond the Pyrenees and Alps. The winter is spent in Africa and Western Asia.

The specimen in the case was, I think, shot in Surrey.

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### THE WILLOW WREN.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

This is one of our earliest migrants, following close upon the Chiffchaff, arriving on our coasts towards the end of March and the beginning of April. It is very widely distributed over England, Wales, and Scotland, though perhaps rather local in Ireland. It is almost a facsimile of the Chiffchaff, and only an expert could tell the difference between them, which is, that the Chiffchaff is rather the smaller of the two, duller in colour, and with darker legs. I can't say that I know the song of this warbler, but that

it has far greater merit than that of the Chiffchaff there seems to be no manner of doubt.

An extract from Mr. W. H. Hudson's "British Birds," regarding the character of the song may be of some interest. "White says it has a 'sweet plaintive note' which is but half the truth. It has a long tender delicious warble, not wanting in strength and volume, but eminently pure and sweet—the song of the Chaffinch refined and idealized. The song is perhaps in the minor key, feminine and not masculine, but it touches the heart. The song of the Willow Warbler has a dying fall, no other birds' song is so touching in this respect. It mounts up round and full, then runs down the scale and expires upon the air in a gentle murmur."

The dome-shaped nest is often on the ground, among coarse herbage, under a bush, or even in a bank, is constructed loosely of grass and lined with feathers; eggs—six to seven in number, white, blotched and spotted with reddish-brown. Two broods are generally reared. From the shape of the nest the Willow Wren is often called the "Oven-Bird." Its range extends throughout the greater part of Europe, and it also breeds in Northern Russia and Siberia.

The specimen in the case was shot in Surrey or Radnorshire.

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### THE WREN.

*Family, Troglodytidae.*

This homely little species, flitting about with cocked tail and jerky actions, so familiar to us, is



resident throughout the year; its numbers are, however, much augmented by immigrants which visit us in the autumn. The Wren, perhaps, is not quite so confiding as the Robin, in that it is more independent of help in the winter months. I mean one does not often see it coming to the window to be fed like other little birds. According to some authorities it is the reverse of being tame and unsuspecting, though I can't say that that has been my experience. As regards its favourite habitat, it seems to adapt itself to almost any sort of place. If it has a partiality, I think it would be for old wood piles and stacks of branches that have been stored for firing purposes in the winter, rotten stumps of trees, and moss-covered walls and banks; its diminutive size enabling it to penetrate and explore places where larger birds could not enter. It never seems to fail much in obtaining the sort of food it is after—such as woodlice, earwigs, and the like. Mr. W. H. Hudson regards the Wren's song as the bird's greatest charm. He says: "It is unlike that of any other British melodist—a loud, bright lyric, the fine clear high-pitched notes and trills issuing in a continuous rapid stream from beginning to end."

The nest is very large, indeed, for the size of the bird, and is constructed of moss, dead leaves, or dried ferns, and is generally made to harmonize with its general surroundings, so as not to attract the eye; the entrance is at the top; inside lining, hair and feathers; eggs—six to eight, colour, white, spotted with red. The nesting-sites are numerous;

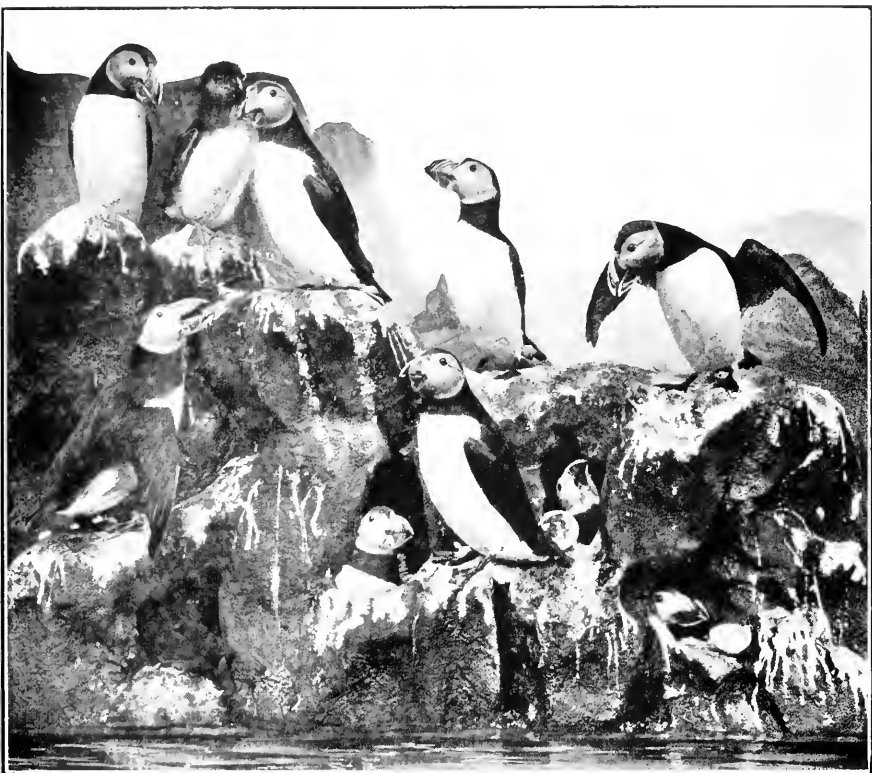
banks, porticos of houses, ivy-covered walls, old roots of trees. The Wren is a very early breeder. It is generally distributed throughout Europe, ranging to 64 deg. north of Scandinavia, and nearly as high in the north of Russia. It is also found in North Africa, and ranges eastward to Northern Persia.

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### THE GOLD-CREST.

*Family, Turdidæ.*

This pretty little wren, the smallest of our British Birds, measuring only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, is resident with us in favourable localities throughout the year, but the numbers are augmented by the immigration of countless flocks that arrive on the east coast in the autumn, and soon distribute themselves generally over the country. There are two very interesting matters in connection with this tiny species the first being the subject of immigration, the second, the character of its nest. Herr Gätke, the great authority on migration, who spent much of his life in the study of birds that passed and re-passed the Island of Heligoland says, in referring to this species, on some particular night in October, "Gold-Crests eddied as thick as flakes in a heavy snowfall . . . on the morrow literally swarming on every square foot of the island." On this same subject Howard Saunders writes, "In autumn, immense flocks sometimes arrive on our east coasts extending quite across England and the Irish Channel, and into Ireland. In 1882, a migration wave of this description



**Puffins.**  
Nesting - Sites in Cliff.



commencing on August 6th and lasting ninety-two days, reached from the Channel to the Faroes." He also speaks of other migrations, lasting eighty-two and eighty-seven days respectively, in the years 1883-1884, finally winding up this interesting subject as follows : " On such occasions, bushes and gardens on the coast are covered with birds as with a swarm of bees ; crowds flutter round the lanterns of lighthouses, and the rigging of fishing smacks in the North Sea is thronged with the weary travellers." The Gold-Crest is very common in the south of Ireland, Kerry particularly, and there, in the winter, the Irish peasant lads have the curious custom of turning out in large numbers to kill with stones as many of these little innocents on Boxing Day as they possibly can. There is some sort of superstition attaching to this, but what I don't exactly know. The nest is very large, and most beautifully constructed of moss, grasses, leaves, spiders' webs, closely felted together, the lining being of feathers ; it generally is suspended near the end of a branch of a yew or fir tree. Six to ten eggs are laid, of a yellowish-white, spotted with reddish-brown on the thick end. The Gold-Crest is generally distributed over Europe. Malta is a stopping-place on the northward migration in spring, and the southward journey in autumn.

The specimen in the case was shot in the Caterham Valley, Surrey.

## THE REED-BUNTING.

*Family, Fringillidæ.*

This species is resident with us in suitable localities in most parts of the British Islands, its favourite haunts being moist ground on the banks of small streams or ponds bordered by alders, osiers, reeds, and rushes. It is often called the Reed-Sparrow, I suppose from its shape and plumage somewhat resembling our cock Sparrow. Another local name Black - Headed Bunting, which properly belongs to a much rarer bird. The Reed-Bunting is not so common as the Yellow Hammer or Yellow Bunting. It is decidedly an active, restless little bird, flitting along the banks of the stream, sometimes perching on the reeds or a bush; its song cannot be said to be of any account.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "The nest is made near the water, on, or close to the ground, under a bush or bunch of rushes, and is composed of dried grass and leaves, and stems of aquatic plants, and lined with fibrous roots and horse hair. The eggs are four to five in number, in ground-colour dull white or grey, spotted and streaked with purplish-brown and dull grey." In autumn the resident birds are augmented by large flocks which land on the east coast from the Continent. This species is found generally throughout Europe, and in Asia extends to the valley of the Yenesei.

The specimen in the case was shot in Radnorshire.

## THE GREAT TITMOUSE.

*Family, Paridæ.*

This species is resident with us throughout the year in woods, plantations, orchards, etc., and is probably more abundant in England and Wales than in Ireland or Scotland. The Great Tit attracts the eye very quickly, not only from the brightness of its plumage but from the very peculiar habit it has when seeking for food on the branches of a tree—it invariably hangs on to the underside of the branch with its powerful claws, thus presenting an inverted or topsy-turvy sort of appearance; and some of the attitudes it assumes, when attacking the buds of a fruit tree, especially when these are at the very extremity of the branch, are very quaint. Its principal food consists of insects, grubs, all sorts of buds, etc. It is very fond of any large bone, either beef or mutton, with just a little meat left for it to pick at; in a very short space of time you will find the bone picked perfectly clean. This Tit will also tackle a lump of suet. It is a decidedly ferocious little bird, no bird of the same size—especially in an aviary—would have any chance against it. According to Howard Saunders “the Great Titmouse will attack small and weakly birds, splitting their skulls with its powerful beak in order to get at their brains, and it has even been known to serve a Bat in this manner.” I have never heard this species actually sing, but it has a variety of call-notes, very metallic, something like the sound of a blacksmith’s hammer

on his anvil. The nesting-site, though commonly in holes in walls and old timber, is, nevertheless, sometimes in such curious situations as the spout of a disused pump, letter-box in constant use, inverted flower-pots, etc. Such nests are to be seen in the Natural History Museum. The materials are moss, grass, wool, and hair, loosely put together. Sometimes, as when a hole in a tree is chosen, the eggs—from six to ten, white, spotted and blotched with reddish-brown—are laid on the decayed wood.

The Great Tit is common over Europe, and extends across Asia to the Pacific.

The specimen in the case was shot near the Caterham Valley.

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### THE BLUE TITMOUSE.

*Family, Paridæ.*

Of all the British Tits our little blue one, so beautifully marked about the head, is probably best known. It takes our fancy most from its amusing little ways when we see it pegging into a bone hung out of the window in the winter-time, or feeding with other birds on any scraps thrown out; like the preceding species, it is a veritable little dare-devil, fearing nothing from any bird nearly twice its own size. Having said so much about the Great Titmouse it is not necessary for me to make more than a passing allusion to this bird. Its distribution is wider than that of the preceding species, and I should say that it was more plentiful. Like the Great



Titmouse, it sometimes chooses extraordinary situations—the inside of a postman's letter-box being quite a favourite one; Mr. Kearton also gives "stone bottles, flower-pots and boxes, cocoa nuts hung in trees, for nesting accommodation." The composition of the nest, colour of eggs, etc., are also very similar to the Great Titmouse. There is one point of interest in connection with the hen bird when she is sitting, that is, she defends her nest with great pertinacity, hissing like a snake, and pecking at the fingers of the intruder in a way which has gained for her the name of "Billy Biter." The range outside the British Islands is much the same as in the case of the Great Titmouse.

The specimen in the case was, I think, shot in Surrey.

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#### THE COAL-TITMOUSE.

##### *Family, Paridæ.*

This Tit is resident with us and fairly well distributed over Great Britain and Ireland, though it is by no means so common as the two preceding species. Its plumage is more sombre in colour than that of the Blue Tit, and altogether it is not so attractive. Having said enough about the general characteristics of the Tit family, I will merely add a little extract from Mr. W. H. Hudson's book on the Coal-Tit's movements after the breeding-season is over. He says, "One of the most interesting winter sights in a wood composed of pine and fir growing together, with beech and other deciduous

trees, is afforded by a wandering flock of Coal-Tits. As they move from tree to tree they attract other species of similar habits, the Oxyes, and Blue and Marsh-Tits, and Gold-Crests, and Siskins, and, perhaps, a couple of Tree-Creepers. Occasionally, a party of Long-tailed Tits will join and keep with the flock some time, but the Long-tails are the most restless and vagrant of all, and eventually hurry on by themselves, leaving the more patient plodders behind. It is wonderful and very beautiful to see so many species thus drawn into companionship by a common social instinct, and by a similar manner of seeking their food."

The specimen in the case was, I think, shot near the Caterham Valley.

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#### THE LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

##### *Family, Paridæ.*

This species, to my mind, is the most comical looking of all the Tits. Take the bird's tail away and what remains would not equal in size the little Gold-Crest. The grey of this Tit's tiny head always reminded me rather of a little old man, and when the birds are hanging on to the branches of trees tucking in most assiduously either to insects on the bark or buds of the tree their appearance is, to say the least of it, very droll.

These active, busy, sociable little chaps are probably more gregarious in their habit than either the Blue or Great Tit; that is to say, when the

breeding-season is over, the parents and young keep together, thus forming a small flock. When hunting for food they generally get somewhat scattered, but on a signal to move on they all concentrate together again, following in the wake of their leader. The nest of this small species is a perfect work of art. It is of large size, situated in the middle of a thick whitethorn, holly, ivy, or furze bush, and takes a considerable time in building ; it is oval and domed-shape, composed of moss, wool, hair, lichens, etc., being thickly felted together. The entrance to it is at the side near the top, and it is lined with feathers. Usual number of eggs—six to ten, but many more have been recorded, these being probably two clutches. “When sitting the long tail of the parent bird is turned over her back and projects over her head through the entrance hole” (H.S.)

The specimen in the case was shot in Surrey.

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## CASE 29.

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SWALLOW, HOUSE-MARTIN, SAND-  
MARTIN, SWIFT, GREY WAGTAIL.

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### THE SWALLOW.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Hirundinidæ.*

The Swallow is one of our most interesting immigrants, and probably is first favourite among our spring visitors. I think I can put it best in this way: that the Swallow occupies the same place in our affection in regard to the summer that the

Robin does to the winter. When we see the first little visitor of this species does it not fill our hearts with a sort of thankfulness that the treacherous spring months are pretty well behind us, and that summer is not far off—for I think I might safely say that the advent of the Swallow means the arrival of the summer. And what graceful little birds Swallows are as they glide swiftly along, sometimes so low over the green meadow as to touch the grass, or, again, over calm sheets of water, hovering, dipping, gently touching as they skim along ; or when soaring high and circling in the air or round the edges of woods, wherever they find insect life to be most in evidence ! Who has watched their aerial evolutions and not been struck by them ? The Swallow, too, is a bird of a very domestic habit, preferring the precincts of old farm buildings, country houses with their park-enclosures, the vicinity of villages, in fact all places where human habitations exist. The species is well distributed over our islands, arriving on our south coast about the middle of April, thence extending itself northwards. It generally brings up two broods. The most favoured nesting-site is on rafters or projections in farm buildings and out-houses, or, in fact, any human habitation, though chimneys are sometimes selected ; the nest is composed of mud and straw, and what makes it so adhesive is, I believe, the saliva from the bird's mouth. The eggs—four to six in number, are usually white, spotted with brown.

Concerning the speed of the Swallow, the following extract from Mr. Pycraft's "Story of Bird Life" may be of some interest: "We have records, however, of the feats of Homing Pigeons and of Swallows. Thus Pliny tells of a certain Roman Knight who wished to convey to his friends at Volterra, in Tuscany, the results of the Chariot Races in Rome, and for this purpose took Swallows with him. A Swallow sent from Roubaix to Paris—160 miles—covered the distance in ninety minutes. If this is true, we get a speed of 106 miles per hour."

According to some authorities, the first brood of youngsters leave for southern quarters before their parents do with the second brood; the final departure of this species takes place in the latter end of September or beginning of October; about a fortnight or so before they actually do disappear the old and young birds collect themselves into large flocks; it is then interesting to watch them flying high in the air together, or to see them when settled in swarms on telegraph wires or roofs near water.

The Swallow "nests in Scandinavia, but not quite as far as the Arctic circle in Russia; eastward its breeding-range extends over Europe, Asia, north, as a rule, of the great mountain ranges, and Northern Africa; while during winter it is found throughout the Indian region as far as Burmah and Malayan Peninsula, and all over Africa" (H.S.).

Some of the specimens were shot near the Caterham Valley, and others in Wales.

## THE HOUSE-MARTIN.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Hirundinidæ.*

The House-Martin arrives on the south-east coast very shortly after the Swallow, and is well distributed over the British Islands, with the exception of Ireland and the north of Scotland where it is not so abundant. The House-Martin associates very much with the Swallow, and when you see them whirling and circling about in the sky together it is often rather difficult to detect which is which. There are, however, one or two distinguishing marks, the House-Martin is the smaller of the two, the tail is less forked, and, easiest mark of all is the patch of white colour on the lower portion of the back. When you see this last you may be certain about the bird. The aerial evolutions of the House-Martin are not so sweeping in their character as those of the Swallow. House-Martins seem to work in smaller circles, and in a more confined area, so to speak; but, nevertheless, it is a pretty sight to watch the graceful way in which they pursue the insects in the air on a calm still morning or evening, when there are plenty of them about. These birds have a very clever method of steering themselves in the air, principally with their wings, which they open and close as may be expedient. This species is sociable, like the Swallow, not afraid of man, preferring to be near him as evidenced by the confiding manner in which he plasters his mud composed structure of quarter saucer-shaped-looking nest against the walls of his house—in a manner very

similar to that of the Swallow. The eggs—four to five in number, are pure white; two to three broods are reared. This species, if the autumn be fine and there is no sign of early winter, often remains behind beyond the prescribed time for its departure, which is usually about the middle of October.

“ It breeds throughout Europe as far up as 70° N. in Scandinavia, and is found during the breeding-season in North Western India, Turkestan, Persia, Palestine, and Asia Minor. It also breeds abundantly in North Africa, visits the Canaries and Madeira, and probably winters in Central Africa ” (H.S.).

The specimens in the case were shot in Surrey.

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### THE SAND-MARTIN.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Hirundinidæ.*

This, the smallest British member of the family is also one of the earliest of the migrants, often arriving towards the end of March. It is fairly well diffused over our islands, though distribution is partial and only in those localities which favour its breeding-habits, which are totally unlike those of the two preceding species. Being averse from human habitations and the sociability of man, it seems to preserve its wild nature, preferring to build in lonely spots—such as the banks of gravel-pits or sand-banks, cliffs on the banks of rivers or lakes, sea cliffs, etc., ; the nest is, however, very interesting. These birds breed in colonies together, and proceed by boring a

number of small holes in these banks to a depth of two to three feet, slanting upwards, with just sufficient aperture to admit of ingress and egress. It is a marvel to most people how they manage to bore inwards to the extent they do. Mr. W. H. Hudson says : " They do not work by digging into the earth with their bills as a man digs with a knife or other implement ; they perch against the surface and pick out small particles, and by means of this slow laborious process accomplish their great work."

The nest, of dry grass, and lined with feathers, is placed at the end of the tunnel in a somewhat wider space. Eggs—four to six in number ; colour, white. Two broods are generally reared. This member of the Swallow family being the earliest to arrive is also the first to depart ; this it does about the beginning of September.

It has a very wide range abroad, which may be almost said to embrace the best part of the world.

One of the specimens in the case was shot, I think, in Surrey, the other in Radnorshire.

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#### THE SWIFT.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Cypselidæ.*

The Swift arrives on our south coast towards the latter end of April, *i.e.*, much about the same time as the House-Martin. It is fairly well distributed throughout England, Wales, Ireland, and the southern part of Scotland, but further north it is very irregular, and in the Hebrides decidedly rare. It is not a



Swallow in any sense, its nearest allies being the Humming Birds. The shape of the Swift—if you observe it carefully—seems made for rapid flight through the air; the beautifully strong bow-like wings, the forked tail, the long narrow-shaped body; the whole so symmetrically knit together; is it any wonder that it is able to outpace in speed any of the Swallows? These birds generally go in bunches together, six to a dozen or so—never, or hardly ever, in large flocks. They are very partial to village church steeples and towers, and are most wonderful in their powers of remaining on the wing from early morning to late at night on a fine summer's evening. Who that has watched them as they dart past, in clusters of fives or sixes, like a streak of lightning, generally squealing or screeching, has not been amazed at their rapidity?

Mr. W. H. Hudson, in estimating the pace of the Swift, says: "If we consider his rate of speed and the number of hours he spends on the wing it would be within the mark to say that the Swift, in a sense, puts a girdle round the earth two or three times a month."

It would appear that Swifts return to their favourite old spots every year, and few are there of our English towns and villages that are not acquainted with one of our most favoured summer visitors. The Swift's nest is a combination of grass, straw, and feathers, all collected on the wing; and made to adhere together by the saliva from the bird's mouth. The most usual nesting-sites are

“holes under eaves of cottages and other buildings, in church towers, crevices in sea cliffs, quarries, chalk-pits, and hollow trees, to which it returns year after year” (H.S.).

Only two eggs are laid, white in colour; and a single brood is reared. The parents with their young leave us about the end of August to the beginning of September. This species is found “in Scandinavia up to 70 deg. northern latitude. In Russia as far as Archangel; in Siberia it has occurred at Omsk, and breeds regularly in Mongolia, Northern China, and Asia, generally to the north of the Himalayas and other great ranges” (H.S.).

The specimens in the case were shot in Radnorshire.

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## THE GREY WAGTAIL.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Motacillidæ.*

This species is dealt with elsewhere, in Case 27 page 135.

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## CASE 30.

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### MEADOW, TREE, AND ROCK-PIPITS.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Motacillidæ.*

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#### MEADOW-PIPIT.

This species, commonly known as “Titlark,” is widely distributed over the British Islands all the

year round. It is found in almost every sort of locality—pasture, cultivated and waste, to high moorlands in the summer; in winter, however, the bird leaves the higher lands, and may be found near the seashore and tidal creeks.

From ornithological books it would appear that the Meadow-Pipit was at one time supposed to be closely allied to the Lark family, but the latest authorities class it with the Wagtails. It is sombre-looking in plumage, the prevailing colours being a mixture of olives and browns—as are all Pipits more or less—therefore it is not very noticeable. In movement it has much the character of the Lark, running about amongst grassy lands in search of insects; and when it indulges in song it rises to some forty to fifty feet in the air in manner very similar to the Tree-Pipit, and slowly descends again with outspread wings.

The chief interest, to my mind, however, about this species seems to lie in the fact that it is the bird into whose nest the Cuckoo so often deposits one of its eggs. On the first arrival of the Cuckoo the Meadow-Pipit may be seen in company acting as a sort of page, and this is certainly a very interesting study. As soon as the young Cuckoo is hatched out, he makes it his business to monopolise the nest for himself, turning everything else out; then the foster-parents rear him up and do not leave him till he is well able to take care of himself. I have seen one of these Titlarks feeding a young Cuckoo who was well able to fly.

In regard to the nest, I quote Mr. W. Swaysland: "It is commonly built of dry grass, lined with fine fibres of grass and moss and a little hair; it is found upon the ground, under a tuft of grass or on the bank of a field, or on the side of a railway cutting, and not uncommonly upon the beach under some dried weeds. Four or five eggs are laid, which are light brown, much mottled with a darker shade, especially near the larger end." This species has a very wide distribution abroad, embracing three Continents. The specimens in the case were shot in some grass fields near the seashore by Barmouth in the winter season.

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#### THE TREE-PIPIT.

This species is migratory, arriving in our country early in April, and departing again in September or October.

From what I can gather, it is not so abundant or so generally distributed in the British Isles as the Meadow-Pipit, being, however, fairly well distributed in England, but only partial in Scotland, not very common in Wales, and practically unknown in Ireland. It is found—as the name would imply—more in localities where there is plenty of woodland. One summer, when in North Wales, I watched several of these little birds in breeding-season. The male bird at such times generally selects a tree near where the hen is sitting on the nest, and seems to be in a constant state of soaring up into the sky from its perch



**Razor Bills,**  
Cliff Scene.



some thirty or forty feet, and, hovering in the air for a while with outspread wings, it pours forth a very pretty little song which it continues as it descends and until it has resumed its old place.

The habits of this little bird are so much those of the Meadow-Pipit in regard to food, etc., that I do not propose to say anything more on that matter. A nest that was shown to me was built in a grassy bank which formed the boundary of a lawn-tennis ground, and contained young; it was well concealed. The eggs of this species, four to six in number, vary much in colour: in regard to this variety Howard Saunders says, "Greyish-white mottled with deep brown; others are rich reddish-brown, some are almost lilac-pink, and, again, a not uncommon variety resembles the eggs of the Reed-Bunting."

The Tree-Pipit appears to be pretty well distributed over the Continent as a breeding-species, and also to be in evidence, either as a migrant or winter resident, on the northern portion of Africa, extending to Egypt, Nubia, Abyssinia, and in summer to Siberia.

The specimens were obtained in North Wales. Of the three species shown, this one is the slenderest and most graceful, having some oblique markings at the side of the neck.

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#### THE ROCK-PIPIT.

This, the largest of the three British species of Pipits, is resident with us and is pretty well distributed over our islands in localities suitable to its

habits, that is, on coast lines where rocks and boulders abound. It is probably more plentiful on the west coast of Scotland than elsewhere, and there I obtained two or three specimens which were handed over to a Manchester taxidermist who eventually retired from business, having a lot of my birds in his charge at the time. In the general wind-up and settlement of my claims these particular birds appear to have been lost. Wishing, however, to complete my case of Pipits, and there being no time left for me to add these birds by collecting them personally, I accepted the specimen you see from Mr. Thorpe, Naturalist, East Croydon. These birds do not, as a rule, collect in flocks, but run about amongst the boulders of rocks in pairs; their food consists of marine insects, flies, and crustaceans, and the nest is more often placed in the crevices of rocks than anywhere else.

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### CASE 31.

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#### THE SKYLARK.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Alaudidæ.*

Who is not well acquainted with this favourite songster—recalling, as it does, the scenes of childhood's days, when we used to wander about in the green meadows amongst the buttercups and daises, on some glorious spring day, and listen to and watch the Lark soaring, as it were, to heaven's gates



till lost to view? Who does not remember the emotions it stirred in our little hearts in those childhood days when all seemed glad around us; Oh what a joyous song it is! so full of melody and variety—a song that has been immortalized by poets.

On this subject, Mr. W. Swaysland says: “The song of the Skylark seems completely identified with our ideas of the country, both in the early morning and at dewy eve; and it is not in the least surprising that poets of every grade of merit should have made it the subject of their composition and sung its praises in their most graceful lines.”

This species is very abundant, breeds in our islands, the resident birds being further augmented by huge flocks which arrive from the Continent. The nest, placed on the ground, composed of grasses, etc., is generally very well concealed in a hollow among growing crops or under the shelter of some tuft, clod of earth, etc. The eggs—three to five in number, are dull grey, thickly mottled and often zoned with olive-brown. The food consists of insects, worms, with a considerable quantity of seeds of various kinds” (H.S.).

This species has an extremely wide distribution abroad, embracing the Eastern Hemisphere.

The specimens were obtained in North Wales.

**CASE 32.**

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LAND-RAIL, WATER-RAIL, BAILLON'S  
CRAKE, SPOTTED CRAKE.

*Order, Fulicariæ. Family, Rallidæ.*

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## THE LAND-RAIL.

This species, also called the Corncrake, is, no doubt, very familiar to most of us, and is plentifully and widely distributed over the British Islands in suitable localities, such as heavy grass lands before being mown, cornfields, clover fields, etc. It arrives in the latter end of April, departing again in October, although instances are on record where the birds have remained—this applies, however, to Ireland rather than to England. When I hear this bird calling in the long grass or cornfields in the summer months, the nearest approach to the sound to me is as though you had a fishing reel in your hand and commenced to pull off some of the line in short jerks.

In regard to the peculiarities of this note, I think what Mr. W. Swaysland says about it is interesting: "The note of the Land-Rail is familiar to all who love and frequent the country; and it commonly happens that in the calm, still, twilight of a summer's evening the discordant 'Crake, crake, crake,' of this bird is the only sound to break the silence or indicate that any portion of the animal world is still awake. The note is distinctly ventriloquial,

and although the bird may be close to the listener yet it seems quite impossible to decide from which quarter the sounds proceed, almost every series of crakes appearing to come from a different direction."

I agree in the main with the foregoing, but am rather of opinion that the difficulty of locating the exact spot whence the crake proceeds is due less to ventriloquism than to the constant shifting of the bird's position when running rapidly through the grass, and either replying to other birds or calling to its mate on the nest. This species, like all the Rails in fact, skulks in cover, and is very trying to any setter because it is impossible almost to really fix it satisfactorily. Its flight is lumbering and slow, legs dangling behind it; and when it gets up after shooting such a bird as a Partridge it is very apt to be missed. One of the specimens in the case I shot in Wales or in Devonshire, the other was given to me by Mr. Hine.

Howard Saunders says, "the principal winter-quarters of this species is Africa"; apart from this, however, its distribution abroad is very wide indeed.

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#### THE WATER-RAIL.

This species cannot, I think, be looked upon as rare, but owing to its skulking habits in marsh-lands where ditches, small ponds, sedges, or slow running streams exist, it is not nearly so often seen as it otherwise might be.

It is one of the hardest birds to put up on the wing, and one of the most puzzling and trying to sporting dogs, for it will double back, dodge, and resort to any artifice sooner than fly out into the open. When forced, however, by some energetic not-to-be-denied spaniel to take flight, *i.e.*, when taken unawares, or driven into some corner from which there is no escape, the bird gets up in a lumbering sort of way with legs dangling down, and flying very slowly drops down again into the nearest cover of which it quickly avails itself. Hearing the shots of the guns around it, and knowing its own weakness in regard to flight, are probably the reasons why this bird sticks so closely to cover.

It is more common in England in suitable localities, such as the Fen District, or Norfolk Broads, than elsewhere, but, at the same time, Howard Saunders says that "In Scotland it is found on the mainland and also on the outlying islands," etc. Again, "In Ireland it is also sedentary though more frequently remarked in winter."

I have found the species very plentiful in Pembrokeshire when shooting Snipe in the winter. I had several of them set up, but owing to the birds not being cased for a long time the moth got into them, thus rendering them valueless. The present specimens were given me by Mr. W. R. Hine, Naturalist, Southport, as I had neither the time nor the opportunity to shoot any more myself.

Mr. W. Swaysland says in regard to this species, that its voice "is a discordant croak uttered usually

in the evenings," and that it "much resembles the note of the Land-Rail." He also says that the bird is "abundant in Holland, France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, and occasionally in the summer in Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands."

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#### BAILLON'S CRAKE.

Though I have no personal knowledge of this bird, the specimen having been obtained from Mr. Hine, Naturalist, Southport, I should say that it is a very rare species, and worth having in any collection.

The best authority I can quote is Howard Saunders, who says that it is "named after the distinguished naturalist of Abbeville, is rather more irregular in its visits to England than the Little Crake. . . . There is no evidence that the bird is a resident. . . . Besides Norfolk, in which about ten specimens have been obtained, it has occurred in Suffolk, Derbyshire, Somersetshire, Cornwall, three times in Yorkshire, and once in the Isle of Man. . . . In Ireland only two authenticated instances are known, both of them from the south. It frequents small marshes and pools; evening and daybreak are almost the only times when it is to be seen, and, if disturbed, runs like a water rat rather than take wing."

The specimen, I am told, was shot near Derby.

## THE SPOTTED CRAKE.

I do not propose saying much about this species, for I really know nothing about the bird myself, never having met with it, but accepted it from Mr. Hine, Naturalist, Southport, as I thought it a pity not to make the case of Rails as complete as I could. "This species, smaller in size than the Land-Rail, is also a summer visitor to the United Kingdom, but owing to the drainage of the fens and the reclamation of marsh-land is far less plentiful than formerly. It usually appears in May and departs in October. Owing to its skulking habits, the Spotted Crake is often supposed to be rarer than is really the case ; though very local, it breeds in East Anglia, the Humber, Trent, and Solway Districts, Durham and Northumberland, as well as in several of the southern counties and among the bogs of Breconshire, in Wales. To Ireland it is a rare visitor, usually in autumn" (Howard Saunders).

The specimen, Mr. Hine tells me, was shot near Ormskirk.

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 CASE 33.
 

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## THE GREYLAG AND BEAN GOOSE.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

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 THE GREYLAG.

Of all the wild geese that are found in the British Islands the Greylag is the only species that

remains with us to breed. Formerly it was much more generally distributed than it is in the present day, being found in Lincolnshire, below the Humber, and on our east coast ; whereas now it is principally confined—so far as breeding localities are concerned—to the north-west counties of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides, it being most abundant in the latter. From this Goose our domestic race is supposed to have sprung. According to Professor Skeat, the trivial name indicates that it is the Grey Goose which in former days “lagged” behind to breed in our fens when its congeners had betaken themselves to more northerly regions (H.S.).

The nest is generally made in coarse grass and heather, often on an island in a Scotch loch ; no lining is used until after the eggs are laid, then the female surrounds them with down plucked from her breast. They are usually five to six in number. In regard to the nesting-habit of this species, Mr. W. H. Hudson says : “During incubation the gander keeps guard over his mate and afterwards assists her in rearing her young. These are led back to the nest by the goose and sleep under her wing.”

The Greylag feeds principally on grass and other vegetable matter, and in the time of the crops consumes an immense amount of grain, coming down in large flocks in the day-time—if undisturbed. I have seen them in great numbers in South Uist. The specimen in the case was

obtained in 1891, on the same island where I got the Sheld-Ducks and the Mergansers. My ghillie and myself were out one day in our sea-boat exploring all round, and had landed on some high ground above high water-mark. On either side of us—so far as I can remember—were creeks from which the tide had partially ebbcd, leaving behind a lot of seaweedy boulders.

From the head of one of these creeks two large birds got up on the wing, and passed where I was standing at about forty yards off. I recognised at once they were Wild-Geese, and, putting up my gun, let drive, taking the leading bird of the two. Nothing, however, fell! I had well drilled it into the head of my Ghillie Mac that because a bird does not come down at once it does not at all follow that it is not badly wounded, and that, therefore, whenever I fired a shot he was to keep sight of the birds flying away as long as he could—until they had entirely disappeared. This advice proved useful in the present instance, for after watching some time he said “I can see only one bird going away in the distance.” “Now,” I replied, “if that is so, then one must be down; that’s sure enough.” So I instructed him to run on ahead, taking the direction of the bird’s flight; this was attended with satisfactory results, for, after having advanced some little distance, he saw through his glasses a curious looking object on a promontory or island, I forget which. On getting nearer it turned out to be the bird you see in the



case. Luckily, it had fallen close to the water's edge, and lay quite dead with wings outspread.

To show the vitality of this bird, I may add that although shot through the head it had managed to carry away the shot for a considerable distance as if nothing had happened.

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#### THE BEAN GOOSE.

This species, like the White-Fronted Goose, is only a visitor to the British Islands in the autumn and winter months, returning to more northern latitudes in early spring for breeding purposes. It is more plentiful in the south and west of Ireland than either in England or Scotland, the most favoured spot in the former probably being Cornwall, and in the latter, certain parts of the mainland and some of the western islands. It is of elegant shape, weighs two to three pounds more than the White-Fronted, is altogether a larger bird, and may easily be distinguished from any other of its congeners by the black nail at the tip of the bill, whence, I imagine the prefix of Bean has arisen. My ghillie, John Sullivan, used to call these Wild-Geese the "Big Scotch Geese"; said they always arrived on the bogs belonging to the Marquis of Lansdowne after the others had come in, and that you could always distinguish them from the others by their larger size.

I will now say something about the specimen you see in the case, which was obtained in the same year and in the same general surroundings as the

White-Fronted in Case 34. Pretty well half the winter season had passed before the faithful John reported that the "Big Scotch Geese" were in; so one day, when driving over the bogs *en route* for the beat I had selected for that day for Snipe and Woodcock, I came across five or six of these birds feeding on the bogs some little distance away from a much larger flock of White-Fronted.

Luckily, I had my 10-bore single-barrelled gun with me that day, so I got down from the car and proceeded to stalk them. By the aid of peat-stacks, and deep cuttings, banks, etc., I was enabled to get within 100 yards or so of this little flock. Two of their number were standing rather closer together than the rest: I therefore took these and fired, one out of which flew about 200 yards and then dropped, the other John thought was wounded and therefore followed a long distance after it, but was never able to make anything more of it.

In following after this other bird John completely lost his reckoning of where the first fell—presumably dead—and, although I was pretty confident in my own mind where it had come down, I couldn't for the life of me find it when I went to search. You would hardly have thought it possible that such a large bird could escape being seen lying on an open bog, yet so it was. We had almost given it up in despair having been searching for about half an hour, when all at once I stumbled across the bird lying between two tussocks of what is termed in Ireland "broken bog"; these tussocks are sometimes as

much as two to three feet in height, so that falling exactly between two of them it could not be seen, unless you walked over the exact spot. I had been right all the time in regard to where the Goose fell, and John quite out of it—the only time I ever knew him to make a mistake. This was a great feather in my cap, and you may be sure John got pretty well chaffed about it.

Howard Saunders says in regard to this bird's habitat abroad: "It breeds in considerable numbers in Scandinavia to the north of latitude 64 deg., and also in North Russia. Messrs. Seebohm and Harvie Brown found it nesting on the 'tundras' of the Petchora; and at Dvoinik on July 27th several hundred old Geese and about as many young were observed marching like a regiment of soldiers, most of them being in full moult and unable to fly. Eastward we trace it in summer across Arctic Siberia; while large flocks visit China and Japan in winter."

Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, the great authority on Wild-Fowl, says: "That Bean Geese are very restless in their habit, being much influenced by the changes of temperature—that during frosts they go to tidal waters. Continued rain and wind keep them inland; a north wind unsettles them; a north-east wind again will bring them to the coast in anticipation of frost; a change and they are on their travels once more."

I cannot conclude what I have written about these three different species of Wild-Geese with-

out making mention of two very interesting characteristics of Wild-Geese in general. The first is, the way they fly when going on long distances; the second, the way they feed. Well, in both they are regular old soldiers!

The usual formation in flight is something like the shape of a V, but they do not confine themselves by any means to this particular formation; far from it, for they go through several military manœuvres, front forming into line being one of them; and I shouldn't be surprised if they threw out flanking parties from the main body. In regard to the second point, they never feed in flocks without posting sentinels all round them on higher ground to warn them of the approach of danger. So you see the whole system of these interesting birds is military.

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### CASE 34.

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#### THE WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This Goose, with the exception perhaps of the Bernacle, is about the handsomest of those that visit us regularly every year from northern latitudes. The time of their arrival is generally towards the end of October, and they leave us again about the end of March for breeding purposes.

In the winter of 1902-3 I was staying in Water-ville, county Kerry, at the Bay View Hotel, the

proprietor of which, Mr. Timothy Galvin, rented, principally from the Marquis of Lansdowne, about 63,000 acres of bog and mountain rough shooting; some of which was very good for Snipe and Woodcock—a sport I am passionately fond of. Given a couple of good Irish setters, an energetic ghillie who is naturally as fond of sport as his master, and thoroughly acquainted with all the places where good bags are likely to be made, I think that Snipe and Woodcock shooting under such conditions requires some beating.

Well, I had those essential requisites at Waterville—two good Irish setters of my own, Jock and Paddy, and John Sullivan, as my ghillie. Now, in regard to John Sullivan, who accompanied me on many a sporting expedition, I have nothing but the warmest admiration for his many inestimable qualities as a first-class sportsman in every sense of that word. I have been with a good many ghillies since my retirement from the Service, and I can honestly say that, go where you may, either in Scotland or Ireland, you won't beat John Sullivan, of "Beenbane," Waterville. His knowledge of the most likely ground on this very extensive shooting was most marvellous, and his memory just as good in regard to exact localities where good bags of Snipe and Woodcock had been made in previous years by different sportsmen. He had an eye like a Hawk, and if your bird, whether Snipe or Woodcock, happened to get wounded and fly away to a considerable distance, John would hardly ever fail to

mark the spot where you would either find the bird dead, or else you would be able to polish it off by giving it another shot. Many and many a bird has John saved for me in this way.

You must pardon this digression on my part, reader, for I feel it would not be justice to introduce you to the White-Fronted Goose without first of all giving you an introduction to my old friend John.

In the year mentioned I arrived at Waterville, I think, somewhere about the end of October, and although my principal object was Snipe and Woodcock shooting, I had set my heart on obtaining, if possible, some additions to my collection in the shape of Wild-Geese; so John was instructed to inform me of their arrival on the bogs as soon as they were in evidence—since when they first come in they usually will let you approach them more easily than after they have been in a week or two. As far as my memory serves me, John reported them on the bogs about the beginning of November; so then, without any delay, I made my first attempt.

There was a large flock of them on an open bog a few miles away from the hotel, but owing to the very openness of the country all round and the absence of anything like cover by which I might possibly get within gunshot I was obliged to resort to the old Indian style of stalking, which is by walking round and round in a circle and keeping on narrowing the radius of it till within range. This I tried, but found in the case of these birds that, although they could not be said to be wild, they



**White-fronted Geese.**  
Irish Valley Scene.





were still just cute enough to know pretty well the effective range of a gun.

Before continuing, I think it may be as well to say that, Waterville being the principal station for the American cables, there were a great many clerks there in connection with the several companies, and that amongst them there were not a few who were very fond of sport and possessed fowling-pieces of various calibres. Now my little 16 bore gun, although excellent for the purpose of shooting Woodcock and Snipe, was not at all suitable for such birds as Wild-Geese, being not nearly powerful enough. Luckily, however, wherever there was a man in Waterville who possessed a gun John generally knew him, so I instructed him to get me the loan of a larger bored gun if he could from amongst some of his telegraph clerk friends. This he did, procuring me a 12 bore, choked in both barrels; a wonderfully hard hitting gun according to the owner's account.

Some days after this I decided upon giving up one whole day's Snipe and Woodcock shooting in order that the time be exclusively devoted to the Geese; so on that particular day John and myself made an early start in an Irish jaunting car with the intention of searching all the bogs on Galvin's ground for Geese, wherever roads would admit of our driving across them.

We had driven pretty well the whole of one morning without seeing any, and John had left the car to go and look on some higher ground which lay to the left of us, and could not be seen from the

road, when, after the lapse of only a few minutes, as the car continued along the road at a walk, the driver—perched up as he was on his seat—suddenly shouted in a sort of hoarse whisper “The Geese, sorr! the Geese!” I said, “Where?” Then, as he pointed almost at a right angle on the right of the road to a hollow that lay about 150 yards off, one Goose’s head could be seen just above a sort of embankment there was, that concealed the rest of the flock from our view. When I saw where they were I said “Drive on, drive on, for goodness sake go on or they will all be off,” or something to that effect. When we got about 300 yards further along the road, I got out of the car and thought I would try and stalk them, so, putting on a pair of seaman’s oilskin trousers over my own, I went down on my hands and knees and tried to get near them on the soaking wet bog; but the birds were a considerable distance from me, and my mode of progression so slow, and the whole thing so laborious in these crackling sailor’s oilskins, that after going some distance like this I gave up the idea and thought I would await John’s return and consult him. I had not long to wait. On thinking the matter over, we decided the best plan would be to turn the car round, drive back—the driver to get off his seat and all three of us walk on the reverse side, *i.e.*, keep the car between us and them, then as soon as we got opposite to the place where they were the car was to keep going on, whilst we made a run as fast as we could, stooping as much as possible, till we got to

the embankment, behind which we expected to find most of the flock. Like this we got to within sixty or seventy yards of them, when up got a fine flock of some twenty-five to thirty birds. I had No. 4 shot in my right barrel and B.B. in the left; the chance was one that never comes a second time. I had plenty of time to think which barrel I would give them, as they seemed so uncommonly slow after Snipe; so, when they had got well into the air, and having got the heads and necks of about half-a-dozen well covered, I pulled the trigger of the left barrel, when what do you think happened? Why a miss-fire! Nice wasn't it, reader? Would you have lost your temper do you think? I think it quite possible you might have done. This result, so utterly unexpected, I must say flurried me, but there was another flock a little on the left of me which rose a second or so later than those I had just fired at, so turning round towards them, I let them have my right barrel with No. 4; the result was not apparent at first, for they all flew away quite unconcernedly, when lo, and behold! one began to separate himself from the rest of the flock, proving clearly to our minds that he was wounded.

John instantly became very excited, for as we watched the bird got lower and lower till at last he came thump down on the bog about a quarter of a mile away. John said "He's down, Colonel, he's down! I have him marked, get ready, quick, or the budd (as he called it) will get into the river." So we hurried along over the bog, I in

my oilskin sailor bags, which handicapped me immensely. When we got near the spot where the bird came down, John kept pointing with his stick and ejaculating "Be ready"; "Being ready" was, after all, not required, for the Goose had fallen dead, and lay with outstretched wings, the most beautiful male bird you ever saw—the deep orange bill and legs contrasting so strikingly with the rest of the plumage. Had my first barrel not missed fire I should have had four or five of them.

When I brought the bird back to the Bay View Hotel, Mrs. Galvin said she had never seen so handsome a one brought in by any visitor. The second White-Fronted Goose was obtained in a bog not far away from the spot where I got the first. It was some little time afterwards, and my gun, instead of a double-barrelled twelve bore, was a single-barrelled ten bore, which gave me a chance at a longer range.

Whenever going out for my day's Snipe shooting I used invariably to take this gun with me in case I might come across any Geese. Well, one day I saw them on the side of the bog near the road, about 130 to 140 yards off, so I got off the car, walked on the off side of it, then ran in as near as I could, and took my shot at about 110 yards, as they rose on the wing; this bird acted in almost the same manner as the first, *i.e.*, continued with the flock for a time, then separated, falling dead about a quarter of a mile off.

Both specimens were shot in the head.

This species is sometimes called the Laughing Goose. In regard to its habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says: "It is not known to nest in Norway or Sweden, yet in winter it visits their coasts, as well as those of Denmark and Western Europe as far as the Mediterranean. It is also found inland, and from its breeding-places in Arctic Russia it migrates down the Volga and other great river-valleys to Egypt, Syria, and Nubia. It is supposed to have had a share in the origin of our tame stock, for it was domesticated by the ancient Egyptians, as shown by its admirable portraiture in paintings from a slab from Meydoun and on others in the temple of Amada in Nubia."

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## CASE 35.

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### THE WIGEON.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

Immense flocks of this species arrive on our shores from the middle of September onwards, and distribute themselves over the British Islands in seaways and tidal waters, around the western islands of Scotland—particularly in certain parts of the Hebrides, where they are literally in thousands; the same also may be said of some parts of the south-west coast of Ireland.

The bulk of these birds depart again in the latter end of March, but still a few remain to breed. The

localities, as given by Howard Saunders, are the greater part of Sutherlandshire, where they are fairly plentiful; Ross, Caithness, Cromarty, Perthshire, and Selkirkshire, where they are in lesser numbers. "In Ireland, Mr. A. G. More states: 'That a few pairs nest in Counties Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, Mayo, and probably on the lakes of the Shannon.' The nest, placed in a tuft of rushes, coarse herbage, or heather, is warmly lined with down, and usually contains from seven to ten eggs of a rich cream colour. The food—procured by day when the birds are undisturbed, but otherwise by night—consists of grasses with other vegetable matter found on oozy shores" (Howard Saunders).

Before saying anything in regard to the circumstances under which the specimens in the case were obtained, the reader must pardon me if I make some allusion to the sporting quarters where I was staying at the time. The place I wish now to speak about is Glenbeigh, co. Kerry. The hotel there in years gone by—very unpretentious as it used to be, but comfortable withal—was kept by a dear old lady of the name of Shea. She was known over the country round as the type of all that is best in the Irish character for giving you a hearty welcome when you came to stay with her; her name, too, was a guarantee that you would get cleanliness in every department in her hotel, combined with good board and moderate charges; no wonder then that she was much patronized by sportsmen in olden times. Whilst I am speaking about Mrs. Shea, it is very

fitting that I should mention another old lady named Mrs. Breen, who kept a sporting hotel at Glencar, a few miles off, principally confined to salmon and peel fishing during the spring and summer months, also a little Woodcock and Snipe shooting in the winter months. Well, these were the two sporting hotels in that part of Ireland, and the only two with any real merit. If either of these two old ladies happened to be full up she would send her visitors over to the other place, whichever it might happen to be, for it really didn't matter very much as both were sporting places, and equally comfortable. To sum up these two, Mrs. Shea and Mrs. Breen, you could hardly think of the one without thinking of the other.

As regards Glenbeigh Hotel as it is nowadays, instead of being unpretentious as it used to be, it has been immensely enlarged and brought up-to-date, being capable of giving satisfaction to the most exacting visitor. This is all due to the old lady's thrift and good management in the past; for what with the extension of the railway to Cahirciveen, and also that suitable ranges had been found near her hotel for artillery practice, about six or eight weeks of every year she had her place filled with artillery and other officers superintending the shooting, and in this way, no doubt, she was enabled to make a nice little pile.

Having thus introduced you to Mrs. Shea and her hotel, I will now go on to the specimens.

In the winter of 1893-94, I think it was, there was a sporting young fellow whom we will call N.—that

being the first letter of his name—with his two sisters staying in the hotel. This said N. and myself, having somewhat similar tastes, used to go out Duck fighting together in the short November and December evenings, one of our favourite haunts being a concrete wall—a sort of breakwater—six or eight feet thick, that ran out to a distance of some 200 yards into a sort of estuary. Over this wall came Ducks of two or three different kinds from the open sea just as daylight was on the wane. Our plan was to place ourselves in a sitting posture at a distance of 50 yards from each other, and wait for our shots; we were by no means the only two on that wall of an evening. There was one essential, viz., a good retrieving spaniel, and that N. possessed, as without it anything that did not fall on the wall itself would be lost, being carried out by the tide.

Another favourite place was on the estuary itself, on what was called the “slob”—that is a sort of slimy ooze left by the tide. This food the Ducks were extremely fond of, and whenever the tide was sufficiently out and fitted in with our time of day for shooting, *i.e.*, daylight disappearing, N. and I used to go down and take up positions on the said “slob”—our plan being to take a square board each, on which we sat, and also a good sized pole, to which we affixed a hurricane lantern, sticking the same into the mud in order to give us our bearings off this somewhat dangerous ground, rendered much more so when the tide was an incoming instead of an outgoing one. The most tricky time of all was when



there was a strong wind behind a tide which was within one to one and a half hours of becoming full. Then sometimes the situation would resolve itself thus : lantern extinguished by force of wind, and tide blown into and filling up channels before the proper time, thus destroying all land-marks and bearings for getting on to dry land. I remember once we found ourselves in the very unpleasant position just described, and very glad were we when we were able to place our feet upon *terra firma* once more.

The drake standing in the case with his wings slightly raised I got on the "slob"; so far as I remember, I was by myself on this occasion, and he was one of the first that came in that evening. The two other specimens were got with Michael Casey, a boat-builder who lived at a place called Cremorne, about five miles from Glenbeigh. This man had a very nice single-handed punt-gun, which had been left him as a sort of legacy by a gentleman whom he used to accompany on his punt-gunning expeditions after Wild-Fowl in the winter months, till at last he (the owner) was obliged to give up the sport owing to rheumatism and other ailments that followed on as the result of exposure. The Wigeon is one of the commonest Ducks of Europe and Northern Asia, extending to Northern Africa and India in the winter. There is no bird that offers such attraction to the punt-gunner. The call-note is a sort of whistle, which sounds like "Whee-you."

## CASE 36.

## THE BRENT GOOSE.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This Goose seems to be far more abundant, and to have a wider and more general distribution over the British Islands than any other of the different species that visit us during the autumn and winter months. Its most favoured localities appear to be the north-east coast of England, the Orkneys, and Shetlands, and in many places on the Irish coast. It is essentially a marine species, seldom coming inland unless wounded. It feeds generally in the early mornings and evenings in tidal waters on mud-flats and sand-banks, on sea-wrack and other aquatic weed brought in by the tide; the position I have seen them in being one with just sufficiency of water to enable them to stand and feed with their heads and necks submerged. I have seen the water almost black with countless numbers of these Geese standing and feeding in salt water in this way.

Now I must say something about the specimens in the case, and the reader must pardon me if I make a little digression. I had been staying at Glenbeigh, county Kerry, in the winter of 1893-4, and had added several good specimens to my collection, when I heard of a place called Castle Gregory—a small country town near Tralee—as a good district for Wild-Fowl. It had one principal shop, and there the peasants purchased all their daily wants in the way

of food, clothing, etc. It was a shop where you could get the proverbial "anything from a needle to an anchor," and was owned by a very pushing, energetic, intelligent Irishman named O'Donnell; he was the one authority in the village for all the wants of the district, and having some knowledge of legal matters, the peasants—when in any difficulty—generally used to consult him. On making application from Glenbeigh to this Mr. O'Donnell for apartments and board, I found that he was able to do the needful, so it wasn't long before I was packed up and off on a flying visit there.

From Tralee I had to go by one of the light railways which runs to Dingle terminus. On arrival at Castle Gregory, Mr. O'Donnell met and escorted me to his place. Leading me up a staircase which started from the back of the shop, he showed me into a fair-sized front sitting-room on the first floor; then he showed me several bed-rooms, with an absence of furniture, but still, with very good iron, brass-mounted bedsteads, good mattresses, clean blankets, sheets, etc., and having surveyed all he said, "Now whill that do ye, yer ānnour?" (*i.e.*, honour)—or something like that. I replied, "Very well; there is just one thing, however,—how about a bath?" Ah!" said he, "Begor, there used to be one, a prapper tin one for the gintlemen, but I'll jist see what I can do for ye." The end of it all was that he produced a wooden washing-tub, which answered very well; for O'Donnell didn't in the least mind my splashing the bed-room floor all over

with water ; it certainly didn't much matter either, considering there were no carpets. My meals were curiosities ; nearly everything was served up in soup plates. I never got any variety in the way of meat but rather coarse chops, and very little in the way of vegetables ; but the establishment was strong in eggs, excellent toast (as the bread was first-rate), and marmalade ; so on these I got along very well indeed.

For the first few days I used to go out with a young fellow named McCartie, the son of a small farmer, who was a very fair shot and a keen sportsman. There were a lot of Ducks of different kinds in a lake not far off, but they were quite impossible to get, except on the off-chance one sometimes gets by flighting at night. However, it was not with McCartie that I got any chance with the Brent Geese. Probably about a week after my arrival at Castle Gregory I heard the curate to Father —, a Roman Catholic Priest, was a great sportsman, and the possessor of a first-rate double-barrelled breech-loading gun by Tolley, and that this said curate knew all about the haunts of the Brent Geese, they being one of his especial studies. Through the kind offices of my landlord I very soon got an introduction to this young sportsman.

When I proposed a combined expedition against the Brents, he jumped at it ; " Nothing would give him greater pleasure." Now, this curate had a very smart " turn out " in the way of a dogcart and spirited horse, and it was arranged that he should call for me one morning pretty early and drive me



**Brent Geese.**  
Rocky Sea = pool. Storm at Sea.



to the place on the shores of the Atlantic, where he expected we should find these birds, literally in thousands; the only point we had to be careful about was, so to arrange our programme as to catch the tide that would suit our operations and tactics against these Brents. Well, when we got down to the shore I never saw such a sight of Wild-Geese in my life. They were in a sort of bay, standing in a few inches of water, feeding away as the tide came in; they were so thick that you might have walked on them, but you couldn't get within gunshot by stalking. The only method likely to afford the chance of a shot was by going out to some rocky point or headland, and waiting there concealed amongst the boulders and rocks till the tide got so deep around you as to force you to quit; your rescue, from what otherwise would have been a perilous position being effected by an Irish canoe-boat made of canvas and manned by a couple of Paddys. Now this is exactly what the curate and I did; we went out—the tide being pretty well out—and got on to a sort of promontory, having our canvas-boat and men within easy hail, when the water got too deep.

We got several shots as Geese passed and re-passed us; we were not always successful, as there is nothing tougher than a Brent Goose to kill. When the tide drove us out we signalled to the boatmen, and then proceeded to follow up some wounded birds which were on the water.

We had to fire a good many shots at one or two before they would collapse. I forget what the bag

was for the day—I merely took two. I must say I enjoyed that day's outing immensely, especially the boating part of it, as these canoes seemed such cranky sort of things, that unless you sat quite in the centre and perfectly still, over you'd go, for the slightest derangement of balance to one side or the other would be sufficient to capsize the canoe.

In his excellent book, "Bird life on the Border," Mr. Abel Chapman says of this species, "In the morning they come in by companies and battalions, but at night they go out in a solid army; and a fine sight it is to witness their departure. The whole host, perhaps ten thousand strong here massed in dense phalanxes, elsewhere in columns, tailing off into long skeins, v's or rectilinear formations of every conceivable shape, but always with a certain formation, out they go. While their loud clanging honk, honk, and its running accompaniment of lower croaks and shrill bi-tones resound for miles around."

I stayed a few days longer at Castle Gregory where I got one or two more specimens which will be recorded in their proper places.

I believe these Brents were got in December 1893. Since then, poor old O'Donnell has joined the great majority.



## CASE 37.

## THE PUFFIN.

*Order, Pygopodes. Family, Alcidae.*

This is a very funny looking species with its grotesque bill, which seems to be the characteristic feature of the bird. One common local name for the Puffin is "Sea Parrot," which probably arises from some fancied similarity in the beak to that of the Parrot; "Coulter-neb" has reference to the plough-share-like shape.

This bird is the sole representative in the Atlantic of a well marked group abundant in the North Pacific, and even in winter it is seldom absent from British waters. Breeding-stations exist on Flamborough Head, the Faroes, the Scilly Islands, Lundy, Wales, Scotland—notably St. Kilda—and south-west of Ireland. The nest is either in a hole in a cliff, or, what is more usual, in soft peaty ground, into which these little birds burrow like rabbits to the extent of some three or four feet; the ground being often so honeycombed as to yield to the tread. Only one pear-shaped egg is laid, very large for the size of the bird; the colour is a dull white, freckled or zoned with pale brown or lilac.

I was staying at the Salen Hotel, Mull, when I obtained the specimens. I hired a good-sized sailing-boat one day from a lobster fisherman who lived at Ulva—an island mentioned in connection with the

Buzzard case—and went out with him to one of the islands that lie off the west coast of Mull.

It was only a small island—a mere volcanic eruption—with a bold looking front of precipitous rocks. There were, however, on the flatter portions of it some soft peaty-looking places; the birds were there in some hundreds. I tried to land, but although the sea was comparatively calm—owing to the swell from the Atlantic—I couldn't, so I had to content myself with getting what I could from the birds that flew past me in the boat or allowed me to approach near enough to them on the water.

The Puffin is a wonderfully quick diver, and often manages to get under the water before the shot reaches him.

These birds are quite a sight in the breeding-season when they sit perched on the sea cliffs in thousands, and when they rise the sky is darkened with them.

Howard Saunders says: "This species is the most abundant of the rock birds which visit the Faroes, and there are vast colonies on the coast of Norway, especially north of the Arctic circle, as well as in Iceland." Farther on he says: "We find the Puffin nesting on many of the smaller Channel Islands as well as on the coast of France, especially in Brittany."

## CASE 38.

## THE BLACK GUILLEMOT.

*Order, Pygopodes      Family, Alcidae.*

This species is not nearly so abundant as the Common Guillemot. At one time colonies used to exist on our east coast, but they don't seem to be in evidence there now; in fact the only locality in our British Islands where these birds may be said to be fairly plentiful are the west coast of Scotland and the adjacent islands that lie off that coast.

My own experience of this species has been entirely confined to the Inner and Outer Hebrides; and even there I cannot say that I have seen them in any great number.

Their nesting-habit is very much the same as that of the Razor Bill, *i.e.*, crevices and cracks of the cliffs, or underneath rocks, but there is this difference in these birds and the rest of the Auk family, in that they lay two eggs instead of one, the ground-colour of which is white slightly tinged with green or blue, and spotted with ash-grey and several shades of brown; they are large for the size of the bird. Booth, from his practical study of the habits of the Black Guillemot, noticed that it was much better able to use its legs and feet than the Common Guillemot. In his "Catalogue" he says: "I was much surprised when I met with this species to find that it could walk and even run with the greatest ease. It is also capable of rising from level ground."

The circumstances under which I got the specimens in the case, with the exception of the two birds in winter dress, are described under the Razor Bill (Case 42), for they were all close together on the rocks there mentioned. These little birds, although their wings are very short, managed to skim along the surface of the sea with great rapidity; their flight is quite straight, so they are not so very difficult. They are, indeed, harder to shoot on the water than on the wing owing to their diving powers.

The food of all these Auks is, I think, much the same—such as small fish, crustaceans, etc. Howard Saunders gives as their habitat abroad: “Faroes, Scandinavia, Denmark, parts of the Baltic, White Sea; whilst on the other side of the Atlantic they are found from Massachusetts to South Greenland.”

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## CASE 39.

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### THE EIDER DUCK.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This large, essentially sea duck, the drake of which is particularly striking in plumage, is found more on the coast of Northumberland and on the western islands of Scotland than anywhere else in the British Islands, although Howard Saunders says: “It is only a winter visitor in comparatively

small numbers to the western and southern coasts of England, but along the east coast it gradually becomes more abundant as we proceed northwards." In Ireland it is hardly known. This Duck is undoubtedly more abundant in Norwegian waters; and there it is strictly preserved on account of the value of the down. The nest is often placed in heather on some island in a sea loch or amongst coarse herbage and rocks generally not very far distant from the water, and is composed of grasses and seaweed. There are from five to eight eggs, of a dull green. During incubation the female lines the nest with the down plucked from her body, so that the eggs are completely enveloped in it. When she leaves them temporarily she carefully covers them with down till her return. During incubation the males all congregate together.

The specimens in the case were obtained while I was staying at the Hotel, Castle Bay, Island of Barra, in the year 1901, being bent upon adding some good specimens to a collection which was then, you might say, in embryo. The lessee, Simon McKenzie, gave me all the assistance he could, and often used to accompany me in my daily trips. My plan was to hire a sailing-boat and take my chance of birds on the water or on the wing, according as circumstances offered. I found the Eider Drake a very tough bird to kill, as dropping him on the water on the wing was only a sort of preliminary; for, clever in the art of diving, he would require several shots before he would succumb. Very often

the weather was rough, which added a good deal to the zest of following up these birds.

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## CASE 40.

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### THE RED BREASTED MERGANSER.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This species, commonly known by the name of "Saw Bill," owing to its narrow mandibles being serrated like a saw inside, is very generally distributed in the British Islands. In Scotland it is resident in most of the lochs, and on the northern and western shores of the mainland, in all of which localities it breeds abundantly. It is also very plentiful in the Hebrides, and nests in Ireland on all the principal loughs; there the local name for the bird is "Sheld-Duck," and also "Spear Wigeon," this latter name no doubt arising from its long sharp bill. The original case I had made for this species contained two drakes and two ducks. Subsequently, coming to the conclusion that it wasn't large enough, and that the birds looked too crowded, I had a case of larger dimensions made, took out a drake and a duck—retaining the best specimen of each—and substituted in the place of the two parent birds, a family of nine young ones. I think the alteration has been extremely beneficial to the collection, for now the case is one of the most artistic amongst the whole number. The parent birds were obtained in



Mergansers, with Young.  
Highland Loch Scene.





an island that lies to the north of the Island of Barra. When not otherwise engaged I used to go out with my ghillie, Mac, in a sea-boat and explore all creeks, sea-rocks, and salt water lakes that abound in that neighbourhood. It was on one of these excursions that I came across these Mergansers. I can't say whether I got both the birds in the case on the same day, or whether the drake is the one that gave me such a lot of fun, or whether it was that one that has been taken out of the case as it originally was, but as it is an even chance that the drake you are looking at is the identical bird, I had better relate the circumstances.

I had—so far as my memory serves me—stalked him on a sort of sea loch, surprised, shot at, and dropped him on the wing; but as he was nothing like mortally wounded he managed by diving to get a good way out into the water. As I had no boat to follow him up at that particular spot, and he was too far off to sustain much damage by an ordinary charge of powder and shot, it was lucky that I had some wire cartridges by me which threw the shot right on top of him; two or three of these made him appear to be somewhat sick. Then he acted as most of the Duck tribe do, *i.e.*, he made for the shore. I watched him carefully with my ghillie's marine glasses (referred to before as being excellent), saw him go ashore at the head of the loch into some rocks some little distance from the water's edge, and marked the exact spot. I had to go all round the loch again to get to where he was, and when I got

near I was careful to keep to the water's edge lest the bird should attempt to get to the water first; then I moved slowly up to the rocks where I knew he must be. He made a frantic effort to get to the water, but I collared him all right in his vain attempt. The young birds in the case were obtained years afterwards. They are not much more than a day to one and a half days old, and were hatched out of the shell for me by a keeper in Argyleshire who was rearing pheasants at the time.

The Red Breasted Merganser is a most destructive bird to trout, and will do an enormous amount of damage on trout lakes. There are thousands of these birds in our islands; there is, therefore, not much fear of their becoming extinct—especially when you take into consideration that they are extremely wary, very difficult of approach, diving immediately on the least sign of a human being, and going out seawards.

I will conclude with a little extract. Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "They feed on small fishes and molluscs, which they take by diving; near the shore where the water is shallow, they are often seen with head and neck almost continuously immersed as they explore among the seaweed at the bottom for food. They swim like the Cormorant, having the faculty of sinking the body beneath the surface, and also dive like that bird, springing up and plunging down almost vertically. The favourite nesting-place is on an island under the shelter of a rock. Sometimes in a hole in the ground." This species has a very wide range in the northern hemisphere.

## CASE 41.

## THE COMMON CORMORANT.

*Order, Steganopodes. Family, Pelecanidæ.*

This species is fairly well distributed in the British Islands, though certainly more plentiful in some parts than others.

So far as my memory serves me, I have found Cormorants in most of the haunts that I have been in, *viz.*, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. I can't say that I have seen them in such numbers as their lesser congener, the Shag.

From Howard Saunders's "Manual" they would appear to be most plentiful on our east coast from Flamborough Head northward to Caithness; but that is a coast line of which I have no personal knowledge whatever. I should call them a marine as well as a freshwater species, as they are very fond of going from estuaries of the sea during the day time to inland trout lochs, gorging themselves with young trout for several hours of the day, and returning again in the afternoon or evening to the sea. The regularity with which these visits are paid is remarkable, so much so that, provided you carefully took the time of departure and return, you might choose a convenient spot to intercept their line of flight, and thus get a shot.

They are very cute birds indeed, and either in a loch or on the sea you will find them difficult of approach.

In regard to the swimming peculiarities of this bird, Mr. W. H. Hudson describes them so faithfully

that I cannot do better than to quote what he says : “When swimming he presents a curious appearance; his body, as if too heavy for the element it floats in, sinks like a water-logged boat, until the back is on a level with the surface. When alarmed he sinks his body deeper and deeper at will, until the head and long neck alone appear, looking like the head and neck of a serpent swimming with body submerged.”

When Cormorants dive they are nothing like so graceful as the regular Divers, which disappear under the water without any effort of raising themselves; these, on the other hand, always lift their tails well out of the water, and plunge down head foremost; at times when I have seen them in the distance and was not quite sure whether it was a Diver or one of these I would watch for the dive, and soon any doubt would be dispelled.

The Common Cormorant, like the Shag, is very fond of standing on rocky islands in estuaries of the sea and such like places, and drying its wings in the sun, spreading them out to their fullest extent. At such times when you see a lot of both species together standing thus on all the jagged rocky points of these small islands—which are generally devoid of all vegetation—they present a very strange appearance. The Cormorant is a very voracious devourer of all sorts of fish; and has a tremendous swallowing capacity. Mr. W. H. Hudson records a fish of fourteen inches as having been taken from the gullet of a Cormorant. In regard to nesting-habit, a precipitous cliff is generally selected, but trees are

also used, as they return to the same site year after year. The nest itself is a very coarse structure of rough twigs and grass, and, if near the sea, lined with seaweed. It emits a horribly fetid smell, which I am not likely to forget, as the odour of the birds I took nearly made me sick. The eggs are of a most peculiar shape, being very long and narrow, of a chalky white appearance, with a transparent sort of green tinge if held up to the light.

Now to the circumstances—my headquarters were still at the Salen Hotel, Mull, so one day, hiring a dogcart, I drove to the village of Gribun, which is about two miles from the Gribun Rocks, where I negotiated one of my Peregrine Falcons.

On arrival, I hired a good sized sea-boat with a couple of trusty boatmen, and sailed down the coast as described under the Razor Bill (Case 42). Some distance down this coast I came to a very precipitous cliff, quite sheer in fact, of chalky composition. On a ledge of some 200 feet or so in height I noticed a colony of these Cormorants who evidently were nesting there. The distance was too great to try my little sixteen bore gun on them, but I had an eight bore with me, so getting out of my boat—as there was too much swell on the sea to shoot with any degree of accuracy—I landed on a volcanic looking sort of rock, and steadying myself against it I fired. The result was absurd—there was no damage done—the birds, in fact, hardly seemed to be aware of any shot, so, making up my mind that any further attempt from that position with such a

gun would be useless, I got into the boat again and landed a little further down, where the boatmen said I could climb up the mountain side and get above them; this I managed to do, but before I got to a place where I could shoot from I had to descend a very steep bit of heather. At last I arrived at a sort of precipice, but the heather gave me good standing ground; the birds were directly below me, and selecting the best specimen I shot her.

Then came the difficulty of procuring the young. Luckily, one of the boatmen was an excellent cragsman, and, letting him down with a rope round his waist, he managed to secure them; but it was an awfully nasty place, and one that I myself would not have ventured in for a small fortune.

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## CASE 42.

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### THE RAZOR BILL.

*Oraer, Pygopodes. Family, Alcidae.*

This species so closely resembles the now extinct Great Auk that it would be hard, were it not for the difference in size—the latter being more than half as big again—to distinguish them. Like the Puffins and Guillemots, the Razor Bill goes out to sea in the winter months, coming in to our coastal British waters in the spring months of the year for breeding purposes.

It is not nearly so abundant as the Guillemot, and its numbers are apparently on the decline. The cause for this it is difficult to assign, and opinions are various. Mr. W. H. Hudson says, "Whether killed by an epidemic to which they are liable, or starved to death as some naturalists think, it is certain that they perish in large numbers. On the south coast I have seen their dead bodies washed up by the waves during a severe gale, lying in hundreds on the beach," etc., etc.

The Razor Bills associate at their breeding-stations with Guillemots and Puffins, and being of the same family the birds get on very well together. In regard to locality, too, that is much the same, there being large colonies of these birds on some of the western islands of Scotland. No doubt, too, they would be found to be in evidence on the British coast wherever stacks and cliffs abound. The Razor Bill lays only one egg, which it does not place in such an exposed place as the Guillemot, but more often in a cleft in the rock, or in a hollow on a rocky ledge. In regard to colour, I should say there is great variation, but the ground-colour is generally white or pale brown, and blotched with various shades of reddish-brown or black.

The specimens in the case are posed in a somewhat similar manner to what you would see them ranged along the ledges of a cliff, the whole idea being to show how they cluster together.

I obtained the birds while staying at Salen Hotel. I sometimes used to go out sailing amongst the

islands that lie out in the Atlantic off the west coast of Mull. In the present instance, though, I was sailing down a very rugged coast line, which runs in the direction of Iona. In this locality—an ideal one for sea-birds—there were all sorts of cliff formation, stacks of rock, large subterranean caverns, and here it was I found the birds you see in evidence, though certainly not in any great numbers. I had to shoot them as they flew off the rocks and came past the boat. They are rather fast fliers on the wing and wonderful at diving—as are all the Auk family for that matter.

There is something interesting about the young of this species, which I gather from Mr. W. H. Hudson's book. When they fly down to the sea in the early morning they do not return to the rocks again simply because they are not strong enough to fly upwards. When the young one is obstinate the mother will take it by the back of the neck and fly down to the sea. . . . The parent teaches the young bird to dive by taking it by the neck and diving with it.

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### CASE 43.

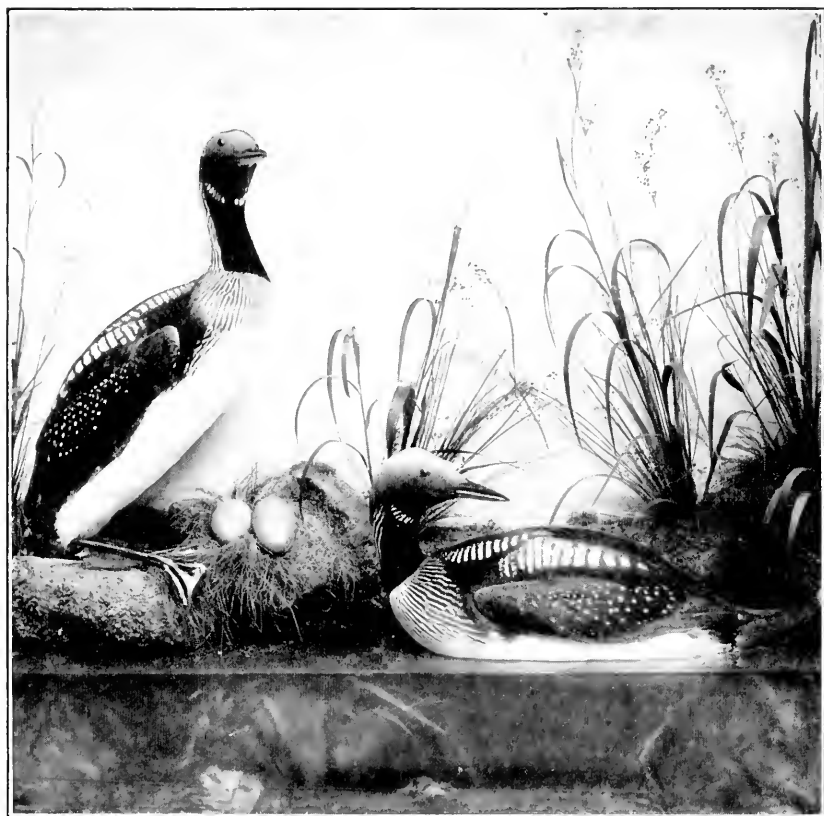
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#### THE BLACK THROATED DIVER.

*Order, Pygopodes. Family, Colymbidæ.*

These splendid specimens I am naturally very proud of, for I think it is no exaggeration to say that they are in finer plumage than the two I have seen





**Black Throated Diver**  
Nesting - Site with Eggs



in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, which were obtained in Caithness; the actual nest having been cut out of the soil by Colonel Irby and Captain Reid, and the whole, *i.e.*, birds and nest, presented by those officers to the Museum.

In saying something about the circumstances under which I was fortunate enough to obtain two such valuable birds—for there is no question about the Black Throated Diver being by far the rarest of the four British species—I am not going to satisfy the reader's curiosity by making known the exact locality where I shot them. It will be quite enough to say that they were bagged in Scotland, within the range given by Howard Saunders, which is the lochs of Inverness-shire, Perthshire, Ross-shire, Argyleshire, as well as many lochs in the Outer Hebrides.

At the hotel where I happened to be staying at the time, I made the acquaintance of a certain head-keeper, who seemed very much inclined to give me his valuable assistance in the work I had in hand. After a little chat, he told me that he knew of a pair of these Divers on a loch not many miles off, so an expedition was arranged accordingly.

The birds' objective point appeared to be near a particular island amongst the several there were in the loch in question, and this island was some little way out, but near the side I wanted to be landed on there was not sufficient water for the boat, so the old Scotch keeper promptly carried me across on his back, and we two then, on landing, took up a suitable position, whilst the ghillie rowed the boat away.

It was a small island, rising very abruptly from the water, and with a lot of growth on the top—principally brambles—a very awkward place to shoot from.

Before continuing my description, I ought to have said that as soon as the Divers—for they were both near the island—saw us on our way in the boat towards the reverse side of the island to where they were, they sank themselves low in the water to escape detection as much as possible; and it was only after the keeper and I had got into our position and remained there some time that the birds, thinking the “coast to be clear,” showed themselves fairly on the water. I then—my position being near the summit of a sort of bank on which I had to lay—began to look through a lot of bramble thorns, and try to estimate the distance the Divers were from me—and this is no easy matter when judging across water. It rested with me, however, to determine the best opportunity likely to be afforded for a fair shot.

At last I thought they appeared to be within range. I whispered to the keeper, asking for an opinion. Receiving a nod of approval, I inserted the barrels of my gun carefully and gently through the thorns, and taking a very careful alignment on one of the bird's heads—for it was no use shooting them anywhere else—pulled the trigger, and the Diver fell lifeless on the water, for No. 4 shot had found its billet in a vital part.

Now, had it not been that the keeper had with him a barking, yelping spaniel at the time I should

have stood a very good chance of getting the second Diver. As it was, as soon as my gun went off, this wretched spaniel broke loose from control; so excited was he that he dashed round to the other side of the island, barking and yapping all the time, thus driving the remaining bird—who at first seemed somewhat confused at the whole of the proceedings—far out into the loch before I could get round with the keeper for another shot.

We spent the whole of that day trying to get that other bird by every artifice we could think of, but all to no purpose, so at last had to give it up as a bad job and return to the hotel. However, I was thoroughly pleased and satisfied to have obtained even one of these beautiful birds.

Some little time elapsed before the keeper brought me information of another pair of Divers which had been seen near a low flat island in a much larger loch a good distance from the hotel. As in the first instance so in this, the bird—for there was only one when I went there—seemed to have a predilection for making towards this island more than any of the others. In close proximity to this particular island was another small flat island from which, should fortune favor me, I might obtain a shot.

The keeper and ghillie having landed me on this same island, rowed away. The approach of the boat, had, in this instance, as in the other, the effect of making the bird submerge herself in the water almost to the point of the beak, and I had to

exercise patience before she was confiding enough to come properly to the surface.

All this time I was lying prone on my stomach with my face close to the ground, looking through a little tuft of rushes close by. When the Diver eventually showed herself she was a goodish distance off and seemingly of a very diffident and suspicious turn of mind—she didn't like the appearance of things at all. This distrust was very much intensified too by Gulls and other birds which were constantly passing and re-passing over my head; seeing me hiding, and coming to the conclusion that "all was not well" they would, by a certain call-note they have—a language amongst themselves in fact—give the bird warning of the danger she was in.

Unfortunately for me, too, there was a pair of young Black-Backed Gulls on the island where I was, and the parents of these birds would swoop down at me and almost take the cap off my head. All this time my bird was getting more and more anxious; at times she would open her beak, at others, get round my position so as to almost out-flank me—my position being head to wind. Well, I remained lying prone on my stomach till almost evening, and coming to the conclusion that any effort I might make would be futile without clearing the ground of the young Black-Backed Gulls, I decided to give it up for that day, but before leaving I killed the young birds, gave the parents a dose each of shot, and returned to my hotel.

It must have been something like a week after this first attempt in which the fates had been against me, that I made the second attempt. On this occasion the keeper, ghillie, and I surveyed the position with a powerful telescope at about three-quarters of a mile off; our real reason being to ascertain whether she had deserted the island. No, she had not, she was still there! so the same tactics were pursued in regard to getting me into the position on the island I was on before.

There was one rather uncomfortable feature about my position, however, on this occasion, viz., that owing to a lot of rain that had fallen during the week the loch had risen, and that when lying prone, my feet were in several inches of water. Although I had despatched the young Gulls, there was no lack of birds passing and re-passing; on one occasion a fight took place over my head between a Skua and another bird. All this was very disquieting to the nerves of a very shy bird, whose suspicions had been so much aroused by my first visit. At length, however, one of the prettiest incidents occurred, showing an interesting characteristic in this species. After an hour or two, this female Diver being very much perplexed in her own mind as to the general situation, made a very plaintive call-cry which was answered in the far distance, I should say about a mile off, by another similar note; she then took a couple of long dives in the direction of this call, and both birds appeared together far out in the loch. She then brought him along to

give his valuable opinion and sum up the position generally.

It was most interesting to watch the combined efforts of these two Divers to solve what was to them a very difficult problem. At times they would separate, open their beaks from various points around me, come together again, and consult. Once they nearly got behind me, but in all their manœuvres they avoided coming within shot.

At last, my patience becoming exhausted, I thought I would risk a shot, although, with my head almost level with the water I could not properly estimate the distance.

The birds were near together which was something in my favour, so I raised my gun and fired. Bang! missed by Jove!! shot an inch too short! Divers under the water like a flash of greased lightning, and away down the loch. Bang! again, as they passed an island where the keeper and ghillie were, but no result; got into the boat with keeper and ghillie, and followed after in the direction they went. Saw them on the far side across the loch more than half a mile off, edging towards a bay, which, if they continued on along the shore would eventually bring them past a promontory. After a little consultation it was decided that I should be landed on the promontory, move a little way down the shore, and lay well back under an overhanging bank, whilst they on their part went out into the loch and made demonstrations with the boat, calculated to drive the birds past my position.



I thus waited patiently concealed, never once looking round to see whether the Divers were approaching. Nearly half an hour must have elapsed, when lo and behold! two splendid birds passed me about three yards off. I took a quick shot. Missed!!! Luckily I did, for the shot, going like a bullet, would have blown the bird's head off. The result of my shot was this—One of the birds dived like a flash, the other, becoming confused, took to the wing. Now, I had one barrel left, and that contained a wire cartridge, so letting the Diver get well away from me I gave him the full force of the charge in the back, which brought him down on the water. I then popped in two more cartridges, and, running down to the water's edge, gave him these as well. He tried to dive, but never after that was able to get away from us in the boat, and after following him some little distance we eventually fished him out in a landing net.

Thus ended a most exciting finish to a most enjoyable day. I hope, reader, I have not quiet wearied you out, but the account given is a pretty faithful record of what took place at the different stages.

This species is almost entirely confined to the west coast of Scotland and its islands; also occasional adult birds have been met with as far south as the English Channel, the estuary of the Dart in Devon; in Ireland examples have been taken at the mouth of the Moy river and near Belfast.

It is very abundant in summer on the lakes of Scandinavia, Finland, and Russia to the northward

and eastward ; it ranges across Siberia to the Pacific and visits Japan in winter.

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## CASE 44.

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### THE SHELD-DUCK.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This species is the most strikingly coloured of our British Ducks. The prefix "Sheld" is explained by Ray, (1674) as an East Anglian equivalent for parti-coloured. This Duck is essentially marine in its habitat, *i.e.*, speaking generally, though I have found them breeding on the shores of one of the lochs in an island in the Hebrides. The nest is invariably made in a rabbit hole, from three to ten or twelve feet in. Sandhills, with long coarse grass, honeycombed with rabbit warrens, especially if they lie along a seacoast or estuary, are, perhaps, the most favoured sites. The eggs, laid in May, are of a creamy-white, generally ten to twelve in number. Almost as soon as the young are out of the nest they take to the water with their parents, and often the mother carries them from the nest on her back to the water's edge. This evidence alone would be sufficient to show what hardy youngsters they are, and when they are launched on the water they seem—although may be only a few days old—to dive and swim as well as their parents. This species is fairly distributed in the British Islands, is found principally on the east coast of England, also on some



**Sheld-Ducks with Young.**  
Estuary of the Sea.



parts of the west. It is also in evidence on the east coast of Scotland, and in the western islands of that country—especially in the Hebrides—where it may almost be said to be plentiful. The specimens in the case were obtained under the following circumstances.

I was trout fishing in one of the northern islands in the Hebrides, and on my way to one of the lochs I was in the habit of fishing, the moorland road over which I had to travel skirted the edge of some tidal water. During spring tides the sea used to come right up to this road; when the tide receded it left a lot of rough broken looking ground, *i.e.*, masses of large boulders covered with seaweed. It was in this sort of ground I had noticed *en route* a pair of Sheld-Ducks, the drake of which was an exceedingly handsome and fine specimen. My ghillie Mac and myself often wished to get a chance at this old bird, but he was generally in a very strong position and un-get-at-able. It must have been some weeks before my chance came. At last! I said to myself, I think I can out-manceuvre you, my friend. The drake was not very far from the road, and on the far side of an accumulated mass of boulders covered with seaweed. I was enabled from the direction I was walking in to get into a position that the rocks would be between myself and the bird, and this without showing myself on the way. As soon as I arrived at my proper place, the ghillie had been instructed to continue walking along the road quite quietly till he got well to the other side of

the bird, then leave the road and walk towards him, when it was presumed he would take wing and fly in the opposite direction, and thus towards where I lay concealed. The whole plan turned out a complete success, the result being that I got a nice flying shot past my position, and bagged the fine old drake. Some time after this I got the duck, which I surprised when stalking amongst a lot of seaweed-covered boulders ; not particularly nice sort of ground for stalking in owing to the slipperiness of the seaweed ; unless you go rather carefully to work you stand a very good chance of breaking an arm or a leg. The young I got some years afterwards, four out of the six being obtained from a naturalist friend in Croydon, and the remaining two, which are larger than the others, I obtained from the Sound of Mull.

This species "breeds along the coast of Norway up to about 70 deg. N. latitude, and is abundant in Sweden, Denmark, the Baltic, the North Frisian Islands, and Holland. It also nests on the shores of France, and sparingly in the Spanish Peninsula ; but throughout the basin of the Mediterranean it is chiefly a winter visitor, and in the southern and eastern portions the representative species in summer is the Ruddy Sheld - Duck " (Howard Saunders). This last named Duck I have met with in India, where it is common in the winter season, the local name for which is the Brahminy Duck. It's a handsome bird, but no good for the table, being too fishy in flavour.

**CASE 45.**

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**THE GOLDEN AND GREY PLOVER,  
THE DOTTEREL, AND TURNSTONE.**

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

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**THE GOLDEN PLOVER.**

This species is widely distributed in the British Islands, being especially plentiful in the western islands of Scotland, the Orkneys, Shetlands, and some parts of Ireland. It is resident and migratory, immense flocks arriving on our coasts in the autumn months. It is essentially a gregarious species, except during the breeding-season. I have met with these birds in flocks on the bogs of Ireland during the winter months, and in the breeding-season on some low mountain tops in the Hebrides, at which particular time the female glides very silently off her nest on the approach of man, and leads him away by slow degrees; but he will find out after a little practical experience that the nest is nowhere in the direction he may have been induced to follow the bird.

In regard to this subject, Mr. W. Swaysland says: "If watched or pursued she will stumble, assume lameness, and pretend to be quite unable to fly; the astonishing persistency and cleverness of these actions being amongst the most interesting of the bird's characteristics." The nest itself is very little more than a mere depression in the ground, and is

very thinly lined, is generally placed on high moorland ground, or as Mr. W. Swaysland says, "marshy bogs and the moist parts of undrained hills."

"The eggs—three to four, are of a yellowish-stone colour, handsomely blotched and spotted with rich brownish-black" (H.S.). In the winter months these birds are an excellent adjunct to a mixed shoot, for being very fast flying, and wheeling past with lightning speed, generally in a large flock, they give a capital sporting shot—to say nothing of their being excellent birds for the table, as everyone must know. The spring plumage of this bird is decidedly handsome; in winter the black breast is almost entirely lost. One of the specimens I got in the Hebrides, the other in North Wales. "Habitat abroad: Faroes, Iceland, and Northern Europe. Winter, Mediterranean, wandering to Madeira and down the coast of Africa to Cape Colony" (Howard Saunders).

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#### THE GREY PLOVER.

I must plead ignorance in regard to this species, although, if my memory does not play me false, I once got one amongst some Godwits and Knots, when out with Michael Casey and his punt, during my stay at Mrs. Shea's Hotel, Glenbeigh, in the winter of 1894. What became of that bird I can't remember.

The specimen in the case was given me by Mr. W. R. Hine, of Southport. The Grey Plover—



rather larger than the Golden—belongs to a different genus, a distinguishing characteristic of which is the possession of a hind toe. It is not nearly so plentiful as the Golden Plover, does not congregate in such large flocks, and does not breed in our Islands, but somewhere in the region of the Arctic circle. Howard Saunders says: “Though a regular visitant to Ireland, it is less numerous there than in Great Britain, in which again it is more abundant on the east than on the west coast, becoming decidedly rare in the Outer Hebrides.

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#### THE DOTTEREL.

I must, I am afraid, plead ignorance in regard to this species—never having come across it in any of my sporting expeditions. I believe the specimens in the case were shot about four miles out of Southport by Mr. Hine, who kindly gave them to me in order to make up my case of Plovers. According to Howard Saunders, the Dotterel is principally migratory, although a few pairs have been recorded as nesting in some of the northern counties of Scotland, also the “mountains of the Lake District, where it has long been known to breed, although at the present day its numbers are sadly diminished.” Howard Saunders attributes this diminution neither to ornithologists, nor to egg-collectors, but to the demand for the feathers for making artificial flies.

“It arrives on our south coasts in April, and then would appear to make its way northwards, the most

favoured counties being Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Northumberland" (W. Swainsland). "Habitat abroad—summer quarters: Norway, Sweden, the tundras of European and Asiatic Russia as far as Bering Sea, etc.; principal winter-quarters: Palestine, Egypt, and Northern Africa" (Howard Saunders).

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#### THE TURNSTONE.

This and the Dotterel are about two of the handsomest of the Plovers that frequent the British Islands. No authenticated records exist of the species having bred in our Islands, although Howard Saunders says that a "diligent search among the islands of Scotland might possibly be rewarded"; the same author states that "the Turnstone is more plentiful in the western islands of Scotland and on the deep indented shores of the west coast of Ireland than in England."

This species feeds amongst seaweed-covered rocks, and may be seen turning over small stones and shells on sandy shores in search of marine insects, crustaceans, and molluscs; hence the name of Turnstone. In Norfolk, it appears, the bird has the local name of Tangle Picker. Turnstones never seem to be in a great number together. The first lot of these birds I ever came across was in the island of Coll, which is one of the Inner Hebrides. There, on some rocks on a sandy strand of the Atlantic, I saw a few feeding together. I managed to secure

one with my Collector's gun; it is the one introduced into the Case No. 58, containing Redshanks, Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, etc. The two specimens in this case I got on the "Green Island," in the Sound of Mull; they are in better plumage than the first-named. Turnstones are cosmopolitan, for their distribution embraces the best part of the world.

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### CASE 46.

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#### THE LAPWING, THE BAR-TAILED GODWIT, AND KNOT.

*Order, Limicolæ.*

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#### THE LAPWING.

*Family, Charadriidæ.*

This is a gregarious species, well known to all, plentifully distributed over the British Islands, and exceptionally abundant in Anglesey and Ireland. In the former of these two named places I have seen countless thousands congregated in huge flocks.

The bird breeds to a large extent in our islands, but the residents are augmented by immigrants from the Continent during the autumn months.

The Lapwing looks a clumsy bird as he flaps along with his rounded wings, but his appearance is quite altered when he gets excited over anything that approaches his nest in the breeding-time. Then he will soar up in the sky, swoop down on you,

almost touching your head ; then swerve off again in a graceful, lightning-like sort of sweep, rising again as he does this till he attains the position he wants for another dart and attack.

I have on occasions, when staying at Maelog Lake Hotel, Tycroes, Anglesey, tried flighting at dusk of evening as the Lapwings flew over the hedges or stone walls of the fields. If it was fairly calm they were easy enough to shoot, but if they were making headway against a gale of wind, nothing more difficult ; for with their large rounded wings they experienced considerable difficulty, and consequently resorted to an up-and-down, tortuous sort of movement, almost impossible for any gun to follow.

Their nests, generally made on marsh, waste, and ploughed lands, are difficult to find, the parent birds using every artifice to deceive and draw you away from them.

According to ornithological books, the male bird even goes to the trouble of making false nests near the true one, which is merely a depression in the ground, with a little grass lining. The eggs—usually four, are olive-colour, blotched and spotted with dark brown and black. When the young are hatched the Lapwing becomes extremely bold in their defence, and will attack other birds three or four times his own size—such a bird as the Great Black-Backed Gull, for instance.

I have often and often watched these Plovers collect in small batches and drive off birds of every

description, Gulls especially, which were threatening their youngsters.

To anybody trying to get near another species for specimen purposes, Lapwings are a nuisance, for like the Curlew, they delight in making all the row they possibly can with their clear, reedy call-note, and at once put everything on the alert to expect danger. Many a time have they destroyed my chance for me, so I know their little peculiarities in this respect.

The specimens in the case were, I think, obtained in Ireland, probably either at Waterville or Glenbeigh, I am not sure which. This is the result of not having kept any notes for reference.

This species appears to have a wide distribution abroad, embracing the Continents of Europe, Asia, and northern part of Africa. (H.S.)

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### THE BAR-TAILED GODWIT.

*Family, Charadriidae.*

I confess to having practically no knowledge of this bird beyond meeting with it in the south of Ireland when in pursuit of Ducks. It is a species most eagerly sought after by the punt-gunner, as the birds keep in such large flocks that when the punt-gun is brought to bear on them it deals death and destruction all round, probably to the extent of some hundreds.

From what I can gather about this species, notably from Howard Saunders, it visits our

estuaries and "mud-flats and sand-banks in spring and autumn;" also that "birds in the red breeding-plumage occur in the south on the spring migration, especially in Norfolk, where, from the date of their arrival, the 12th of May is called by the Breydon gunners 'Godwit Day'."

I met with these birds in the south of Ireland, in the winter, when out one day with Michael Casey and his punt. The operations after Duck with Casey have been so fully described elsewhere that it is unnecessary to say anything more than that the specimens in the case were shot with a punt-gun on one of these expeditions in 1893-4, and that being in their winter plumage of ashen-grey, they present a very different appearance from what they would have done in their spring dress, which comprises many combinations of chestnut, red-browns, and black.

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#### THE KNOT.

*Family, Scolopacidae.*

This, like the Bar-tailed Godwit, is another species of which I have no practical knowledge beyond meeting with it in the winter in the south of Ireland.

From ornithological books it appears that these birds are migratory only; that their arrival from the north may be expected about August; that the adults are often preceded by young immature birds, which are surprisingly tame and unsophisticated on

first landing; that some of the immigrants remain behind as late as May before returning north to breed. About May flocks in breeding-plumage arrive from the south, and make a short stay before departing with the main body for the breeding-station.

In regard to the favourite localities of this species generally in our islands, I quote Howard Saunders, who says, "Nowhere in Great Britain is the Knot more abundant than on the extensive sand-banks and mud-flats of the estuaries on the east;" also again, "Large numbers are found in Ireland during the colder months." The specimens in the case were obtained under the same conditions and circumstances as were the Bar-tailed Godwits, and indeed I almost think with the same shot from the punt-gun. You will observe that they are in their ashen-grey winter plumage, which is very different to the bright dress assumed in the spring.

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### CASE 47.

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#### THE HOODED CROW.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Corvidæ.*

This bird, also known by the different names of the Grey, Royston, or Saddleback Crow, is a resident and breeding-species in the western islands of Scotland, and the Isle of Man, is abundant in the north and west of Scotland, the Outer Hebrides, Orkneys,

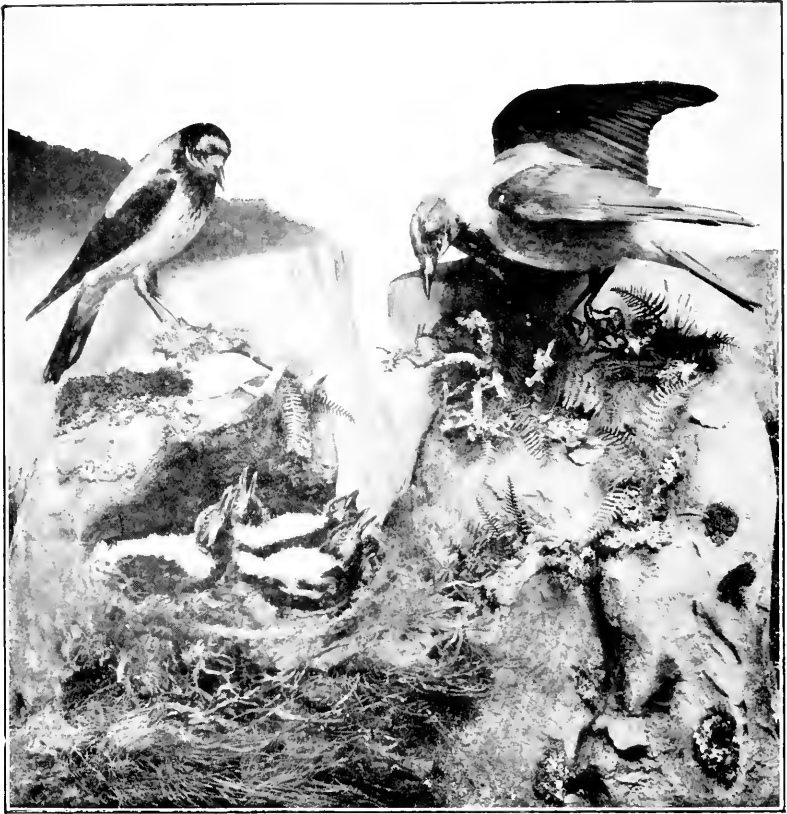
and Shetlands ; in the last named islands being the representative species.

In Ireland too, especially the south, it is decidedly plentiful and breeds there. In addition to all these resident birds many more reach our shores from October onwards, and so far as England is concerned, I think the bulk of these would be found on our eastern coast—Lincolnshire being a favourite county. There is hardly a bird on our British List that is more destructive to game and consequently none is more hated by game-keepers, or pursued and destroyed with such relentless persistency.

In the island of Mull, where I was in 1903, the Duke of Argyle's head-keeper, was simply death on these Crows, exterminating them as far as possible, for he looked upon them as the worst class of vermin. He said that if their nests were not destroyed, and any latitude were given them to breed there wouldn't be a head of game on the Duke's estate, for not only do they suck all the eggs they can find, but they devour young birds as well ; they won't allow any young thing to live if they get the chance, so whenever the spring of the year came, there was a sort of "spring cleaning"—if I may so term it—of the estate, that is, freeing it of as much vermin as possible, this Crow being the object of especial attention.

The only time this can be done effectively is when the female is sitting on her eggs, then instructions would be sent to the under-keeper to visit the most favoured spots on the estate for these nests,





**Hooded Crows.**  
Cliff Nesting - Site, with Young.



and having marked all the places where evidences of building were taking place, deal with them when eggs were laid and bird sitting. The process would be to flush the female off her nest, shoot her, introduce some arsenic into the eggs, which the male bird coming along an hour or two afterwards would promptly suck to his own destruction.

The Hooded Crow does not by any means confine himself to such luxurious diet as the eggs of game-birds, or their offspring, for he will tackle any sort of filth washed up by the tide on the sea shores in the way of putrid animals, and fish of all sorts, and indeed, he may often be seen thus foraging for what he can find, for nothing comes amiss.

I have seen these Crows in Ireland on the sea coast more than anywhere else, and in Lincolnshire you may see scores of them on the salt-marshes and tidal creeks; it was in Lincolnshire that the specimens in the case were obtained under the following circumstances:—

I was staying in 1903, at a little inn at a place called Fosdyke, which is situated on a sort of tidal creek that connects Boston with Spalding—my main object being to get some more Ducks for my collection, as I had been told that there was an excellent chance for me on the Wash. I got an introduction to a sporting parson, a great authority on Duck shooting, and he very kindly recommended me to the local man of the place, a shrimp fisherman, the possessor of a decent sized fishing smack, and a

sportsman too! into the bargain, as he possessed a single-handed punt-gun,

The only thing now remaining to be done was to arrange terms with the owner of the smack, and appoint a day for going out. This I was not long in accomplishing, the terms being 15/- per diem for the loan of the smack and the services of man and his son, and the usual accompaniment of a good lunch with plenty of beer and whiskey to wash it down. So, one fine morning when the tide suited for going down the creek and entering the Wash, we made a start about seven o'clock, taking a little punt-gun in tow behind.

About two hours sailing brought us fairly out into the Wash, and then, of course, I expected we should keep sailing about amongst all the favourite channels between the innumerable sand-banks that exist there, until we came in sight of some Ducks when the punt-gun would be brought into requisition; but no! what was my surprise to see them take down the sail and commence operations for catching shrimps. I thought to myself, "This is a funny sort of business; here am I paying this man 15/- for his smack, and providing him with an excellent lunch, and as much liquor as he can stow away, and all for what? why, merely that he may pursue his ordinary avocation as a fisher for shrimps. No! No!" thought I, "it isn't quite good enough." Still, my impulse seemed to be to make no remonstrance, but to calmly watch events and see what the final result would be. Well, as

soon as one piece of fishing ground got played out, this man and his son would hoist sail again and start for another, on arrival, take down sail and begin fishing again. I was beginning to get a bit sick over the whole business, when about 2 p.m., or thereabouts, the man suggested that perhaps now, we might begin to look for some Ducks.

The wind, meantime, had freshened considerably, but nothing daunted, the old fisherman started off in his cockle-shell of a punt—for it was nothing better—and hoisting the tiniest of sails which he held in his hand, began to explore all the sand-banks that were gradually becoming more and more exposed to the receding tide ; but every feathered creature, whether Goose or Duck, was so fearfully wild, as not to give even the remotest chance for a shot ; in fact, as soon as the little white sail became visible around any point, up would get flocks of Brent Geese, Mallards, etc., at distances ranging from a half to three quarters of a mile.

From the smack I could see all that was going on, and in an hour or two's time, seeing how futile the whole thing was, decided upon making our way homewards again ; so the punt was called in, and we made tracks back, employing ourselves with catching more shrimps and boiling the whole lot before we reached Fosdyke, which we did sometime in the evening.

On going ashore, I think the fisherman quite imagined that I should be satisfied with my outlay of upwards of a guinea by his proffering for my

acceptance some shrimps for my tea, but I didn't feel like eating any. The fact was, in my innermost heart I was thoroughly and completely disgusted, for I saw only too plainly that in consequence of the numberless punt-guns that exist in that part of the world—many of the farmers indulging in the sport—that the birds never get any rest; and that now they are so terrified at their appearance—with which they are only too familiar—that it is quite impossible to get within shot.

I have made a great digression, reader, from the Hooded Crow, but I think my experience on the Wash may be useful to some who may be contemplating a visit with an object somewhat similar to that I myself had in view; so I give it for what it is worth, and the sum total of my advice is, “Don't go—at least not to that part of the Wash.”

I have stated that aquatic birds were extremely wild, well for that matter, so were land birds, for I found, when I confined my attention to Hoodies exclusively, I had to resort to strategy to get them, because I could not get within fair gunshot in an ordinary way.

One of the specimens was shot by means of a dead calf, which I obtained from a farmer—the little beast had died from some sort of ailment, and consequently was worthless for human food—so throwing it over a Roman Embankment—a splendidly constructed bank, which the Romans built, I suppose, to stave off the encroachment by the sea that skirted the salt-marshes—I placed it

within easy shot of a certain part of the embankment, which I carefully marked. Then, allowing a day or so for the Hoodies to get well on to their quarry, I paid a visit one morning, walking the whole way along the bottom of the embankment till I got to the spot marked with a piece of white paper on the top; then running up the bank, I surprised them. I made rather a bad shot, I didn't kill my bird stone dead, for he managed to fly across to the other side, where I picked him up afterwards.

The second specimen was got when out in a boat going down the creek previously mentioned. The sides of this creek were sand, and to prevent the banks giving they had been strengthened by a lot of thorny brushwood pushed in in layers, so that when the tide was out the bank looked a mass of brushwood, intermingled with sand. I had a companion with me in the boat, a young fellow, and an eight bore gun on hire. On returning to Fosdyke up this creek we saw a party of Hoodies assembled on the top of the bank rather busily engaged. I said to my companion, "Would you like to have a shot with the eight bore? If so, take one at that lot of Hoodies." Accordingly, he loosed off the eight bore, and bowled over one of them. On the boatman going to pick it up, there was a shout of triumph; we said "What's up?" He, roaring with laughter, held up a huge conger eel, weighing fifty to sixty pounds, the eyes of which the Hoodies had just finished picking out. The fact was, the poor brute had found itself entangled in the brushwood on the receding

tide, and thus had been left to the mercy of the Crows.

I think what I have said about them pretty well bears out the general bad character I have given them. This species interbreeds with the Carrion-Crow. Its habitat abroad according to Howard Saunders, is the Faroes where it is resident, Scandinavia, Finland, and Northern Russia, where it is common, Central Germany, where colonies of the pure bred bird are found; Switzerland, France, and Spain it only visits in the winter. It nests in the islands of Majorca, Corsica, and Sardinia; is resident in Italy and Sicily; visits North Western Africa; is very abundant in Egypt, where it breeds; swarms in southern Russia, whilst eastwards, it can be traced through Asia, Persia, to Afghanistan. Thus it has a very wide distribution. The young birds in the case were obtained on the west coast of Scotland.

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### CASE 48.

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#### THE CARRION-CROW AND ROOK.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Corvidæ.*

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#### THE CARRION-CROW.

This species is not quite so widely distributed in the British Islands as some might be disposed to think. Howard Saunders considers it to be "fairly common in the wooded districts of England and



Wales, especially in the neighbourhood of low-lying coasts, estuaries, lakes, and sluggish rivers." Its distribution in Scotland appears to be partial, being plentiful in the south; in Ireland its place is taken by the Hooded Crow. It is like its congener, the Hooded Crow, a very voracious feeder, and will eat almost anything, from putrid carrion to such luxuries as the eggs and even the young of pheasants, partridges, poultry, etc. Amongst a long list of different sorts of diet, Howard Saunders mentions weakly lambs, leverets, moles, rats, fish, mussels, and the refuse of the seashore, so that, taking the sum total of all the stuff that comes handy to the Carrion-Crow, it may be regarded as one of the most destructive species amongst the feathered tribe, and as such one of the greatest pests to either farmer or gamekeeper. Owing to its sagacity—a leading characteristic of all the *Corvidæ*—it manages to hold its own very well indeed, in spite of persecution. No bird better knows the range of a gun, or when it is being "shikarred"—to use an Indian expression.

The nest is a rough structure of twigs. In the case of the locality being a wooded district, it would probably be in a tall tree, but in the case of the seashore a cliff would most likely be selected. The eggs—four to six, of a bluish-green colour, minutely spotted with brown, are very much like those of the Hooded Crow. The specimens in the case were obtained in the winter at Arthog. In regard to habitat abroad, the Carrion-Crow would appear,

from Howard Saunders, to be pretty generally distributed over the Continent ; while eastwards, to quote *verbatim*, "In Asia it nests in Turkestan and sparingly in Cashmere ; in Western Siberia it meets and interbreeds freely with the Hooded Crow. In Northern China and Japan the Carrion-Crow again prevails."

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### THE ROOK.

This is a very gregarious species, plentiful in England, Wales, and Ireland, and according to Howard Saunders, increasing in Scotland. In a sense it may be looked upon as beneficial to the farmer for the amount of destructive grubs, larvæ of insects, worms, slugs, etc., which it picks up on his ploughed lands ; but, then, on the other hand, it is very destructive to his newly-sown grain. Perhaps the amount of evil and good balances one another. At any rate, although the Rook is very fond of eggs, and will, says Howard Saunders, even hunt to obtain them, it is nothing like so destructive as the Carrion-Crow.

The chief interest attaching to the Rook, I think, is in its nesting habits, in which it displays a great deal of sociability, and we in England would not like to be without our "Rookeries," the term applied to the places where a number of rooks assemble and choose a suitable site for building purposes. These "Rookeries" are distributed all over the country, and are the favourite appanages of our old Country Seats. Indeed they are most jealously guarded by

most owners who are fortunate enough to have them on their property; and rightly so, I think, for no sort of sound, in my humble opinion, has such a lulling, soothing effect, or is so well calculated to induce sleep, as the "Caw," "Caw," "Caw" of a "Rookery" when one is lying wakeful in bed and not particularly anxious to rise with the Lark.

To maintain a good "Rookery" I am given to understand that the numbers should be kept down, so that shooting young Rooks with a small rifle in the month of May, as soon as they emerge from the nest and settle on the outlying branches—a very common sport in our country—does not in any way interfere with the parent birds nesting on the same spot in the following year. Rather the reverse, the chances of the abandonment of that particular nesting-site being enhanced by allowing the young birds to come to maturity. I have no personal knowledge of this, never having possessed a "Rookery" of my own, so the reader must take the statement for what it is worth.

According to Howard Saunders, this species has a wide distribution, extending from the Continent of Europe to Siberia and India.

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### CASE 49.

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#### THE HEN HARRIER.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ.*

In my particulars in connection with the Red Throated Divers I related the circumstances under

which permission was accorded to shoot those particular birds. Well, these Harriers were got the year following in the same island, the necessary authority being granted to me by the same gentleman, who, on my explaining the object I had in view in a personal interview, was most cordial in giving his consent. Still, all the same, I considered it advisable to pursue the same cautious tactics that I had adopted in the previous year—to make no display of a gun in my general paraphernalia.

In connection with the secrecy with which I went about the whole business there was one rather amusing matter ; I had excited the suspicions of one of the under-keepers, who used to try and pump my ghillie every morning about breakfast time as to what my movements were likely to be for the day. I told my ghillie that his reply should be of an evasive character, such as, “ He didn’t know, as his master was never in any particular hurry about going out ” ; by this means, the under-keeper would soon get tired of waiting to solve a problem about which he was very inquisitive, and about which I had not the slightest intention of enlightening him. In the end he gave me up as a bad job.

Now, as to the circumstances under which the birds were obtained. One bright glorious day I was roaming about in the south part of the island, I admit with the object of trying to find a Hen Harrier’s nest.

After searching many likely spots without success, my ghillie and I walked on to a promontory that

jutting out into a large piece of water, and thickly studded with heather. In tramping about all over this ground I suddenly sprung a Hen Harrier off her nest; putting up my gun suddenly—the ground being very rocky and rough—I stumbled and almost fell, and as my gun consequently was not in the proper alignment the bird escaped practically unhurt. Naturally I was very disheartened, but nevertheless decided not to leave the spot at once. This decision was a very lucky one as it eventually turned out, for after waiting some little time, I noticed a large hawk-like looking bird high up in the air making towards the promontory, which I rightly concluded must be the female returning to the nest. I at once got down amongst the heather, lying almost on my back, and when the bird got over my head I fired, with the intense satisfaction of seeing her come tumbling down into the water. Here came a difficulty; the Hen Harrier was dead, true enough, but having no boat, how were we to get it out?

By luck, as it happened, there was a slight breeze blowing at the time, so we simply had to exercise our patience till the bird was blown ashore. This took up a lot of time; and moreover, when we took it out of the water the feathers were so soaked that we had to lay the body, with the wings outspread, on a bush for the sun and breeze to improve matters a bit.

It will give you some idea how long all this took if I say that, although we made a fairly early start

in the morning, it was about 11 p.m. when we got back to the hotel.

Some little time after this I made a second visit to the same spot in the hopes of being able to come across the male bird, but never saw anything of him, and it was evident that he had deserted the place. There was one other nest that my ghillie and I had found in the meantime, and as we had unfortunately failed in our attempt to get the male over the first nest, we were reluctantly obliged to make use of the second to attain our object; the one redeeming feature being the great probability there would be of matters being equalised somewhat by the widower of the first nest mating with the prospective widow of the second; indeed, the fact of hawks if deprived of a mate finding another within a very short space of time seems to be pretty well established,—at any rate it appears to be so with the Peregrine Falcon, for I have been told that the male of this species takes only about twenty-four hours to find a female should he have accidentally become a widower.

Thus, paying a visit to the first nest and failing, we made a long desultory tramp across the moors to where we knew the other to be.

This was in a bank of heather, and the female was sitting on her eggs. We didn't disturb her. By the side of this bank there was a natural dip in the moorland, running uphill some distance, the whole being covered with heather—just the sort of place to lie up in. Spreading out my waterproof, and getting my gun fixed up all

ready for the arrival of the male Hen Harrier—for I was sure he was bound to come—I awaited events.

It was not very long before he made his appearance, but not sufficiently near to make my shot a certainty ; and this I was determined to wait for, as my experience has always been that the first chance is always the one to be relied on, and that failure then often results in getting no more chances ; at last the Hawk appeared to be going to give me that opportunity for which I had been hoping ; when suddenly—apparently for no reason whatever, because he hadn't seen me—he swerved off. I thought to myself, “ whatever made him do that ? ” The cause, however, was soon explained when I heard behind me a voice which said “ Good morning, Sir ” ; I looked up and saw the under-keeper, the very man who had been so inquisitive about my movements, and was always questioning my ghillie. His name was Ross, so I said in reply to his salutation, “ Hulloa, is that you Ross ? Have a drop of whiskey ? ” “ No thankee, sir,” he replied. “ What, not like whiskey ? Most of the Scotch people like it,” continued I, or something to that effect.

The fact was, although he didn't know it, he had unfortunately got hold of a “ mare's nest,” for it was his master who had given me authority to do what I was doing ; so I played with him a bit to begin with, and then, just when I knew he was going to ask me what I was doing there, I saved him the trouble of putting the question by rounding on him and saying, “ Perhaps I may as well tell you

that I am here for the purpose of shooting the Hen Harrier, and also, that I have your master's permission for doing so. I am sorry you don't like whiskey,"—ironically—"I should have had a shot just now but for your coming along, and I certainly shall have no chance so long as you stick here." Of course I can't pretend to give verbatim what I said to this keeper, but only the general drift of my remarks.

However, they had the effect of altering his manner very considerably, for he became most desirous to do what he could to assist me. I heard afterwards that this very keeper, so anxious was he to catch me, used to sally forth in the morning with a powerful telescope, take up a position on some of the highest ground, and survey the moors for hours ; so that when I made my long tramp across country from the first to the second nest, he evidently spotted me through his telescope, and then marking the exact spot, descended upon me like a Vulture. Soon after Ross left the Hen Harrier came round again, and offering me a good chance I accepted it, and brought the bird down.

Quite satisfied with my days adventure, my ghillie and I made tracks back for the hotel. In regard to some of the characteristics of the Hen Harrier, Howard Saunders says : " Like other Harriers, this species quarters the ground with great regularity in search of small mammals, birds, and reptiles, which form its food ; but though destructive to game, there is no evidence that it is an especial



scourge of the poultry yard, as might be inferred from its vernacular name. The flight is particularly buoyant and generally low."

In looking at the birds in this case, I think the dissimilarity in regard to plumage and size of the male and female is very noticeable. The female—as in nearly all the hawks—is much the larger of the two.

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## CASE 50.

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### THE PHEASANT.

*Order, Gallinæ. Family, Phasianidæ.*

This very well-known and handsome bird appears to have been known many, many years ago. Mr. W. H. Hudson says that its history extends "far back into the period of myth and fable to the famous expedition of the Argonauts, who brought back this bird from the banks of the river Phasis, in Colchis."

Howard Saunders, on the same subject, says: "There is evidence that the Pheasant had become naturalized in the south of England before the Norman invasion, though there is no mention of its existence in Scotland until 1594, and in Ireland until 1589."

The Colchian bird, generally known in this country as the old English Pheasant, is rapidly dying out, being swamped by the Chinese or Ring-necked Pheasant, and by hybrids with the Japanese

and other species. More or less perfect albinisms are not uncommon.

Looking at the Pheasant as I do in the light of a bird that we rear ourselves—many thousands being hatched out every season wherever there are large sporting estates—I should think its abundance, or otherwise, must rest somewhat upon the proportion killed to those reared. Of course, there are many places in Asia where the birds exist and breed in their wild state.

The Pheasant is hardy, and thrives under conditions that are suitable—woods with thick undergrowth, cultivated land round about, and water not far off. But after all, when one writes about such a bird as this, one thinks more about it in connection with its being one of the chief instruments we have to provide magnificent sport for Kings, Princes, Dukes, and the aristocracy generally. Wealthy landowners invite their relatives and friends to big shoots during the winter months; these are called “Battues.” The guns are posted round the woods and the birds driven over their heads. Bags may be anything from 1,000 to 2,000 birds in a day. I myself have only been fortunate enough to have had a small experience of what this shooting is like; but it was quite sufficient to give me a very fair idea. We had three days of it altogether, at different intervals, the total bag approximating to 1,000 birds.

I began very badly on the first day, but I gradually improved, and continued to do so. The

whole matter is more or less knack, and can easily be acquired with plenty of practice, which is the main thing; but to term it "barn door fowl" shooting is simple twaddle, and merely displays the ignorance of the speaker who makes such a remark; for in this sort of shooting you get Pheasants at all sorts of different angles, ascending, descending, and over-head, going at a great pace when there is a little wind to help them.

A man who has done nothing but shoot over dogs will probably find, when he first tries driven Pheasants, that he has got something more than he bargained for.

The specimens in the case were shot on a private estate of about 10,000 acres, belonging to Mr. Campbell Davis, about five miles from Llandovery, in Central Wales; they were picked out of a lot I got with the keepers belonging to the estate on the different expeditions I made there when staying at the Dolecoed Hotel, Llanwrytyd Wells, which also was Mr. Campbell Davis's property.

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## CASE 51.

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### MAGPIE, JAY.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Corvidæ.*

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#### THE MAGPIE.

This species is pretty generally distributed throughout our islands, but its numbers (where

there is much game preserving of late years), no doubt, have been considerably diminished by keepers, as it is a most destructive bird to the eggs of game.

In Ireland where there are large tracts of shooting, over which there is little or no supervision, the Magpie flourishes, and in my shooting expeditions to that country I found them to be very plentiful. The specimens in the case were obtained in the winter at Glenbeigh Hotel, co. Kerry. I have really little to say about them, except that I found the Magpie one of the most sagacious birds I ever attempted to stalk and get near. In the winter they are not at all in good plumage, many feathers in the tail being wanting, and others only partly grown; also there is a great want of gloss about them, so that the birds you see are the pick out of what I was able to shoot.

In regard to the nesting-habit of this species, Howard Saunders says: "The nest, large and domed, is often begun towards the end of March, and is made of thorny sticks, cemented together with clay at the foundation, with fine roots and dry grass as a lining. It is generally placed at some height in the fork of a tree, but often in tall and sometimes in very low hedges and thorn bushes. The eggs—usually six, but sometimes nine in number, are bluish-green or yellowish-white in ground-colour, closely freckled with olive-brown." He also says that they feed on slugs, snails, worms, rats, and mice, and that their services in this respect probably

counter-balance its destructiveness to game eggs. With regard to the boldness of the species he quotes an instance recorded by Lord Lilford of fourteen or fifteen Magpies attacking a sore-backed donkey in severe snowy weather. The note is a harsh chatter kept up incessantly as long as any obnoxious person or animal remains in its haunts ; while the manner in which the bird will hover over and swoop at an exhausted fox must be a familiar sight to many sportsmen, and conveys to them the intimation that the quarry is sinking."

I believe this species possesses the power of mimicry and can be taught to speak a few words.

In regard to habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says : " From the North Cape in Scandinavia southward it is found more or less plentifully throughout Europe, eastward the Magpie is found across Asia to India, China, and Japan, and also in the northern portion of America from the Pacific to Michigan."

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#### THE JAY.

This very handsome species, the wings of which are much valued for making artificial flies and for ladies' hats, is not so plentiful as it used to be owing to its numbers being kept down by gamekeepers, for, like the Magpie, it is a very deadly enemy to the preserver of game, being very partial to the eggs.

Owing to the well-known fact that when Carrion and Hoody Crows, Jays, and Magpies abound on a property, no game need be expected, and also to the

fact that the letting value of a shooting depends on the amount of game it carries with it, it naturally follows that honest keepers do what they can to keep these rascally birds down as much as possible. It is their duty, and they are paid to do it ; so, when sentimentalists are loud in their lament over their destruction I am not with them, for they are looked upon as vermin by all sportsmen and game preservers, and their destruction means reproduction elsewhere of something much more useful.

The Jay, however, is not soon likely to be extirpated ; in Scotland, perhaps, more than anywhere else its numbers have been sensibly reduced, owing probably to the fact that the Scotch keeper is one of the best and most to be depended on amongst that class of men ; but, in spite of all, the Jay holds his own fairly well, for there is no more wary or cunning bird in existence ; nor one more restless, active, energetic ; he is perpetually on the move, so that when you hear his harsh screech, and try to follow him up and locate him, he is off again to some other tree long before you can get anywhere near ; and as he always takes care to stick to the densest parts of the wood he may fairly be termed a very un-get-at-able bird.

In regard to the Jay's harsh call-note, I append an extract from Mr. W. H. Hudson's book : " When disturbed in his woodland haunts he utters a scream that startles the hearer, so loud and harsh and piercing is it. Richard Jefferies well describes it as being like the sound made in tearing a piece of

calico. He also has a lower monotonous rasping note which he will continue uttering for half an hour at a time when his curiosity or suspicion has been excited."

In regard to the nesting of the Jay, I don't think I need give you any better authority than the actual nest itself, which I took with eggs and the hen bird sitting at the time. It was in a tree situated in a wood of low birch trees—so far as I remember. A keeper being with me on this occasion, I remember at the time told me of a very remarkable peculiarity about this species, that if the hen bird found out that her nest and eggs had been discovered by a human being she would certainly destroy both it and the eggs and build another nest elsewhere. From this it would appear that the Jay had not much of a belief in the magnanimity of the human race, and that any more time spent on a discovered nest would be looked upon as worse than useless. I must say that I was struck by this characteristic feature.

The second specimen was got some years previous, about 1893 or 1894. I had rented a little pheasant shooting on a farm near my brother-in-law's shooting in Radnorshire; and on one occasion when shooting pheasants in a wood I annexed the bird you see.

The food of this species "consists chiefly of worms, insects, berries, nuts, beechmast, acorns, and fruits, also to some extent of the eggs and young of other birds" (H.S.).

Its habitat abroad—"South of the Arctic circle in Scandinavia the Jay is found throughout the suitable wooded portions of Europe down to the Mediterranean and Black Seas" (H.S.)

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## CASE 52.

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### THE CHOUGH

*Order, Passeres. Family, Corvidæ.*

This handsome species, allied to the Jackdaw, is, I very much regret to say, not nearly so plentiful as it used to be in years gone by.

Mr. W. H. Hudson, as I gather from his book, seems to attribute its diminishing numbers and now very limited distribution over our islands, to persecution of some sort or other, the inference being *man*. He says, "Unless strong measures to secure its protection be at once taken, its eventual extinction in this country must be regarded as merely a question of time." Howard Saunders, on the other hand, assigns quite a different cause for the scarcity of the Chough nowadays, which he attributes to its being a very local bird, as well as a very capricious species; localities formerly inhabited by it being sometimes abandoned without any assignable reason. In 1887, Howard Saunders found that it had almost disappeared from Lundy Island, where it used to be abundant, but this was due to the ravages of the Peregrine Falcon, which, when Pigeons are scarce, finds the Chough a very good substitute.



I am much more inclined to take Howard Saunders's view of the cause of the Chough's scarcity, for what object could there be to shoot any of these birds except an occasional one for Museum purposes. The egg-collector must bear his share of the blame. There is another thing to be considered in all this, that the Chough is a very cute and wary bird, and as a rule, only frequents sea cliffs and such like difficult places, so that it wouldn't be many the gunner would shoot for the bird would soon find a way to take care of itself. To refer now to the specimens in the case, and to some particulars in connection with obtaining them. I think the first Chough I ever saw was when I went to Cahirciveen, county Kerry, in the year 1896, for Snipe and Woodcock shooting. I was staying at the Railway Hotel there belonging to a Mr. Leslie, and one day when out with one of his watchers—keepers, as they call themselves, though they are nothing of the sort—I came across several Choughs that had come inland from the sea cliffs and were in some pasture-lands in the company of either Rooks or Jackdaws. Although these pastures were encompassed by stone walls in every direction, thus affording good stalking cover, I invariably found that Master Chough was fully aware when I was shikarring him. I think I made one or two attempts before I was successful, and then the bird flew a pretty good distance before coming down, but marking the spot carefully we managed to find him ; he was lying dead in a peat cutting.

The other specimens in the case I got some years afterwards when at Waterville with John Sullivan in the winter of 1902-3. We found them on some heather-clad mountains near the seashore, about four or five miles out of Waterville on the road to Parknasilla. The birds would often come down into the low grass lands at the base of the mountains, but never could I get a decent shot under these conditions, for they were always too wary ; I found it necessary, in fact, to get up to the altitude they usually maintain on the mountain side, and then by hiding amongst boulders and rocky places get some flying shots as they passed or flew over my head. I think I spent two days like this with John, and got all I wanted.

The Chough is one of the most graceful birds on the wing, and its evolutions in the air are most interesting to watch. It rises in sweeping sorts of curves in the air, "alternately rising with a scream and then suddenly dropping with almost closed wings." The call-note is something like the Jackdaw's, as if it was split ; only much more musical. Howard Saunders calls it a clear metallic "kling." This species nests principally in the sea cliffs of Cornwall and Devon, Wales, the Isle of Man, south and south-west and north of Ireland.

The nest "is frequently placed in some cavity in the roof of a cave, but sometimes in vertical fissures, holes in ruins, grassy banks, or disused lime-kilns. The eggs—three to five in number, are greyish-white, with occasionally a yellow or greenish tinge, spotted



**Choughs.**  
Cliff Scene.



and streaked with several shades of dark grey and pale brown." (H.S.)

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### CASE 53.

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## THE WOODPIGEON AND ROCK PIGEON.

*Order, Columbæ. Family, Columbidae.*

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### THE WOODPIGEON.

The Woodpigeon, or Ring Dove, is a resident species, and its numbers are supplemented by large flocks which arrive in the autumn and winter months from the Continent. In the spring it pairs for breeding purposes, but in the winter it is gregarious.

I am afraid the farmer does not regard this species as anything but an enemy to his crops, for it is a great destroyer of them, doing an immense amount of damage, being fond of various kinds of grain, turnip tops, swedes, clover, etc. It is very partial to acorns, and Mr. W. H. Hudson in his list gives gooseberries.

The nest is formed of a few twigs placed generally in a fairly high tree. Two eggs are laid of a shiny white colour. The Woodpigeon appears to have increased considerably in numbers, "especially in the Lothians, where the bird was unknown a century ago." (H.S.)

The increase in the species may possibly in some measure be due to the extermination of birds of prey

by gamekeepers and the Wild Birds' Protection Act. Mr. W. H. Hudson alludes to it as a persecuted species. Well, that may be so. That is to say, in a day's shoot it is a very useful bird to have in a cover to give a good sporting shot when game is not plentiful, but when you talk of persecution, I don't suppose it has nearly such a rough time of it as a Grouse, Pheasant, or Partridge. Of course, it is a bird that can be shot with a gun license only, and therefore affords sport to many a man who is unable to pay for anything in the way of game shooting.

I look upon the Woodpigeon in feather, and the rabbit in fur, as two of the most useful adjuncts to a shooting which may be called "mixed." The best sport with Woodpigeons is when they come in to roost. Then on the birds coming to or going from the wood your skill will be tested to the utmost, for the shots you are likely to get will be difficult; and as a Woodpigeon is capable of carrying a good deal of lead away, you must be pretty forward on your quarry to do much successful shooting.

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#### THE ROCK DOVE.

The Rock Dove, or Rock Pigeon, as it is more commonly called, I think is a species that I have met with principally in the islands that lie off the west coast of Scotland, and is to be found on rocky coasts wherever caves exist, for it confines itself entirely to that sort of locality.

Howard Saunders says that the purest breed of this bird is to be found "in Ireland, especially among

the rugged, wave-hollowed cliffs facing the Atlantic," etc. The same author also gives the coasts of Wales, Isle of Man, Flamborough Head, Northumberland, and the west coast of Scotland as breeding-stations.

When I used to fish pretty frequently at Loch Boisdale in South Uist some years ago, it was quite a common practice for the visitors—when fishing was slack—to make up parties to go round the coast and visit all the caves in the neighbourhood for the purpose of shooting Rock Pigeons. As one could not land to do this, and consequently had to stand in a boat that probably was rocking about in a choppy sea, it required one to be rather an expert in the way of quick shooting to make any sort of hand at these birds, as they darted out of the caves at all sorts of angles. I don't suppose anyone who has not tried it could understand how difficult it is, when you make due allowance that the Rock Dove is a very tough bird to bring down and takes a lot of shot.

The specimens in the case were shot out of the caverns that abound on the weather-beaten coastline of Mull—previously mentioned in connection with several of my specimens which were obtained there.

## CASE 54.

## THE JACKDAW AND STARLING.

## THE JACKDAW.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Corvidæ.*

This is a very familiar species to us all, being indigenous to our islands, at the same time augmented in the winter months by large flocks which arrive from the Continent.

It seems to be very generally distributed over Great Britain, with perhaps the exception of the Outer Hebrides ; also some parts of the Irish coast, where its place amongst the cliffs is taken by the Chough. In regard to nesting-habit, the Jackdaw has a very varied selection of sites, those that I have come across having been more or less in church towers, chimneys of houses, ivy-grown cliffs ; but in addition to these it makes use, I believe, of rabbit burrows and holes in trees. Mr. W. H. Hudson describes the nest as "a rude structure made with sticks, dry grass, leaves, wool, and other materials heaped together." The eggs—four to six in number—are of a pale blue to greenish tint in ground-colour, spotted and blotched with blackish-olive-brown and grey.

The Jackdaw's principal food probably would be what it can pick up in the way of worms, slugs, insects, and such like in pastures and cultivated lands, but at the same time it is partial to eggs, and will even eat carrion in the winter.



I think we most of us look upon the Jackdaw as only a very mischievous bird, and never credit him with being more than that. The late Mr. E. Booth used to hold that opinion till going one day (he tells us in his book) to some Jackdaws' nests to take a young bird for purposes of comparison with a young Grey Crow, he found "shells of dozens of Grouse eggs which had been destroyed." Next season steps were taken to prevent their breeding again in that district, the result being that the Grouse immensely increased on the moors.

I call the Jackdaw a very sociable bird, as he sometimes comes into country towns and breeds in the chimneys of a whole street. At least this was the case at Foxford, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

It was extraordinary to see a whole street turned into a sort of nesting-site for birds. One of the specimens in the case was obtained there, the others with their young I got when staying at Salen Hotel, Island of Mull, during my second visit. The nests were situated in some ivy on the face of a cliff. This species is no doubt gifted with more than the usual amount of intelligence. Mr. W. H. Hudson says "the two small bright, whitish-grey eyes, set close together in the middle, have an expression of craft that is somewhat human and a little uncanny."

My own observation in regard to the Jackdaw is that he is one of the most knowing of the Crow family, being perfectly well aware when you are "shikarring" him and when you have no such intention.

In regard to habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says, "It is found, and as a rule is resident, throughout the rest of Europe," the exceptions given being the Faroes, Iceland, Norway (north of Trondhjems Fjords), and Arctic circle generally. Continuing, he says, "But in the south of France, Spain, Italy, and Greece it is extremely local."

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THE STARLING.

*Family, Sturnidae.*

This species is more gregarious in its habits than most of our birds, and must be familiar to most of my readers.

It is very widely distributed over the whole of the British Islands, being exceptionally plentiful in the "west and north of England and Wales. Immense flocks arrive on our east coasts in autumn, a large proportion of these immigrants spreading themselves over the south of Ireland" (H.S.) Of late years Starlings have greatly increased in number, and this is especially the case in regard to Scotland, where in former years it was almost an unknown species.

As far as my own knowledge obtains the Starling has been in evidence everywhere.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "The nesting habits of the Starling contribute to make it one of our most familiar birds. He breeds in holes; and a hole in a tree or rock, in a cliff or quarry, suits him very well; but he more often finds a suitable place under the

eaves of a house, or in a barn or church tower, or other building, and uses the same site year after year."

The nest, commenced usually in April, is constructed of a lot of grass, roots, straw, etc., with a little moss, and lining of a few feathers and wool. Four to six eggs are laid, of a pale blue colour. The food consists of worms, grubs, insect life of all kinds, etc., also berries and fruit.

I have often watched Starlings feeding in pasture lands. What restless little busybodies they seem to be! running here, there, and everywhere for food, rushing at any particular spot where one of them has found something extra good; greedy little birds, never satisfied, feeding all the livelong day.

In localities where Starlings are abundant they keep on gathering towards the close of day at their roosting-place, and then, when they are all collected, rise in one vast cloud of countless numbers, which Mr. W. H. Hudson says, "when seen from a distance may easily be mistaken for a long black cloud suspended above the wood, and that it is one of the finest sights that bird life presents in England."

There is nothing of particular interest in connection with the specimens in the case, which were obtained when I was staying at the little inn at Fosdyke, in Lincolnshire, in 1903.

The species has a wide distribution abroad.

## CASE 55.

## THE SHORT-EARED OWL.

*Order, Striges. Family, Strigidaë.*

The two handsome specimens in the case, which are in excellent feather, were shot in late autumn, when I was out after Grouse with a keeper on a shooting my brother-in-law held for some years in Radnorshire. They were flushed from heather not far from each other—on a mountain about 1,000 feet above sea-level, and had evidently only just come in from the Continent. This species—amongst sportsmen—is often called the Woodcock Owl, this is owing, Howard Saunders says, “to the fact that large numbers arrive regularly from the Continent in autumn and remain for the winter,” also to its being “frequently flushed by sportsmen,” and lastly, to “the coincidence of the time of its appearance and its twisting flight.” Its habitat is usually to be found on high moorlands, heather, etc., but Howard Saunders also gives “fens, furze on hills, and more or less damp places.” This bird is not an arboreal species like the Long-Eared Owl, but rather prefers tufts of heather in which to make its nest; and I may say that I once found a nest of this species in a bank of heather in one of the islands of the Outer Hebrides. I stayed by it some little time to watch the parent birds; it was interesting to see their excitement and resentment at what they considered my intrusion upon their domain. As I did not leave

immediately, they very soon became quite bold, their one idea being to try and drive me away by circling round me and by occasional violent swoops at my head. At times they came so near as almost to hit me in the face. So far as I can remember, there were seven or eight eggs in the nest of a dirty white colour, very smooth in texture and almost round. Howard Saunders says that this Owl feeds on "rats, mice, lemmings, and other rodents—birds from the size of a Lark to that of a Plover—occasionally bats, fish, reptiles, and large insects."

The Short-Eared Owl appears to be pretty well distributed throughout the British Isles, being found in the eastern and northern counties of England; in Wales and Ireland in suitable localities; whilst in Scotland and its western islands it may be said to be plentiful. Howard Saunders says, "No other species has so wide a range," and, on perusal of his book, I should say that there is hardly a country in the world where the bird is not in evidence.

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## CASE 56.

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### COMMON AND ARCTIC TERN.

*Order, Gaviæ. Family, Laridæ.*

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#### THE COMMON TERN.

This is a very handsome little bird with its scarlet legs and bill, its glossy black head, and its French grey plumage. It is distinctly a migratory species,

visiting our islands about the month of May for breeding purposes, departing again towards the end of September.

According to the best ornithological authorities, the Common Terns' distribution over the British Islands may be said to be considerably to the south of that occupied by the Arctic Tern ; the two being so very similar in plumage as to require an expert to tell the difference, and their habits and general characteristics so much the same, treatment under one head will be quite sufficient. Howard Saunders gives the following boundary for the Common Tern : " west coast of Great Britain as far north as the Island of Skye, the Channel, and east coast of England as far as the Moray Firth." I have met with scores of Terns breeding on the islands in some of the fresh-water lochs in the Hebrides which I have hitherto taken to be the Common Tern, but on referring to Howard Saunders's " Manual," he states that he has had no conclusive evidence of their being there. All I can say is that I must have mistaken the one for the other, a mistake which might easily occur.

On looking at the two species closely one finds that the Arctic Tern has a blood red bill and is rather darker on the breast, while the bill of the other is orange-red tipped with very dark brown, and the breast is lighter in colour. The chief interest in the Tern is when it is engaged in fishing operations, which are most graceful ; the bird at such times soars up in the air to the height of from fifty to sixty feet, then hovering for a few seconds

over some bed of seaweed which is gradually becoming covered by the incoming tide, closes both wings when within twelve to fifteen feet of its prey, and drops like a stone into little open places amongst the seaweed, and I may almost say never fails to bring up a small fish or sand-eel in its bill. It is a pretty sight, too, to see these Terns when they know they have made some miscalculation how quickly they recover themselves, just touching the water without plunging in and ascending again in a gentle sort of sweep.

There are many about the western islands of Scotland, one or two of which are exclusively taken up by them for breeding purposes. It was on such an one as these about twenty miles out of Oban that my companion B—whom you will find mentioned in connection with the steam-launch I hired from Oban on one occasion—and I managed to get the specimens you see in the case ; there were any number of birds there.

Both species have a very wide distribution abroad.

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## CASE 57.

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### THE HERON.

*Order, Herodiones. Family, Ardeidæ.*

This species may be said to be fairly well distributed over our British Islands in localities suitable to its habits, such as estuaries and creeks of the sea, freshwater pools, and marsh lands.

It is an interesting bird owing to its associations with the past when falconry was a pastime. In those days the Heron was protected by law, being esteemed as a favourite quarry for the Falcon.

Mr. W. H. Hudson in his book has something interesting on this subject which is worth quoting; he says, "When pursued by a Falcon the Heron is capable of rising vertically to a vast height, while the Hawk rushes after in a zig-zag course, striving to rise above his quarry so as to strike. This aerial contest of Hawk and Heron forms a very fascinating spectacle, and formerly, when Hawks were trained for this sport, the Heron was as much esteemed as the Pheasant—which has been called the 'Sacred' bird—is at the present day. With the decline of falconry the Heron ceased to be protected by law and diminished greatly in numbers; but he is a historical bird, and there is a feeling or sentiment that has served to prevent his extermination."

So far as my observations obtain in regard to this particular species, I have found it in evidence in almost every part of the British Islands I have been in—if I make an exception it would be the Hebrides, for I don't think there are many there. As for Heronries, there are probably a good many more than are mentioned in ornithological books.

In the year 1903, when sailing in a boat along the sea cliffs which skirt the Island of Mull, there was a Heronry—a fair sized colony in fact.

Howard Saunders, in giving the birds' nesting-site, is very accurate in what he says: "they nest in



company in varying numbers on high trees ; sometimes, however, on precipitous sea cliffs, or crags covered with ivy and shrubs." This last named position exactly describes the position of the one I saw on the coast of Mull ; all the others that I have come across have been usually in high trees. The Heron's capacity for food is enormous ; often and often have I watched these birds feeding ; taking up a position they think most favourable to the incoming tide there they stick, up to their knees in water, swallowing fish after fish, small and large, for anything they can manage to get down their throat is all right, and their swallowing capabilities must certainly be wonderful, for I have seen them struggling to get down a good sized fish of maybe half a pound, till I have almost thought that on this particular occasion they weren't going to manage it, but, down it went ! after a lot of determination and perseverance.

The Heron may be said to be wary, and yet owing to his want of brains in putting himself into defenceless positions which can easily be approached, there is no difficulty in surprising and getting a shot at him.

The specimen in the case was obtained when I was staying at the Glenbeigh Hotel in the winter. I had gone for a day's expedition by train to a place called Castlemaine, to follow the course of a tidal river called the Maine, my object being to try and get some Ducks.

In walking along by the banks of the river, on coming round one of the bends, I surprised the

gentleman you see in the case and annexed him. There was no merit in the shot as it was easy enough. When I saw he was a fine specimen I decided upon putting him into my collection. The bird wasn't anything like dead when we picked him up, and the first thing he did was to go for us with his beak. This is the characteristic feature of the Heron family, and unless you watch them they are dangerous, as the spot they make for is the eye.

In regard to habitat abroad, Howard Saunders says: "On the coast of Norway it ranges to 68 degrees N. latitude, although it does not reach beyond 57 degrees in Sweden and Russia, while southwards it is found in suitable localities over the greater part of Europe, and considerable numbers breed in colonies in the marshes of Northern and Central Italy, the valley of the Danube and Southern Russia."

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### CASE 58.

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REDSHANK, SANDERLING, RINGED  
 PLOVER, COMMON SANDPIPER,  
 DUNLIN, TURNSTONE,  
 SNOW BUNTING.

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#### THE REDSHANK.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

This species seems to be pretty well distributed over the British Islands. In the spring season the

bird comes into the inland marshes to breed, whilst in autumn and open winters it is generally to be found on the sea coast and its estuaries ; the latter, owing to the numberless little creeks formed by incoming and ebb tides, and the many sea pools, marshes, and mud-banks left at low water, are the most favourite resorts for the Redshank. It was in such ground as the last-named that I shot the specimens in the case, in the winter of 1893, at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry.

These birds are often a great nuisance ; spoiling one's stalk after some other species, which they assuredly will do, if anywhere near, by flying all over the place uttering a screeching, shrill cry. Many a time have the birds sold me, so I don't particularly love them. The nest is often very difficult to find, owing to the artful way in which it is concealed ; the eggs are most eagerly sought after by collectors on account of the great variation in colour and markings.

In regard to nesting-habit, I append an extract from Howard Saunders's Manual : " The Redshank frequently breeds in small communities, the nest being in the centre of a tuft of rushes or of long grass, the entwined blades of which conceal the contents from view ; but in many places the nest is as exposed as that of a Lapwing or of a Golden Plover. The four eggs are of a yellowish-stone colour, blotched with purplish-brown. When the nest is approached the bird is very noisy, and practices many artifices to allure the intruder from

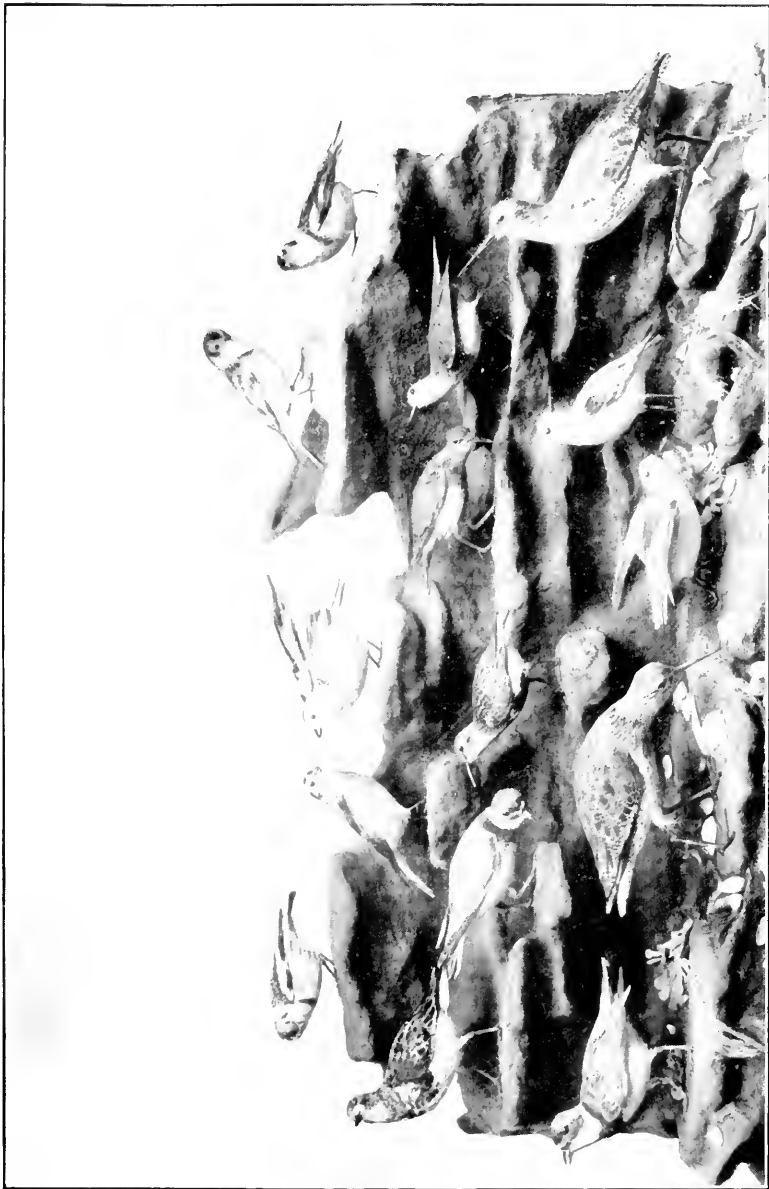
the neighbourhood. . . . in spring the male has a peculiar love song, pirouetting and bowing like an amorous Pigeon. The food consists of aquatic insects, worms, crustaceans, and small molluscs." Its habitat abroad extends over a wide range; as far north as Archangel; south, Cape Colony; east, Japan, China, and India.

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#### THE SANDERLING.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

The little Plover is easily recognised by the absence of a hind toe. From the middle of autumn to mid-winter it is fairly well distributed on the sea-shore, and in estuaries and inland waters. The specimens in the case were shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, in the same year as the Redshanks. They are in winter plumage, which is very different from that in the spring; in the latter the feathers of the back are darkish, spotted with rufous, the throat and breast are chestnut, and altogether the birds are then much more handsome. Sanderlings may often be seen in flocks with Dunlins and Ringed Plovers, for whose companionship they appear to have a preference, coming over to us in the autumn, remaining with us part of the winter, then departing, and returning again in the spring in their breeding-plumage, staying with us a couple of months or so, and departing again to northern latitudes for breeding during the summer; so that twice in the year Britain is used as a stopping-place;



Redshanks, Sanderlings, Ringed Plovers, Common Sandpipers, Dunlins  
Turnstones, Snow Buntings.  
Sandstone Cliff.



on their southward journey in autumn, when they stay some time ; and on their northward journey in spring, when they are only with us a few weeks. Mr. W. H. Hudson says: "The Sanderling is circum-polar in its distribution, and breeds further north than most of the Arctic species." It is not necessary to say anything about nesting-habit as the bird does not breed in our islands.

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THE RINGED PLOVER.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

So far as my own observations obtain in regard to the distribution of this particular species, I must say that I have found it in all suitable localities—on the seacoast, estuaries, and Scotch lochs situated not far from the sea. The two specimens in the case, as far as my memory serves me, were shot on the shores of a loch about four miles distant from Loch Boisdale, in South Uist, and only about half a mile from some magnificent sand strands on the Atlantic. There are apparently—according to that indisputable authority, Howard Saunders—a resident and a migrant race. The former "are larger and more bullet-headed, and duller in the colour of the mantle than those which come from the south in the spring and leave us after a short stay, of which a few, perhaps, remain to breed in Kent and Sussex." The same author says: "The nest is usually a mere shallow cavity in the sand, sometimes lined with

small stones. The eggs are four in number, stone-buff, spotted with black. Two broods are reared." Owing to the similarity in the colour of the eggs to their natural surroundings, they are extremely hard to find, especially when the parent birds practice every artifice to draw you away from their whereabouts. This also may be applied to the finding of the young birds, which, when being warned by the alarm note of the parents, squat as tight as possible, and though you may be close to them you will have to look a long time before detecting them, so well does the colour of their down blend with that of the stones around. Sanderlings have a very wide range abroad.

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#### THE COMMON SANDPIPER.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

This bird, often known as the Summer Snipe, usually arrives on our coast during the month of April, although these, doubtless, are only the pioneers of the greater number which arrive in May. The Common Sandpiper is more abundant on the lochs in Scotland than anywhere else—it is also fairly common in Wales and Ireland, whilst in the south of England its breeding-grounds are decidedly scarce. The specimens in the case were shot in the Hebrides—one of the two, as far as I can remember, being bagged on a loch about six miles distant from Loch Boisdale, where I was trout fishing. Often and often have I watched the antics of this



delicate little bird, which, after taking flight and settling on some stone or boulder of rock on the margin of the shore, seems to indulge in a lot of ducking and bobbing of the head and working of the tail that is very amusing. This Sandpiper, when disturbed in the breeding-season, utters a little plaintive note like "Wheet, wheet"; its nesting site when on the margin of a loch would be some little distance from the water's edge to allow of any unusual rise, and would probably be found in a sheltered hollow in a bank or in coarse tufts of grass or rushes.

The eggs—four in number, are reddish-buff, spotted with brown. There are many varieties in colour, one clutch being hardly ever like another; and the finding of the nest of this species in a reasonably short space of time—owing to the cuteness of the parents—can only be accomplished by an egg-collector who has studied that art, one to which, speaking frankly, I cannot lay claim.

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### THE DUNLIN.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

This species, by far the most abundant of the British Sandpipers, is a very interesting little bird. It has the local names of "Purré," "Stint," "Ox-Bird," and "Sea-Snipe." There are two migrations, one vernal and the other autumnal; a good many of the adult winter birds remain behind with us to breed in suitable localities, whilst the balance depart

in the spring to breed in northern latitudes. Now, whilst the resident birds with us retire inland for nesting purposes, selecting as site for same, by preference, the wild elevated moorlands which are found in Scotland, their places in summer on the seacoast, estuaries, etc., are filled up by immature birds; so the net result is that there is always a plentiful supply; indeed, their number is legion. According to Mr. Charles Dixon, an authority on the migration of birds, the Dunlin breeds in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; whilst Howard Saunders considers that satisfactory evidence is wanting in regard to Wales. The nest is very slightly constructed, "often in a tussock of long coarse grass or among seapinks, short heather, etc.; the eggs—four in number, are greenish-white, blotched and spotted with two shades of reddish-brown." (Howard Saunders). There is a great difference in spring and winter plumage, the former being a compound of chestnut and black, the latter an ashen grey colour. The Dunlin breeds as far north as "Scandinavia, the tundras of Russia to Novaya Zemlya, also along the Baltic Coast of Northern Germany; during the colder months the bird comes further south to the Canaries, Northern Africa, extending as far as Zanzibar." (Howard Saunders).

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#### THE TURNSTONE.

The particulars of this bird will be found to be dealt with in Case 45.

## THE SNOW BUNTING.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Fringillidæ.*

The Snow Bunting is a winter migrant to our shores, arriving on our east coasts, generally about the month of October, in large flocks, and spreading into suitable localities. It is an interesting little bird, for though the main body departs from our shores during the spring for northern latitudes to breed in the regions of the Arctic circle—nests having been found on Grinell Land, nearly as far as man has penetrated—some remain and breed with us, especially on the higher ranges of the Scotch mountains.

The specimens in the case were obtained under the following circumstances :—I had been returning from a very enjoyable day after some Brent Geese with a Roman Catholic Priest—a great sportsman, who possessed one of Tolley's best double-barrelled wild-fowling guns—when casting my eye up a beautiful strand of sand on the shores of the Atlantic, near Castle Gregory, co. Kerry, I noticed a flock of small birds hopping about on one leg, busily searching for food amongst the seaweed left by an ebb tide. This hopping on one leg was quite new to me, and I was quite sure that I had not met with this species. I did not get a shot on that particular day, having no shot sufficiently small for them, but I marked the locality, and visiting the spot on another occasion with some snipe shot cartridges, I bagged six with one barrel. They are in their winter plumage, which you will note is extremely

varied and pretty ; in summer the back of this bird's tail and wing feathers, with the exception of the middle,—termed the inner secondaries,—are all black, the rest of the plumage being all white. There is one interesting account given by the well known naturalist, Seeböhm, who met with large flocks of these little birds when on his travels in the Arctic regions, whose description, as they appeared to him, I now give in his own words : “ In sledging over the snow across the Steppes of South-Western Siberia, from Ekaterineburg to Tomsk, a distance of about 1,000 miles, the Snow Bunting was the only bird we saw, except a few Sparrows, Jackdaws, and Hooded Crows near the villages. The Snow Buntings were in small flocks, and many of them had almost lost their winter dress. It was a charming sight to watch them flitting before the sledge, as we disturbed them at their meals. Sometimes in the sunshine their white bodies were invisible against the white snow, and we could almost fancy that a flock of black butterflies was dancing before us. The flight of the Snow Bunting is peculiar, and is somewhat like that of a butterfly, as if the bird altered its mind every few seconds as to which direction it wished to take.” Of its song, he says : “ Whilst the female is busy with the duties of incubation the male sings freely, sometimes as he sits upon the top of a rock, but often flinging himself up into the air like a shuttlecock, and then descending in a spiral curve, with wings and tail expanded, singing all the time.”

## CASE 59.

## THE TEAL.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

Teal are the smallest of our Ducks, and are indigenous, but in the winter we have many more visitors. They are fairly abundant and widely distributed, especially over Scotland and Ireland.

In regard to nesting-habitat, Howard Saunders gives the localities as follows: "Sparingly in the south of England, and occasionally in the valley of the Thames, but in the eastern counties and the valley of the Trent it is a fairly numerous breeder, and becoming more frequent, while it finds suitable retreats in the Welsh bogs, as well as the mosses of Lancashire and Cumberland," etc. Again, "It is a widely distributed breeding-species in Scotland, and nests in every county in Ireland, where a great influx takes place during the cold season." The nest "is placed in tufts of heather or under low bushes on the borders of morasses and pools, composed of dry grasses and leaves, to which a lining of down is added during the progress of incubation. Eggs—eight to ten, and even to fifteen, in number; colour, buffish or creamy-white. Many instances are on record of the affection of this bird for its brood, and a female has even been known to follow her ducklings into captivity."

The Teal feeds by night, on slugs, worms, insects, aquatic plants, crustaceans, etc. The specimens in the case were got one day on one of my

punt-gunning expeditions with Michael Casey, of Cremorne, five miles from the Glenbeigh Hotel, where I was staying during the winter of 1893-94.

I have said so much about Michael Casey and his punt in connection with another case that in the present instance I do not propose to say anything further on these specimens, except that the Mallard has been introduced into the case because the two species associate so much together.

The geographical range of the Teal is very wide indeed. According to Howard Saunders : " It is in evidence all over the continent in the cold season wherever fresh water does not freeze for any length of time, is a visitor to Madeira, the Canaries, and North Africa, Egypt, etc., and found throughout Asia from the Arctic circle in summer to Siam in the winter."

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## CASE 60.

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### THE SHOVELLER.

*Order, Anseres. Family, Anatidæ.*

This species may be considered rare amongst British Ducks. Another name for it is "Spoonbill" or "Broadbill," and all three are due to the peculiar shape of its bill.

It comes to us chiefly during the winter months ; at the same time a fair number remain to breed in the spring. To give these localities with some authority, I quote Howard Saunders, who says :

“ In some parts of Norfolk and Lincolnshire it nests regularly, and sparingly in Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland ; whilst near Rainworth, in Nottinghamshire, it is decidedly increasing. In Wales and on the west side of England it is rarer ; though a few pairs inhabit the marshes on the Cumberland side of the Solway, . . . it is almost unknown in the Outer islands or in the south, and nests at Abbeyleix, in Queen’s Co., Lough Derg, on the Shannon, Lough Portmore, in co. Antrim, and a few other localities in Ireland.”

The same author says : “ The nest is usually on dry ground in rank vegetation or tufts of rushes, and is made of fine grass with a lining of down, plucked by the female from her body after she begins to sit. The eggs—eight to fourteen, are of a pale greenish-buff colour.” This Duck feeds on “grasses, worms, slugs, snails, aquatic, or even winged insects, and small crustaceans.”

I think I can endorse what Howard Saunders gives as the diet of the Shoveller. In the account of my operations during my stay at Castle Gregory, I said there were several varieties of Duck on a certain lake, but there was no means of getting near them, and the only chance lay in waiting for them late in the evening when the daylight was on the wane.

Well, in the position I used to take up on such evenings for “flighting,” as it is usually called, I had seen these birds fly down an inland creek on the side opposite to where I was posted, and consequently

out of range. To make a long story short, though I tried hard I never seemed to be posted in the right place for them; the fact was, my luck was against me, and I failed even to get a shot.

It must have been some months after I had left Ireland—the shooting season being over—that my old friend O'Donnell, of Castle Gregory, knowing how keen I was about these Shovellers, employed, as I imagine, someone in the village to capture them for me, for he sent both specimens to me by post, with, I believe, a forwarding letter which explained that they had been caught with a line and hook, baited with a worm; a truly funny way of obtaining a specimen! Nevertheless, I was very pleased to accept them, as I had thoroughly associated myself with the locality where they were, had seen them in fighting expeditions at night, and consequently looked upon them as a sort of property belonging to myself after all my labour for them.

In regard to habitat abroad, I don't suppose any of our Ducks have a wider range, for it is in evidence pretty well all over the world, *i.e.*, "Europe, North Africa, Asia, and North America from Alaska to Panama. The species is fairly common in China and India during the cold weather." (H.S.) These specimens were the last link between myself and Castle Gregory, near Tralee, where I spent many enjoyable days in old O'Donnell's rather rough quarters.



## CASE 61.

## THE KESTREL.

*Order, Accipitres. Family, Falconidæ.*

The Kestrel, or Windhover—the latter name is undoubtedly due to its characteristic habit of hovering in the wind—is pretty well distributed over the British Islands, and is a resident and breeding-species with us.

From ornithological books it appears that in winter this Hawk leaves its habitat in the more northern districts of our islands and distributes itself in the more southern portions, these again being augmented by others which arrive from the Continent. In regard to the nesting-site of this species, those that I have come across have been in tall trees—such as the fir, or in the face of some cliff, generally those which have a good growth down the side—such as ivy, but writers on ornithology say that the Kestrel prefers, instead of making a nest for himself, to make use of a ready-made one, such as that of a Crow, Magpie, or Woodpigeon.

The eggs—usually four, laid in May, are of a reddish-brown colour. This Hawk, like the Hen Harrier, is very fond of field mice and voles; frogs, snails, and beetles being also part of its diet; but nevertheless it cannot be entirely credited with being a perfectly harmless species, for it certainly preys on young birds, and as there appears to be a consensus of opinion amongst some ornithological

writers and experts that the Kestrel Hawk has no destructive tendencies the following facts may be interesting as well as instructive. When staying at Arthog Hall Hotel in 1906 a report reached me that a Kestrel had carried off some young Pheasant-chicks belonging to a Colonel L., who resided at Ynys Faig Hotel, Fairbourne, near Barmouth. At the time I did not inquire any further into the matter. Quite recently I wrote for full particulars, and the Colonel very kindly sent me the following: "About 3.30 one morning in the middle of June, 1906, I heard the hens making a great noise, and got up just in time to see from my bedroom window a Kestrel swoop and take a Pheasant-chick out of some rough grass. I may say that my bedroom window overlooks the ground whereon were five or six coops of Pheasant-chicks—about 14 or 16 days old. Owing to the heat the shutters of the coops were not closed as usual. At about 5.30 a.m. either the same or another Kestrel swooped down on another chick, which it took off without my being able to get a shot at it. On both these occasions I was so close to the Hawk that no mistake is possible. The following day Whittal (*i.e.*, the keeper) tried to get a shot. Again the Hawk took a chick, close to where he was standing, but got away. Next morning Whittal shot a Kestrel on the edge of the rearing field. He brought the bird to me; it *was* a Kestrel. A couple of days afterwards I shot a Kestrel about 200 yards from the rearing field, since when we were not further troubled."



**Kestrel Hawks.**  
Woodland Nesting - Site, with Young.



The proprietor Ynys Faig Hotel also writes me that he quite endorses what Colonel L. has written, and further adds: "I saw the bird myself carry off young Pheasants. I am also certain they play 'old Harry' with the young Partridges in the breeding-season." I now propose to give the testimony of Mr. Alexander Stewart, head-keeper, residing at Ach-na-Cloich, Argyleshire, a man with whom I have been out in the field on several occasions, and on whose statement I place the most implicit reliance. As Mr. A. Stewart is in the habit of rearing hundreds of Pheasants for his master, Mr. N., every year, he is quite in a position to speak with authority. This is what he writes me: "With regard to the habits of the Kestrel I may state that they feed chiefly on mice and small birds. They are very troublesome in the rearing field, as I have seen them take young Pheasants, and I have shot them with young Pheasants in their claws. We destroy all the birds and nests we come across as they are also very destructive on the Grouse moor." I will conclude these remarks by stating the opinion of Mr. James McKintyre, head-keeper over the Duke of Argyle's property in the Island of Mull. He writes as follows: "You are perfectly right in regard to the Kestrel Hawk doing damage. I can prove it; not at all once or twice I found young Pheasants in her nest, also young Grouse and Black Game. There are lots of ignorant people that tell you the Buzzard Hawk does not kill game. Its just as well for them to say that neither the Peregrine

Falcon nor the Sparrow Hawk is not destructive to game as to say the Kestrel or Buzzard does not damage game, because they all do." The practical experience of two head-keepers over large estates, reliable in every way—as I know them to be from personal acquaintance—speaking with the authority that the position they hold enables them to do—this fact coupled with such support as that of a retired Colonel, who himself has been in the habit of rearing Pheasants, is, I think, amply sufficient to dispel any erroneous idea entertained by some ornithological writers in regard to this particular Hawk, and it is for this reason I have taken the trouble to collect the data herein afforded, my object being to present facts to my readers—not suppositions.

To anyone making a practical study of the different characteristics of birds in the field, I think the one that would probably strike him most in reference to this species is its habit of hovering over its prey. At such times the Kestrel appears to be perfectly motionless, and this seems to be maintained often when the wind is high.

Mr. Pycraft says: "In hovering the wings are driven at an enormous speed, yet the bird remains poised over a given spot. In our common Kestrel Hawk we have a superb exponent of this fact." Mr. W. H. Hudson remarks: "When thus hovering motionless the wings are seen to beat rapidly for a few seconds, then to become fixed and rigid for a moment or two, after which the beating motion is renewed." From these two descriptions it is evident

that the bird has to use a good deal of muscular power with the wings to keep himself nearly stationary over the object of his prey.

The specimens in the case are a complete family, which I got in Radnorshire. Being anxious to have them in my collection, I set a boy at work—the keeper of the sporting estate being too lazy—to try and find me a nest. After some considerable lapse of time, I obtained information of one; I made one or two futile attempts at first owing, to the extreme wariness of the parents. The nest was in a tall fir tree, and one wet day the hen stuck to her post rather longer than was her wont, so that when she flew off I happened by chance—for that is what it really amounted to—to be within shot of her, and brought her down. I then took the three young birds, and set a spring trap for the male bird across the empty nest; by that same evening I managed to bag him too.

The Kestrel has a very wide distribution, embracing the best part the of Old World. Howard Saunders says: “Nowhere is it more abundant than in Spain, where swarms may be seen, especially towards sunset, circling round the lofty church towers of Cordova and Seville.”

## CASE 62.

THE WOODCOCK, SNIPE, AND JACK  
SNIPE.

*Order, Limicolæ. Family, Charadriidæ.*

## THE WOODCOCK.

This, to me, is a very interesting species indeed ; and, taken in conjunction with the Snipe, probably affords more fascination to the man who is unable to pay a fancy price for sport than any other sort of shooting.

We generally consider the Woodcock to be due towards the end of October ; the prevailing wind at the time and the age of the moon having something to do with its arrival rather earlier or later than that date.

Most of the birds that visit us, I think, come from the direction of Norway and Sweden, and hit off the line of our east coast in their flights of countless numbers. Many instances are recorded of these birds flying against our lighthouses on dark stormy nights, and killing themselves against the glass. The record of lighthouse keepers on our east coast in regard to the numbers of birds that get destroyed in this way would be most interesting.

Woodcock, after arriving on our east coast, appear to wend their way along the south coast, passing over to Ireland, via Lundy Island, in the British Channel, and then to distribute themselves all over that country.



Some years ago I was Snipe shooting in co. Clare, west coast of Ireland, when the man who was with me said that one year in some fields in that county, close to the shores of the Atlantic, he found hundreds upon hundreds of Woodcock on the furze bushes, on the ground, in fact, everywhere. They were so exhausted that they couldn't fly, and you could catch them and knock them down with sticks. These were evidently birds that, meeting with a wind too strong against them, had been carried on to the west coast of Ireland instead of to the east coast of England.

In regard to the birds sometimes failing to make their objective point, Howard Saunders says : " Birds have often been known to alight with the wind in a quarter opposed to the direction whence they might be expected, but this is probably due to the existence of currents of air in the more elevated strata through which they have been passing." He also says : " That of late years, owing to the increase of plantations, especially of conifers in the vicinity of cultivated ground, the numbers of birds that remain to breed have greatly increased, and there can be no doubt that the Woodcock nests in most parts of Wales, England, Ireland, and Scotland."

I myself know of one place in Argyleshire, not far from Oban, where a good many Woodcock breed on a preserved estate rented by a wealthy gentleman. His keeper, who has tendered me much valuable assistance in connection with my collection, asked me one day whether I would like to see a

Woodcock on her nest. I said, "I should, indeed." He went away a short distance from where we happened to be in the wood, then beckoned to me to come to him, and there in some bracken in a spot sheltered from the cold winds, and well exposed to the sun's rays, sat this handsome bird on her nest, with one of her big black eyes open, the other half closed, as if she wanted "forty winks." She was quite tame, letting me come within a yard or so of her.

"The nest is merely a depression in some sheltered place, a lining of dead leaves being added, usually during incubation. The eggs—often laid by the middle of March, though more frequently in April, are usually four in number, are of a yellowish-white colour, blotched with ash-grey and two shades of reddish-brown." (Howard Saunders.)

One very interesting feature about this species is the tender care for its young. On the approach of any danger the female removes them to some other place, and many have been the ideas and suggestions as to the process by which she accomplished her purpose; the one most generally accepted being, I think, that she presses the little one to her breast with her beak, and, supporting it between her thighs, carries it away to safety.

Most of my Woodcock shooting has been in co. Kerry—principally at Waterville, where I had the services of John Sullivan, than whom no better man in "Ould Oireland" could be found for the purpose; for was not he the keenest of the keen upon this particular species? I used to ask his opinion in

regard to the relative merits of the Woodcock and the Snipe, and he would positively turn up his nose at the latter, calling it "a little budd, and no use at āll, at āll;" but when he spoke of the Woodcock it would be with the greatest respect, calling it a "noble budd." The fact was, John was simply "gone" on Woodcock.

I may tell you that no bird in creation better knows how to take care of himself than does our friend, Master Woodcock; so if you want to be successful in your search for him on the mountains and bogs of Ireland you must make an exact study of the bird's particular likes and dislikes. This John and I used to do regularly every morning before selecting which beat we would take, and on which side of the mountain we would look for our birds.

Most of my readers, probably, know that the Woodcock is a night-feeding bird; that being so, having filled himself to his heart's content, he likes to have a comfortable warm place to sleep in during the day time. In choosing a mountain side for the purpose of finding him, never select that side on which a cold keen wind is blowing, but rather the side which is sheltered and warm. Never look for him in places that hold the wet—such as heather, because he doesn't like wet places, and you won't find him in them. At such times rather look for him amongst the boulders in the mountains where he can get a choice of little crevices and caverns in which to keep himself dry.

In frosty weather, or when snow is on the ground, never look for him where the ground is hard, but by the edges of rivulets and overhanging banks of streams, or near running springs on the mountain's side ; there you are sure to find him.

By a little intelligent adaptation of these general rules, John and I managed to be fairly successful.

In regard to the flight of the Woodcock, many people have the idea that the bird is very easy to shoot; that depends upon the circumstances. Given a bird that is quite unsophisticated after he has just come in, and before a shot has been fired at him, if he gets up in front of you in a nice easy open spot, you will probably get a shot at a bird that flies somewhat like an Owl. The reverse of these conditions would be a bird that has been in some time and is well up to snuff, having, very likely, been shot at and missed. Put up such a bird amongst the rocks on the mountain side, and he will dart over and round them before you have scarcely had time to put your gun to your shoulder ; or, again, put such a bird up in a wood where there are plenty of alders and thick growth, and there is no harder bird in this world, for he darts off like an arrow, with a twist and a turn, and when you try to shoot ahead of him he always manages very cleverly to put a tree between himself and you.

This species is very widely distributed abroad. "It nests in the vast forests of Scandinavia and Russia ; a smaller number breeding over the rest of Europe up to the limit of tree growth as far south

as Northern Italy, Transylvania, the Balkans, and Caucasus"; it is found on "both sides of the Mediterranean basin in winter, and is resident in the wooded mountains of the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores. In the cold season it is in evidence in Persia and India, and breeds in the Himalayas at an elevation of 10,000 feet." (Howard Saunders.)

The specimens in the case were selected out of some thirty birds I shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, in the very hard winter of 1894-95. This was an excellent year so far as the sportsman was concerned, but an uncommonly bad one—I'm afraid—for the poor bird; as just about the time he should be leaving our country he was in such an emaciated condition as to render a flight of any distance virtually an impossibility.

I remember Ireland was practically under snow nearly the whole of February, 1895, and many thousands of Woodcock must have died in consequence.

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#### THE SNIPE.

It is really a question which is the more interesting species, the Snipe or the Woodcock; the decision must rest, therefore, with the sportsman himself. In my sporting expeditions to Ireland and elsewhere, I have met with men of both persuasions; that is to say, given a good Irish bog, with a fair sprinkling of Snipe, and on the other hand, good Woodcock ground—both bog and mountain side—you would see one man in the hotel confining himself almost

entirely to the most likely ground for Snipe—not caring whether he met with a Woodcock or not—whilst another would do exactly the reverse, and make the Woodcock his first consideration. Before saying anything about sport in connection with this species, let me refer briefly to its migration and residence with us.

We look for the Snipe much about the same time as the Woodcock, that is towards the end of October; and I think prevailing wind and age of moon also have some determining influence in regard to its being a bit earlier or later than the usual time. The Snipe comes to us in winter from northern latitudes, as in the summer its habitat is in Northern Europe.

Mr. W. H. Hudson gives Scandinavia as the locality. It arrives on our east coast like the Woodcock, and destroys itself in the same way by flying against lanterns of lighthouses. Like the Woodcock, too, I believe, it makes its way down to, and along, our south coast, taking Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel, *en route* for Ireland, where it spreads over the country.

In regard to the Snipe's residence with us and its breeding-grounds, Howard Saunders says that it "still breeds in England and Wales wherever drainage has not abolished the localities suited to its habits, and it is comparatively abundant in the marshes of Suffolk, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire, whilst generally distributed on the northern moorlands and up to a considerable elevation in Scotland

and Ireland. The birds produced in the British Islands are few, however, compared to those which annually visit us in October and November."

There is something very interesting in connection with the male bird of this species during the breeding season; this has been so graphically described by Mr. W. H. Hudson in his book that I append an extract: "Late in March or early in April the Snipe pair, and it is then the male birds begin to practice their curious aerial exercises, familiar to anyone who studies bird life, and about which so much has been said by ornithologists. The performance takes place at all hours of the day, but chiefly towards evening, the bird rising to an immense height in the air and precipitating himself downwards with astonishing violence, producing in his descent the peculiar sound variously described as 'drumming,' 'bleating,' 'scythe-wetting,' and 'neighing.' As to how the sound is produced, opinions differ; still, although the question has been discussed for over a century, probably it is in part vocal and partly produced by the wing feathers." The view of Meves of late, strongly supported by the experiments of Mr. Bahr, is the more probable—that it is produced by the tail feathers. The nest of the Snipe, generally made in April, is a very slight affair, "in a tuft of grass, a bunch of rushes, or on the open; the eggs—usually four in number, and very large for the size of the bird, being yellowish or greenish-white, blotched somewhat

obliquely with several shades of brown." (Howard Saunders.)

To speak of the Snipe as a sporting bird, there is hardly anything that will touch it. When I say this, I am sure I express the views of a great many sportsmen who would sooner have it than the best of Pheasant and Partridge shooting.

I remember once meeting with a retired officer of a crack Hussar Regiment in co. Kerry, a Col. P., who used to tell me that, although he had every opportunity of other sorts of game shooting, nothing carried the same fascination with it that Snipe shooting did over the bogs of Ireland. This officer is an old man now, and when he first retired from the Service—a good many years ago—Snipe were so plentiful in co. Kerry that you could walk them up on the bogs, with a beater or two on either side of you; and if you were a decent shot there would be no difficulty in making good bags. He himself, being a crack shot—his name, in fact, being a household word in the south of Ireland—used to make, what nowadays would be considered to be quite phenomenal bags of anything from twenty to forty couple per diem. Owing to the vast increase in the number of sportsmen who prefer Snipe shooting and the number of sporting hotels that cater for the public in this direction, renting large tracts of shooting—which are a combination of mountain side and bogs—from Irish landed proprietors, Snipe have now so materially diminished in numbers, that if you went out to-day, as did Col. P.





Woodcock, Full Snipe, Jack Snipe.



in the old days, with merely a beater or two, you would hardly put up a single bird in a day's tramp.

Your only chance in these days is to be possessed of one or two first-class Irish setters, good rangers, with plenty of heart in them ; dogs that will not give up ranging on account of the paucity of birds. When I have been out on the bogs around Waterville with good old John Sullivan, I had two splendid dogs, Jock, and his son Paddy ; the former was a capital ranger, and even though Snipe were so thinly scattered as to be from a quarter to half a mile apart, Jock would not be likely to miss one of them. Paddy was very fond of the Woodcock, and was A1 at that species ; at the same time, he was good at Snipe, although not such a fine ranger as his father.

In the present day ten couple of Snipe is considered very fair for a day's sport, whereas the average I daresay would not be more than five to seven couple, according to luck of ground.

What I have just said clearly shows the difference between Snipe shooting as it is now and what it used to be. I remember once arriving with John on one of the crack bogs called Killurley, about eight miles from Waterville, when just as we were going on to it an old Irish peasant, who was standing by, exclaimed, "There's nā Snipe at āll, at āll." I said, "I am sorry to hear that, as I hope to find some." "Nā," he said, "Col. P.'s shot em āll." That shows you the impression the Colonel had made on these Irish peasants in the years that had passed. Of

course, this old man, knowing nothing about the Snipe being migratory, and fresh lots coming in yearly from abroad to feed on the bogs, thought that when Col. P. had shot such quantities of them that he must have extinguished them altogether.

There are two distinct ways of shooting the Snipe in his zig-zag flight, [one being to take him the moment he rises and snapshot him—so to speak—as many Pigeon shots do at trap shooting; the other is to let him go a bit and take him after his first twist or two. I was once shooting Snipe in county Clare, west coast of Ireland, and was out with the Irish champion shot, a keeper named O'Halloran, who had made the best record bag of Snipe in one season for one gun, which was mentioned in the *Badminton*. I really forget whether it was 1,400 or 1,400 couple. I must say I felt rather nervous at going out with such a man. We were shooting in marshy grass fields, which were so small as to do away with the necessity for dogs. Well, this man used to walk rather fast, hold his gun almost to his shoulder as if expecting a Pigeon, and the moment the Snipe was up, pull the trigger, and down, more often than not, came the bird; but he *did* miss, I am glad to say, and here I may mention, that I have never yet seen the man that didn't. I said, "I see you *do* miss sometimes." "Oh! yes, Cornel, the fact is, that I have not been shooting Snipe for a long time, but Gulls instead, and shooting them has quite spoilt me for Snipe."

From the experience I had of Snipe shooting in Kerry with John Sullivan, I always found it the best plan to go either down or across wind against them, the main object being to get the bird between yourself and the dog ; in other words, to get round to the farther side of the dog and walk towards his head when setting instead of coming behind him at his tail. The reason for this is obvious ; the Snipe being a bird that zig-zags in his flight against the wind, if you try him from behind the dog, he not only has the advantage of the distance he is from the dog's nose, but also that, when he gets away with the greatest rapidity, he is scoring a greater distance between himself and you all the time, whereas in the first instance the bird makes towards you and gives you either a side shot or one over head.

To be a good Snipe shot is more of a knack than anything else. At times Snipe are much more difficult than at others ; such as on stormy days especially ; or when they get up wild on the mountain side, where you have no firm foothold ; then, when they go like greased lightning down the hill they are a caution, and you must be a pretty good shot to bring them down.

India is, of course, a country where excellent Snipe shooting is obtainable in the cold weather, and enormous bags are made in the country round about Calcutta. I believe from seventy to one hundred couple in a day is not an uncommon bag for a good shot, but then the birds—although

exactly the same species as we get—owing to the strength of the sun and its enervating effects, do not fly at the pace or twist to such a degree as they do on the bogs of “Ould Oireland.”

The best eight days’ shooting I ever had with a friend, Lieut. A.—I being a Captain in those days—was 250 couple. Since then my friend, on attaining the rank of Major, made the record bag for the Bombay Presidency, which was 106 couple in one day.

The Snipe, like the Woodcock, is very widely distributed in the Old World. Howard Saunders says, it “is fairly abundant as a breeding-species in Iceland and the Faroes, is met with in summer in northern Europe, nests in the marshes of Northern Italy, breeds in Asia, and is distributed in winter nearly to the Equator.”

The specimens in the case are selected as being the best out of what I shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, in the winter of 1894-95.

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### THE JACK SNIPE.

Having written at such length about the Common, or Full, Snipe, I only propose to make a few remarks about this, the smallest of the genus. A Jack Snipe will weigh from an ounce to two and a half ounces, while the Common Snipe varies from three ounces to nearly double the weight. In habits there is no great difference, but the flight of the

Jack Snipe is slower and more bat-like. There is no authenticated instance of the Jack ever having bred in our islands. It arrives earlier, as a rule, than the Common Snipe, often being in by the middle of September.

It favours the most swampy places on the bog, what in Ireland are called "sloughs," *i.e.*, veins running through the ordinary bog, filled with heavy coarse green tussocks of grass, on either side of which you would probably sink up to your middle in the most horrible slush. These are the sort of spots the Jack loves to dwell in, and in consequence many a little bird owes his life to being in this sort of un-get-at-able place : for though the dog may fix the Snipe, its a case of an immovable dog, and a bird that won't budge, and, as you can't go in yourself, all you *can* do is to leave the Jack to himself and call the dog off. When, however, he is in a place where you can get in close to the dogs set, he is generally not more than a foot or two from the dog's nose, very often only an inch or two. Now, when you have the bird as close as that to you, and in many cases actually see him on the ground, you would think it was any odds on the gun. I don't, however, think that to be the case, for it is quite common to miss him under such conditions, as the Jack Snipe has a very peculiar flight, totally unlike his larger congener ; as a rule when a Jack flits up he seems to fly more like a butterfly than anything else, rising and dropping in the air from six inches to a foot at a time, and just when you are pulling

the trigger he either rises or falls, the consequence being that you shoot under or over him.

Owing to this peculiarity of flight and its dissimilarity to that of the Common Snipe, it is a bird that demoralises the sportsmen on the bogs more often than not; for you only get one or two here and there amongst the many shots you may get at the other with its zig-zag rapid flight, and the consequence is, when this little chap flits up like a butterfly, he doesn't go half fast enough for you, and the result is a miss! I certainly can say, so far as I am personally concerned, that the Jack Snipe would sometimes pretty well put me off my shooting for the day, should I happen to have commenced badly by meeting one and missing him, then following him up and missing him again, I would get so riled with the bird that I would inwardly register a vow to expend a whole bag full of cartridges sooner than confess to being beaten.

The Jack is such a confiding little bird that it does not matter much how many shots you fire at him, he will invariably fly only a short distance before settling down again, when you are able to mark him for another shot.

There is an amusing story told about an Irish gentleman who possessed one Jack Snipe upon his property, which he pursued religiously with his gun for eighteen days, the bird giving him an immense amount of practice during that time. On the eighteenth day he killed it—probably by a fluke. "Confound it!" he said, "all my sport's gone now."



The species is widely distributed over the northern half of the Eastern Hemisphere.

The specimens in the case were shot at Glenbeigh, co. Kerry, in the same year as the Common Snipe, and were selected as being the best.

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### CASE 63.

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#### RED GROUSE, BLACK GROUSE, AND PTARMIGAN.

*Order, Gallinæ. Family, Tetraonidæ.*

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#### THE RED GROUSE.

What memories of very happy days and associations do not these particular specimens recall? I had come from a trout fishing trip on the Island of Benbecula, which is situated between North and South Uist, where the country is treeless, wild, and desolate to a degree; nothing but a few crofters' huts existing there to break the dull monotony of a landscape little better than a combination of moorland, peat-bogs, and innumerable "tarns," or small lochs. I say, I had just come from such a country as this to find myself in one of the most beautiful spots on the mainland of Scotland, that is Glenelg, situated in the county of Inverness-shire, at the head of the Sound of Sleat, and opposite to the Island of Skye. Woodland and heather-clad mountains in full bloom on every side; certainly a wonderful

contrast to the Island of Benbecula. I arrived there at the end of July, 1889, my purpose being to kill some salmon on the river and Grouse on the mountains; as the proprietor of the hotel there had advertised both for the entertainment of his visitors, whose intention was to make something more than a passing visit. I found the spacious and up-to-date hotel most comfortable in every way, and the landlord, Donald McKintosh, one of the best fellows in the world, a typical Scotchman in fact, long-headed, and shrewd; still, withal, an extremely generous, large-hearted, sympathetic man, who was a fund of amusement in himself, for he could tell a tale against the best of men; and oh! what a stock he had of them! they were simply endless. The first fortnight being dry, and no water for salmon to run up into the river, I had to content myself with sea fishing, which was excellent. At last Grouse Day came, which happened to fall on the 13th. Being the oldest visitor in the house, McKintosh, in the straightforward manner which was his wont, gave me the first offer to go out on his mountain after Grouse; allowing me to go entirely by myself, at the same time supplying me with a good ghillie and an old English setter, which had, no doubt, been a rare good one in his time. Well, I had a most enjoyable day, the only drawback being that I hadn't taken enough cartridges, and that, the weather being sultry, the poor old dog was done up by early afternoon, so that the ghillie and I had to pretty well carry him on returning to the hotel.



Red Grouse, Black Grouse, Ptarmigan.



During the course of the day's shooting, whenever I managed to get a brace, John Adam, my ghillie would exclaim, "That's splendid!" In confidence, he told me that he had been out with hotel sportsmen who fired (presumably meaning when there were two or three together) six barrels at a Grouse, and not a scratch! five ditto at a hare, the result being the same. The poor old English setter, when he was unable to range any longer, would point his nose up the mountain side, indicating, sure enough, there were Grouse in that direction, but that he was too dead beat; however, by dint of a little pushing and helping, I managed to get one or two more shots out of him, then had to shut up. My total bag was six brace of Grouse, four hares and a Snipe—a nice little load for Adam, but he was only too pleased to carry it, remarking that "one looked such a fool when one had nothing to carry home." Before many weeks were over I had a fair number of delightful Grouse shoots, as a sporting gentleman, Dr. M., was staying in the hotel, who had rented a large shooting, and when anyone was required to fill up a gap in his party, I was generally the lucky individual to be invited. But you will say, "What has all this to do with Grouse as a species"? Nothing; it is only a sort of introduction to the place where all three species of Grouse in this case were obtained.

The Red Grouse has the distinguishing characteristic of being indigenous only to our islands, its principal habitat, of course, being the Highlands of

Scotland, though it is found on the moors in the north and east of England, especially in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. It also extends to Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire, and is found on the moors in Wales and Ireland, though in the sister island it is not so abundant. The nest of the Grouse is just a depression in the ground— eight to ten eggs are laid, ground-colour, olive, blotched with dark red. The bird is an early breeder, and during courtship the cock goes through various love performances for the edification of the hen. No bird stands higher in the estimation of our crack game shots than the Grouse for affording sporting shots, especially when driven with a high wind behind him over the shooting butts ; but although it may require greater skill and precision to shoot a driven bird than one over dogs, there are many good and true sportsmen who would prefer the latter method owing to the exhilarating feeling there is in a good tramp over the Scotch hills, on a typical August day, with good dogs and a few congenial companions. Give me the latter, say I, for what is more delightful than to watch the puzzling out of a covey of birds that are inclined to run and out-manœuvre the dogs, and then the supreme moment when the dogs have fixed them for the guns. Why, its as much pleasure to see the dogs work as to shoot ! This species is subject to a disease which has baffled a good many experts, and will I'm afraid continue to do so.

## THE BLACK GROUSE.

This species, the male of which is commonly called the Blackcock, the female the Greyhen, and collectively Blackgame, were at one time common in the south of England, but its numbers have decreased very much. Small packs, however, still exist in South Devon, Cornwall, and on Exmoor. It exists in suitable localities in Wales, in the northern counties of England, and is fairly plentiful in Scotland. This Grouse, although found amongst the heather, seems rather more partial to those parts of the mountain where there is a mixture of birchwood scrub, rough grass, and boggy ground. The nest, like that of the preceding species, is a mere depression in the ground. "Eggs—six to ten, of a yellowish-white, spotted with orange-brown." (Howard Saunders.) The birds are polygamous, and in the courting season, as soon as dawn appears, probably on certain days in the month of January, a lot of old Blackcock assemble, form a ring, and go through a most wonderful performance for the delectation of the hens. From what Booth says, there is generally a master of the ceremonies in the shape of the grandest old cock, who arrives first upon the scene; to give a short quotation from his book, which is valuable, considering that he saw from a place of concealment what took place, he says: "The old cock now advanced into the centre of the arena; his comb was elevated, his wings drooped, his tail curled upon his back, and every feather down to his very toes was spread out to the

fullest extent. After bowing all round, and apparently being satisfied that no one wished to dispute his title to be considered the greatest swell present, he proceeded to execute a kind of *pas seul*, which seemed to consist of a double-shuffle, hop, skip, and a jump, and was concluded by an almost complete somersault. Four others then advanced towards the open ground, two coming from either side. These went through something like a set figure, advanced, bowed, turned round, jumped over one another's heads, turned round, bowed again, then retired." Booth did not actually see any fighting, but, no doubt, a settlement would have to be effected afterwards by that method. The young Blackcock and Greyhen were shot in the season in the same year as the Red Grouse; but as an old Blackcock does not get his proper tail feathers till January, I had to make a second expedition to Glenelg, in the beginning of 1890. On this occasion, I had McKintosh's keeper, John McKillop, with me, a first-rate man, and, after a lot of patience, we succeeded in bagging the two old birds in the case. I don't suppose there is any bird more difficult to stalk than the old Blackcock, for he seems to be possessed almost of reasoning power. I remember on one occasion John and I spotted a fine old bird sitting in a birch tree, about a half to three quarters of a mile from the moorland road over which we were driving. After alighting from the trap, we knew the ground so favoured a stalk, that we could get within shot of the bird without his being aware of our approach.



Well, the last hundred yards or so had to be done on our hands and knees, till we got to a wall; by rights, on raising ourselves above this wall, the tree should be within twenty-five yards on which the Grouse was perched. Very slowly I raised myself, getting my gun ready for a quick shot. Do you think I saw the bird? No fear! He had taken his departure, probably as soon as he saw us leave the road; for I suppose he argued something after this fashion, "So long as I can see them I'm all right, but when I can't it's all wrong, they're up to something."

Blackcock are very fast and strong on the wing, and afford fine sporting shots when driven out of the woods over the guns outside.

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#### THE PTARMIGAN.

This beautiful and graceful bird is a resident in those higher ranges of the Scotch mountains which are suitable to its habitat; even there its distribution is local, the most favoured counties being Perthshire, Aberdeenshire, Ross-shire, and Sutherlandshire. It is not found in Ireland. This species seldom comes lower than an elevation of 2,000 feet, except possibly during very severe weather in the winter. The eight to ten eggs resemble those of the Red Grouse, but the ground-colour is lighter; they are laid late in May, in a hole scraped in the soil. The specimens in the case were obtained in the early part of the year 1890, and I was accompanied by John McKillop,

McKintosh's keeper, in my expedition after them. They were on a mountain called Ben Screel, which rises up from Loch Hourn, in the Sound of Sleat, to the height of some 3,300 odd feet. The shooting rights of this particular ground belonged to the Master of Blantyre, from whom I had not much difficulty in obtaining permission; so, choosing a suitable day, John and I sallied forth; certainly not until we had ascended to the higher reaches of the mountains did we find any birds, and then only about two small packs. Our difficulty was to make them out amongst the stones, so much did their plumage assimilate with everything around them; for it must be remembered the birds were in different plumage; some showing a mixture of slate-grey and white, others being practically white. McGillivray better illustrates how difficult they are to make out than any other author I have read, so I append a short extract: "These beautiful birds," he says, "while feeding, run and walk among the weather-beaten and lichen-crested fragments of rock, from which it is very difficult to distinguish them when they remain motionless, as they invariably do should a person be in sight. Indeed, unless you are directed to a particular spot by their strange, low, croaking cry, you may pass through a flock of Ptarmigans without observing a single individual, although some of them may not be ten yards distant. When squatted, however, they utter no sound, their object being to conceal themselves; and if you discover the one from which the cry has

proceeded, you generally find him on the top of a stone, ready to spring off the moment you show an indication of hostility. If you throw a stone at him, he rises, utters his call, and is immediately joined by all the individuals around, which, to your surprise, if it be your first rencontre, you see spring up, one by one, from the bare ground."

The above extract is a very faithful picture of what these birds are like in their native haunts amongst stones and boulders. John and I had to give up the task of trying to locate them, as they did not let us approach them, or else let us pass them; so, finally, we separated, and took the chance of one driving them past the other when put up on the wing. We managed to secure the two in the case just as a thick fog was descending over the mountain, from which we had to make tracks towards the hotel with the utmost agility possible. My day on Ben Screel with John McKillop brings to an end, so far as collecting birds for the Waterloo Museum is concerned, my visit to McKintosh's hotel at Glenelg, where I had a real good time amongst a lot of nice people; for McKintosh was a man who laid himself out for his guests, giving them all sorts of entertainment in the way of Highland Reels, Strathspeys, Sword-Dancing, etc., to the accompaniment of the bagpipes. But everything comes to an end, and so must this account of my day after Ptarmigan.

## CASE 64.

## THE PARTRIDGE.

*Order, Gallinæ. Family, Phasianidæ.*

This is a very interesting and well-known species ; one of our most favoured game-birds for the table, and affording excellent sport in the field. When I speak of it as an interesting bird, I refer more particularly to its associations with the past.

Times are changed from the days when our forefathers used to tramp the turnips and stubbles in their quaint Old English sporting dress, accompanied by good old sporting dogs, and put in a good hard day's work—days when driving and breech-loaders were unknown. In the present day, where Partridges predominate, as they do, I believe, in the eastern counties, driving the birds over the heads of the shooters is more often adopted than shooting them over dogs.

This species is widely distributed in the British Islands, being much more plentiful in England and Wales than in either Scotland or Ireland. I must say that in the two last named countries I have hardly met with Partridges at all ; probably this is due to the fact of their being somewhat local in Scotland, but in Ireland poaching is said to be the chief cause of the lack of birds. Whenever I have happened to come across them they seemed to me to be much smaller than the ordinary English bird.

In regard to nesting-habits, Howard Saunders says: "The Partridge often pairs in February, but eggs are seldom laid until the end of April or beginning of May. From twelve to twenty of these are often produced by a single hen, but as many as thirty-three have been found in one nest, from twenty-three of which the young were hatched and went off with the old birds, while four of the eggs left behind had live chicks in them."

The usual colour of the shell is olive-brown, but "pale blue or whitish varieties are not very uncommon." Of the parents solicitude for their young, the same author says: "I have seen the old birds show a bold front to the Hen-Harrier for several minutes while covering the retreat of their brood to the shelter of a hedge." And here I may remark that the love for their offspring in bird life is a very beautiful feature; at such times the self-sacrifice of the parents is very clearly demonstrated by the artifices they adopt to bring whatever danger there may be on themselves instead of allowing it to fall on the little ones. One of their devices, when man approaches the nest, is for one of the parents to pretend to be injured and barely able to fly, so that when someone coming along, unacquainted with this characteristic, runs after it in the hopes of being able to catch it, he will never accomplish his purpose. He is only on a fool's errand, as the bird, when its would-be captor has been led far enough away from the nest, will fly back again.

The specimens in the case were obtained in the winter of 1902, when I was staying at Maelog Lake Hotel, near Tycroes, Anglesey, kept by Mr. Cottrell—a man very fond of shooting—who rented a lot of cultivated lands for his sporting visitors. My reason for going to Anglesey was simply to get my specimens in the best of plumage, which they do not attain till the beginning of winter, and that was one of the only places in the British Islands where I might expect to get a shot at them over dogs. I could never understand why they lie there and are wild everywhere else.

We were a jovial little party of three or four guns. One of the guns, a Mr. Hampson, I got very chummy with, and after staying at Cottrell's a week, we went over to the Valley Hotel, near Holyhead, where we had a few more days' shooting together.

The birds you see in the case are the pick of our combined efforts.

The best Partridge shooting I ever had was in Radnorshire, at Llanbadarn, where my brother-in-law had some five or six thousand acres to go over. There were many varieties of ground to shoot over, from cultivated fields and moorland to small hills and dales; the last named we used to term "dingles." You had to work hard to get a decent bag, and as there was hardly any flat ground at all—the cultivated fields being on the slopes of the hill—you experienced shots at all sorts of angles both ascending and descending. One of the most trying positions being when the covey had been run into

the corner of some steep bank, and when you had steamed up to them pumped and blown—the wind having been knocked out of you—to take your shot at a strong covey whizzing over a hedge.

The Partridge, according to Howard Saunders, is found in Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, down to Savoy, both sides of the Pyrenees, Italy, as far as Naples, and in Central and Eastern Europe, where it is abundant.

I have met with three different kinds of so-called Partridges in India, the Black, the Painted, and the Grey, and there are others. These birds are not true Partridges, but Francolins, or, as some people call, on account of the spurs, Spur-legged Partridges.

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## CASE 65.

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### SPOTTED FLYCATCHER, WAXWING, RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

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#### THE WAXWING.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Ampelidæ.*

I do not propose to write much about these two handsome specimens, simply because I have not been associated with them in any way. In the year 1893 or 1894 it was reported to me by some friends, with whom I was staying in Surrey, that some beautiful little birds were hanging up in Leadenhall Market for sale, and were being rapidly bought up

by eager naturalists. As this species is a very rare straggler to the British Islands, and does not favour us with a visit more than about once in twenty years, I recognised how hopeless it would be for me ever to expect to come across it, so I bought a couple. Howard Saunders records the first visit of Waxwings as occurring in 1686. Their habitat abroad is the Arctic regions and the northern parts of Europe in summer; and in winter they visit the United States amongst other places. The word Waxwing refers to the little red sealing-wax looking tips to the points of the wing feathers.

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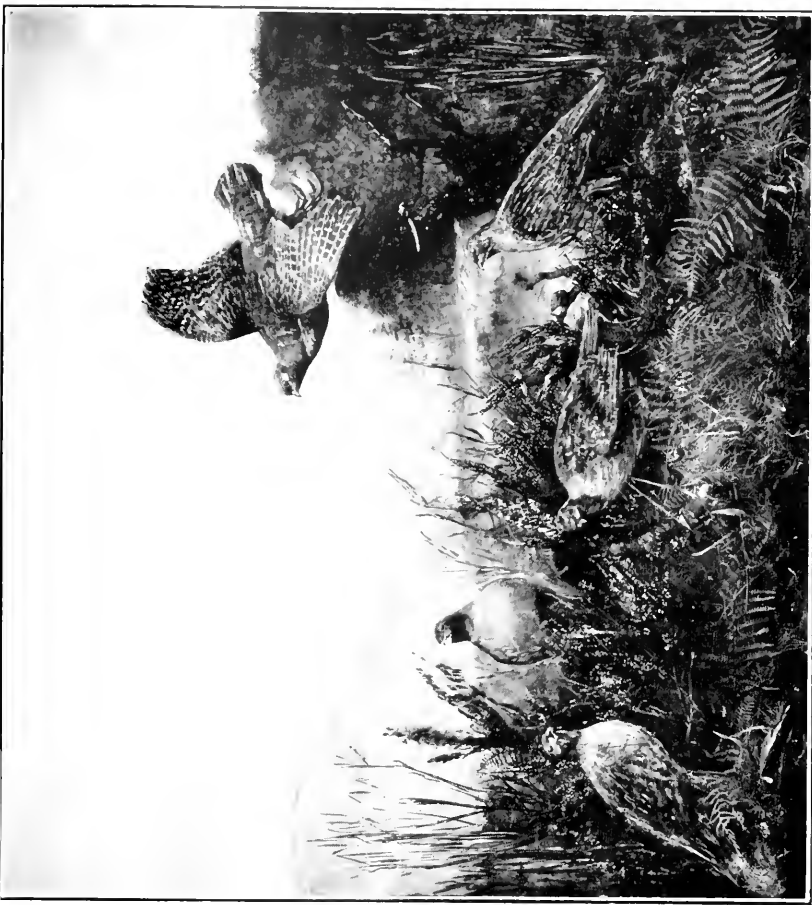
#### THE RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Laniidae.*

This species, one common name for which is the "Butcher Bird," arrives in May, and very soon spreads over the woodlands in the southern and central counties. It is not very common in Wales; although during my stay in the wooded districts in Merionethshire there were plenty of them. In Norfolk it is decreasing, in Scotland it is rare beyond the Firth of Forth, and in Ireland only a single example has been recorded. The birds in the case are parents with their grown-up young. The male bird sitting in front was shot in Radnorshire, and the rest in Surrey, in the neighbourhood of the Caterham Valley.

Howard Saunders says: "The nest, large for the size of the bird, is usually placed about five or six





**Partridges.**  
Rough Grass and Heather Scene.



feet from the ground, in a thick thorn bush or strong hedge, and is made of stalks of plants, moss, and roots, with a lining of bents, wool, and hair. The eggs—four to six, vary considerably, some having a ground-colour of a greenish-white, others of a yellowish-clay, and some of a salmon tint, they are spotted and zoned with brown, olive, or lilac, or blotched with two shades of light red and violet-grey. Only one brood is brought up. This Shrike feeds on mice, lizards, beetles, bumble bees, wasps, and other insects; it impales its prey on thorns, whence its trivial name of Flusher, which is another form of Flesher, that is Butcher.” In Winter the Red-Backed Shrike goes as far south as Natal and Cape Colony.

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#### THE SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

Case 24 is exclusively devoted to this species.

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### CASE 66.

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#### THE CUCKOO.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Cuculidæ.*

Familiar to all of us, generally arriving on our coasts about the second or third week in April, and soon making itself known by its call-note of “Cuck-oo,” which seems to be divided into two distinct syllables, owing to the slight pause made between the first and second note.

The species is fairly well distributed over our British Islands. The peculiar interest attaching to the Cuckoo entirely centres in its parasitic breeding-habits. In opposition to the natural laws that govern the breeding-instincts of most other birds, such as parental family duties, the bringing up and care for their young, etc., the Cuckoo never takes the trouble to make a nest, but usurps that of some smaller bird. Howard Saunders gives the following list of birds as those generally selected:—Pied Wagtail, Meadow-Pipit or Titlark, Hedge-Sparrow, Sedge-Warbler, Reed-Warbler; less frequently the Cirl Bunting and Yellow Bunting. All over Europe species of foster-parents are known, ranging in size from the Golden-Crested Wren to the Woodpigeon.

The way in which the eggs are placed in the nest is most interesting and curious; not in the ordinary way as one would suppose by the female laying them in the nest, but by laying them elsewhere and carrying them up in her beak and thus depositing them. The eggs vary a good deal in colour, from greenish to reddish-grey, spotted and blotched with darker shades of colour, and sometimes resemble those of the foster-mother.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says in regard to these nesting particulars, "As a rule only one egg is laid in a nest and a few days after the eggs are hatched the young Cuckoo gets rid of his foster-brothers by getting them on to his back, which is broad and hollow, and throwing them over the side of the nest. If any unhatched eggs remain he gets rid of them in the

same way." Enlargements from photographs by Mr. J. Peat Millar, of Beith, of a young Cuckoo ejecting the rightful occupant of a nest are to be seen in the Natural History Museum.

Howard Saunders says, in regard to the number of eggs, "From 5—8 are produced by the female in the season ; the same bird sometimes depositing two and even three eggs in a nest."

The Cuckoo feeds almost entirely on insects, caterpillars, etc. It is a very graceful bird on the wing, and from its general shape and plumage presents some of the characteristics of the Sparrow-Hawk, in mistake for which it is often shot.

The adult bird in the case was obtained on the Island of Mull, when I was staying at Salen Hotel. The young one is a bird of the year, and had stayed behind till late in September. I was staying at Arthog Hall Hotel, near Barmouth, in the autumn and winter of 1906, and one day when I was out on the mountain side with my little "Collector's gun," I noticed rather a large hawk-like looking bird flying short distances and settling on the rocks or ground. I couldn't quite make the matter out till I saw another little bird following it—a Titlark, in fact. Evidently the young Cuckoo had not done with the tutelage of the foster-parent. After some little patience I got a pretty close shot at it from behind a high stone wall, luckily striking it in the head.

Howard Saunders says that the Cuckoo "ranges almost to the North Cape in Norway ; nearly as far in Russia, and across Northern Asia up to

lat. 67° N. Over Europe it is generally distributed. In Asia its southern breeding-limits appear to be in the Himalayas, but in winter it goes down to the Phillipines, Burmah, and Ceylon, and in Africa to Natal."

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## CASE 67.

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### THE NIGHTJAR.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Caprimulgidæ.*

This species seems to be fairly well distributed, but I cannot lay claim to much personal knowledge about it. From what I can gather, however, from ornithological books it would appear that the Nightjar does not visit our shores before the middle of May, and leaves us again in September. It is entirely nocturnal in its habits, and is silent and almost motionless during the daytime, either sitting on the ground amongst coarse herbage, bracken, heather, etc., or lying along the branch of a tree, not across it.

Owing to the markings assimilating very much with the surroundings in which the Nightjar is found, it is hardly ever seen in the daytime, unless surprised by someone almost treading on it; at night, however, in the twilight of the long summer's evening, it is a most fascinating bird to watch. Mr. Swaysland, in his "Familiar Wild Birds," thus admirably describes its aerial evolutions: "Though dull and quiescent in daylight, the bird is vastly

different when its feeding time has arrived; then its whole character changes, it suddenly becomes possessed of marvellous powers of flight, and exhibits an endurance of motive power and elegance of movement that place it in the very first rank of accomplished flyers. Now dashing along within grasping distance, now wheeling round some old oak or chestnut tree, now rising high into the air, now gradually descending, now sweeping forward in a long straight line, and now returning in a series of graceful curves, one moment visible and the next lost in the gloom—it may well be doubted whether any other bird can possibly excel the Nightjar in grace of movement. Morris calls it a gigantic and sombre Swallow, and, like the Swallow, is a summer visitor only, and subsists on insect food,”

The favourite places of resort of this species are uncultivated lands where there is plenty of bracken, heather, furze, etc., and it was on such ground that the specimens in the case were obtained for me by a keeper in Wales.

Woodland glades and plantations are also favourite haunts, and in such places, in the summer evenings, I have often heard the peculiar vibrating, churring note of this species, sounding to me more like the winding, in short turns, of a wheel of some wooden toy than anything I can think of.

The Nightjar makes no nest, merely lays two eggs on the ground. The mouth of the bird is very peculiar, being very wide, very much the shape of

the Swift's mouth in fact, only, of course, much larger; it is also furnished with a lot of bristles, which enable it, no doubt, to capture the moths and beetles upon which it subsists.

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### CASE 68.

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GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER, NUT-HATCH, TREE-CREEPER, WRYNECK.

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GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Picidæ.*

This species is much less common than the Green Woodpecker. Its favourite haunts are amongst woodland slopes, and districts with fine old timber about them, and in such localities it is fairly distributed, though nowhere abundant. It is not infrequent in the southern parts of England and the Midlands; growing rarer in Wales (except in Brecon) and the north of England, and hardly known in Scotland or Ireland, except as a visitor. The circumstances under which the specimens were obtained were as follows:—My brother-in-law having a shooting-box at a place called Llanbadarn, Radnorshire, I, when not occupied in shooting game, used to amuse myself by looking for some new species to add to my collection. I got information that these two birds had been seen in a wood about three miles away. Owing to the luxuriant



foliage I found the birds very difficult to locate, and the difficulty was rendered more so by their shy and restless habit, always taking advantage of all the cover they could get in the top branches of the trees, and never waiting long enough to enable me to get up to the particular tree where I fancied they must be from their call-note. However, I was determined not to be beaten, and succeed I did at last in getting them before nightfall, but it was dark before I got back. In regard to the breeding-habits Howard Saunders says, "The nesting-hole, smaller than that made by the Green Woodpecker is generally hacked out in a similar manner, but according to good authorities a natural cavity in a dead branch is sometimes prolonged and utilised, and several holes are often cut out before the bird is satisfied. The six or seven eggs, laid on the bare wood about the middle of May, are creamy-white in colour; incubation, in which both parents take part, lasts a fortnight. The food consists of insects and their larvæ, but in winter berries of the mountain ash, nuts, acorns, &c., are eaten. The note is a sharp "tchick," and sometimes a low reiterated 'tra,' but the male often makes a loud vibrating noise by rapidly hammering with his bill on the bark of a tree."

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#### THE NUTHATCH.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Sittida.*

This species, which resides with us all the year round, cannot be said to be widely distributed, but

partial to certain localities. It is more common in the south-east of England, and in the Midlands, where there is no lack of old timber.

In Wales, in suitable districts, it is in evidence, but I have never, to my knowledge, come across it in Scotland, where it is rare, and in Ireland it is unknown. The specimens in the case were, as far as my memory serves me (for I regret to say I have no notes by me by which I might be able to refresh it) were shot at a place called Limpsfield, in Surrey—not very far from Oxted. I watched these funny little birds climbing up the trunks of trees on that occasion very closely, dodging from one side to the other.

Howard Saunders says that at such times the motions of the Nuthatch resemble those of a mouse rather than of a bird; and to him I am indebted for the following extract: "The Nuthatch begins to breed about the middle of April, generally making its nest in some hole in a limb of a tree, and occasionally between the buttresses of the trunk close to the ground. A hole in a wall is sometimes selected, and in many instances the aperture is filled up with clay and small stones, leaving only a narrow orifice for entrance. An extraordinary nest in the British Museum, presented by the late Mr. F. Bond, was placed in the side of a haystack, and measured thirteen inches by eight inches, the weight of the clay being eleven pounds. Some distance inside the cavity is a bed of dry leaves or of scales of the Scotch fir, on which the eggs, five to seven, are

deposited. These are white, spotted with reddish-brown. In spring the male utters a loud and shrill whistle as well as a 'Tui-tui-tui;' there is also a bubbling or churring note. In autumn the food consists chiefly of hazel nuts, which the bird fixes in some crevice, and then proceeds to hammer with its bill until the shell is broken; each stroke being delivered with the full weight of the body, working from the hip joint, whence the names of Nuthatch (*i.e.*, Nuthack) and Nutjobber."

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#### TREECREEPER.

*Order, Passeres. Family, Certhiidae.*

This small species is pretty generally distributed over our islands, but owing to the diminutiveness of its size, and the colour of the bird blending very much with the trunks of the trees up which it climbs with the assistance of its tail feathers, it would not be likely to attract attention. One, if not both specimens in the case, were shot with a walking stick gun in a private park in the Caterham Valley, In regard to nesting-habits, etc., Howard Saunders says, "Towards the middle of April the Tree-creeper makes its nest, usually selecting a crevice between the partially detached bark and the trunk of a tree, or a narrow cleft in the bole; not unfrequently placing it behind loose plaster or under the eaves of a shed or a dwelling; sometimes in the foundation of a nest of birds of prey and Rooks, and in piles of timber or bricks. Fine straw or twigs,

roots, grass, and moss are the materials employed, with a lining of wool, feathers, and strips of inside bark, often that of the birch tree. The eggs—six to nine—are white, spotted, zoned and blotched with reddish-brown and dull purple. Incubation is assiduously performed by the female. The food consists principally of insects and occasionally of the seeds of the Scotch fir. This species is found in Norway in the lower coniferous woods to the Trondjhem-fjord, and eastward in Sweden; Russia and across Siberia to the Pacific, as far north as trees flourish. Southwards it is found in Japan, Northern China, and Asia down to the Himalayas; westward in Persia, Asia Minor, Algeria, and northwards throughout Central Europe, wherever suitable localities present themselves.”

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#### THE WRYNECK.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Picidæ.*

This beautiful and delicately marked species, the pencilled plumage on the back of which is quite worth carefully noticing, is one of our early migrants, arriving in the south of England sometimes by the middle of March, though its usual advent, speaking generally, would not be before the middle of April. It has acquired the name of the “Cuckoo’s Mate,” I suppose, from the fact that as soon as its arrival has been noticed and recorded by naturalists, who take an interest in such matters, the Cuckoo may be expected to follow a few days afterwards. The

specimen in the case was, I think, shot in a fruit tree in some private gardens in the Caterham Valley, not far from the spot where I got the Tree-creepers.

In the breeding-season the Wryneck has a very loud call, sounding to me like "Qui, qui, qui, qui," which is sustained for several seconds, and repeated so quickly that I did not find it very difficult to locate my bird, when once he commenced his note. It is unlike anything I ever heard, and fixed itself so much upon my memory that now I can tell the bird anywhere, even though I may not be able to see him. On taking the bird in my hand after shooting, his tongue protruded out of his mouth, I should think, to the extent of one and a half inches? which rather surprised me.

With regard to this wonderful tongue, Howard Saunders says: "The food consists chiefly of ants and their pupæ, which the bird seeks on the ground, shooting with marvellous velocity its long retractile, vermiform tongue (covered with a glutinous secretion) into ant-hills; in autumn it is said to eat elder-berries." With regard to the nesting-habits, he says: "About the middle of May it makes use of any convenient hole in a tree at no great height; occasionally in an earth cutting or sand-bank. The eggs are usually from seven to ten in number, but the bird has been induced to go on laying until, in a case recorded by Mr. Frank Norgate, the maximum of forty-two was reached; they are pure white, rather larger, less glossy, and thinner in shell than

those of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. . . .  
 When disturbed, the sitting bird makes a loud hissing, calculated to induce the belief that a snake is concealed in the hole, a practice which has led to the popular name of 'Snake-bird.' It also erects the feathers of the head, twisting its neck about in a way which is equally characteristic of the above name, and when taken in hand will often feign death."

The Wryneck is more common in the south-east of England than in the west. I have come across it in Wales, though it is not plentiful. Howard Saunders considers it only a straggler to the north of England, in Scotland it occurs on the east coast on the spring and autumn migrations, and a few have been taken in Ireland. It leaves this country in September for the south.

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## CASE 69.

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### THE BITTERN.

*Order, Herodiones. Family, Ardeidæ.*

This is undoubtedly a rare species in the present day, although a century ago it was in suitable localities fairly common as a breeding-species.

In regard to its diminution in our islands it is interesting to note some of the causes assigned by various ornithologists. To select three; Howard Saunders says, "The extensive reed swamps and marshes to which the Bittern resorts during the

breeding-season have greatly decreased of late years in England owing to drainage and cultivation, nevertheless its eggs were occasionally found in the Broad district of Norfolk down to March 30th, 1868, and as recently as August, 1886, a young bird with down still adhering to it was obtained there. Before the reclamation of the East Anglian Fens the 'Butter Bump,' as it was called from its note, bred in them annually, as it did also in other suitable portions of England and Wales; while even at the present day so many of the birds which regularly visit us are shot in the spring that if a little forbearance were exercised, the 'boom of the Bittern' might again be heard in our land."

Mr. W. Swaysland says, "No doubt the ever-increasing efforts made by the agriculturalist in draining and re-claiming waste and marsh-lands is to a great extent the reason of its scarcity, but whatever the cause it is much to be feared that the Bittern must be reckoned amongst the list of those British birds that are slowly but surely disappearing from the country."

Mr. W. H. Hudson remarks as follows: "The Bittern, formerly a common bird, is hardly entitled to a place in this book ['British Birds'] since it has long been extirpated as a breeding-species . . ." Again, "The Bittern comes back to us annually as if ever seeking to recover its lost footing in our islands, and that he would recover it and breed again in suitable places as in former times is not to be doubted, if only the human inhabitants would allow it,

but, unhappily, this bird, like the Ruff, Hoopoe, and Kingfisher, when stuffed and in a glass case is looked upon as an attractive ornament by persons of a low order of intelligence and vulgar tastes."

Now, here we have three opinions, two of them, in my humble opinion, giving the real and principal reason for the scarcity, viz., the reclamation of all the most important breeding-haunts of the species. This is unquestionably a far more potent factor than the shooting of an odd bird or two, for I don't believe it amounts to much more than that. Generally speaking, when an uncommon bird is shot it finds its way to the naturalist's shop, and is nearly certain to be recorded in the local papers. A little further consideration of this matter would show Mr. W. H. Hudson's contention to be quite untenable, for the Bittern being for the most part a night-feeder and a skulker amongst immense reed-swamps and marshes in the daytime, what possible chance would there be of a gunner doing much damage in such hopeless and un-get-at-able positions? There is yet one more point, and that is that I don't believe for one moment that the Bitterns which annually visit us are wholly accounted for by the gunner; there must be many that are never seen at all owing to their skulking habits and out of the way places they get into.

The specimen in the case was obtained at Arthog in the winter, and was given to me by Mr. C. Driver—the lessee of Arthog Hall Hotel, where I was staying at the time.



In regard to the summer distribution of the Bittern, Howard Saunders says that it extends throughout the entire Palæarctic region from China and Japan to the Azores, and is resident in the warmer portions of Europe, where its numbers are augmented in winter by visitors from the north.

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## CASE 70.

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### THE GREEN WOODPECKER.

*Order, Picariæ. Family, Picidæ.*

This species is a good deal more common than its congener, the Great Spotted Woodpecker, occurring in wooded districts up to Lancashire and Yorkshire, while there are very few authenticated records of it from Scotland or Ireland.

The power the Green Woodpecker possesses in his bill is simply marvellous; with it he is able to hack out of hard wood a hole penetrating far into the trunk of a tree, and this is what he does before depositing any eggs. Howard Saunders says: "The hole is bored till the heart is reached, and then turns downwards for a short distance, when it is enlarged to form a suitable receptacle for the five to seven pure glossy-white eggs," etc.

This bird climbs obliquely up the trees in short jerks, using his tail feathers to aid him, and all the time he is ascending he makes a point of looking round the trunk, first this side, then that, to make

sure he is not taken by surprise by any danger. Should he notice anything, his head is round the tree in a second.

Mr. W. H. Hudson says this species finds safety from its enemies by clinging to the trunks of trees rather than by taking the wing. One of the specimens in the case was got when I was staying with my friend Hampson, at his Shooting-Lodge in Shropshire, not far from Hopton Heath. We put the bird up and shot it on the moor one day when we were after Grouse. The other two were obtained during my stay one winter at Arthog Hall Hotel, near Barmouth. I was told the "Old Fort," which was surrounded by a lot of fine old timber on the mountain side, was a noted place for them, and that by going up there and concealing myself I should soon get a shot. Well, it all seems so easy—doesn't it?—but when you particularly want a thing I generally find the reverse to be the case.

I should think I paid fully half a dozen visits to that 'Old Fort,' sometimes sitting amongst the boulders of rock for three hours at a stretch. At last the eventful day came, I had waited a long time even on this occasion, the first time the bird came he settled on the trunk of a tree, so close to me that I couldn't possibly have a shot at him without destroying him as a specimen. It amused me very much to see his antics going up the trunk, bobbing his head from side to side to be assured all was well; he soon flew away, however, to some trees farther off in the wood, but returned eventually

to one that gave me a fair shot, and I secured him.

The circumstances attending the second were somewhat different, in this case the bird was coming in to roost in an abandoned nesting-hole in the trunk of a tree. The first evening I attempted to negotiate him, unfortunately, I was on the wrong side of the trunk, so he got in without my being able to see him. My second visit also failed owing to the artfulness of the bird, who managed to screw round the trunk very gradually, and so into the hole. The fact was the bird seemed to know I was there, this, handicapped as I was with a light which had almost departed, made the matter much more difficult.

My third attempt was successful, as allowing a good time to elapse before trying again and taking up an entirely different position, and one in which my concealment was altogether satisfactory, I managed to outwit my friend.

Howard Saunders says: "The Green Woodpecker breeds in the forests of Norway up to about 63 deg. N. Lat., but in Sweden and in the islands of the Baltic it does not range so far north. In Denmark it is scarce, but southward it is generally distributed throughout most of Europe down to Turkey; as well as in Asia Minor and North Persia."

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