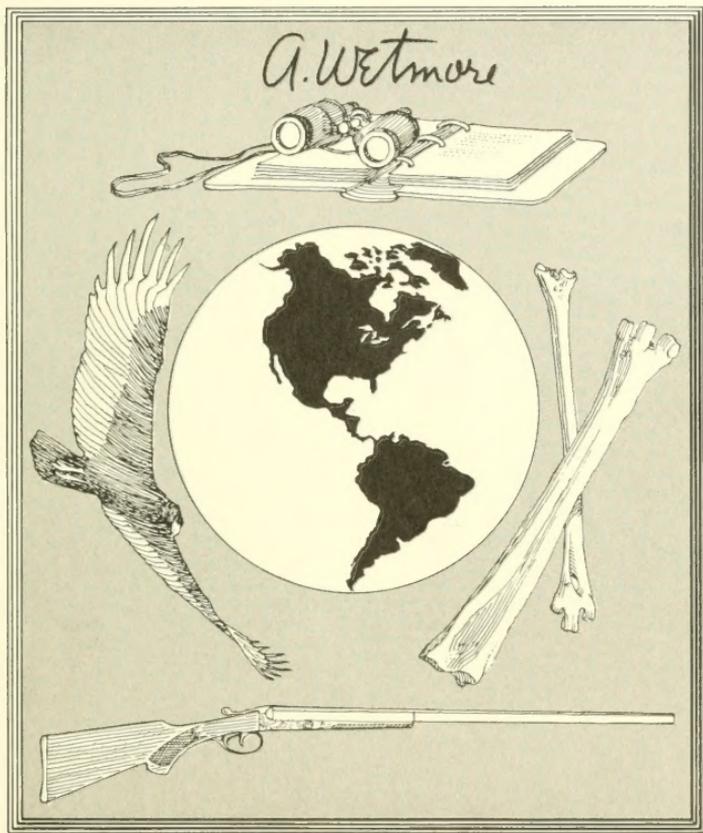


*Joseph Whitaker.*

Smithsonian Institution  
*Libraries*



Alexander Wetmore  
1946 *Sixth Secretary* 1953



102

*with the Auklet Comps*

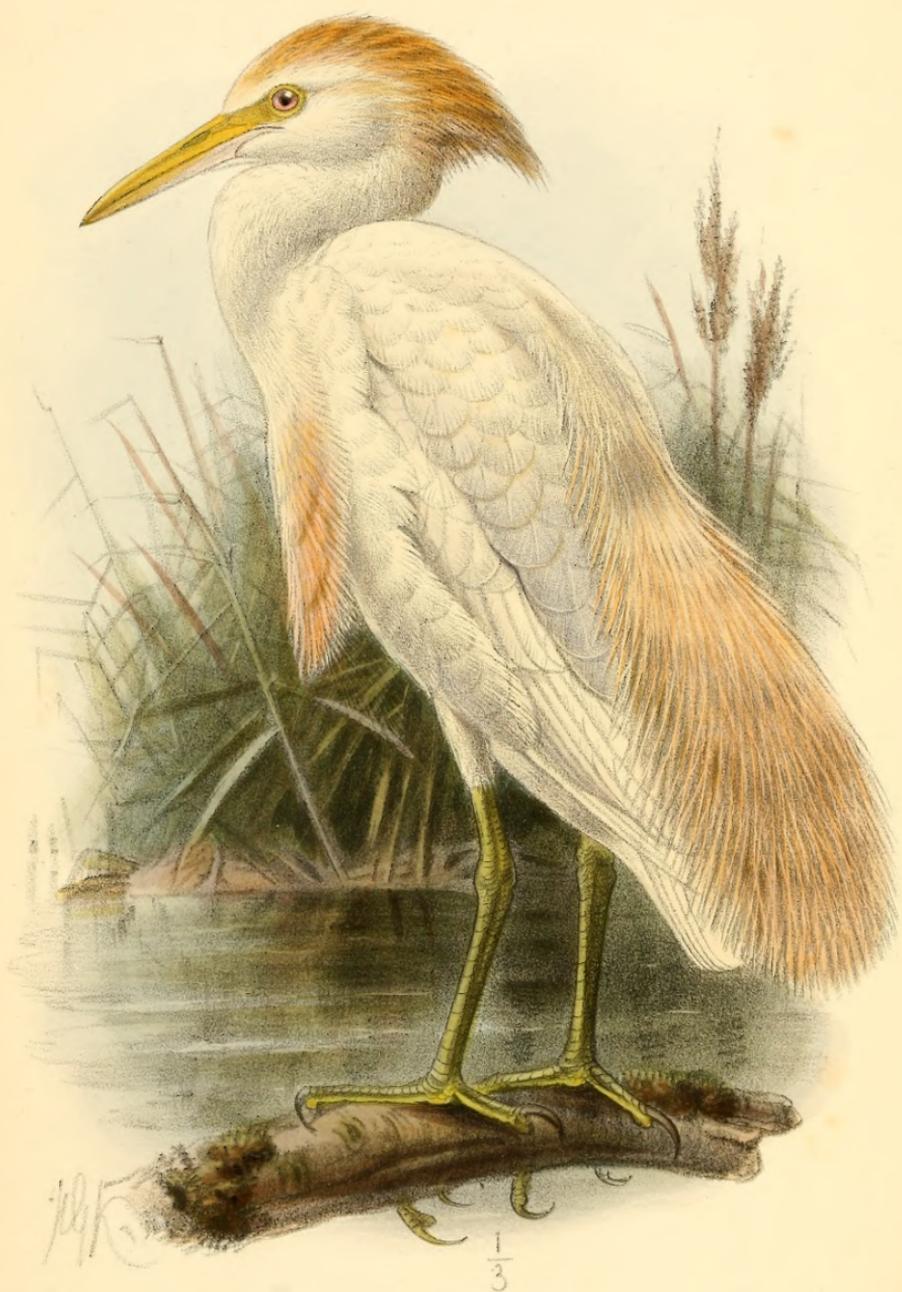
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THE  
BIRDS OF DEVONSHIRE.

Birds! Birds! ye are beautiful things,  
With your earth-treading feet and your cloud-cleaving wings  
Where shall man wander, and where shall he dwell,  
Beautiful birds, that ye come not as well?  
Ye have nests on the mountain, all rugged and stark,  
Ye have nests in the forest all tangled and dark;  
Ye build and ye brood 'neath the cottagers' eaves,  
And ye sleep on the sod 'mid the bonnie green leaves.  
Ye hide in the heather, ye lurk in the brake,  
Ye dive in the sweet flags that shadow the lake;  
Ye skim where the stream parts the orchard-deck'd land,  
Ye dance where the foam sweeps the desolate strand.  
Beautiful Birds, ye come thickly around,  
When the bud's on the branch and the snow's on the ground;  
Ye come when the richest of roses flush out,  
And ye come when the yellow leaf eddies about!

*Eliza Cook.*





BUFF BACKED HERON .  
(ARDEA BUBULCUS)

QL  
690  
G7P61  
Birds

THE

# BIRDS OF DEVONSHIRE

BY

WILLIAM E. H. PIDSLEY

EDITED

With an Introduction and short Memoir of  
the late John Catcombe

BY

H. A. MACPHERSON, M.A.

*Member of the British Ornithologist's Union*

SMITHSONIAN WITH MAP AND COLOURED PLATE

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1891.

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## PREFACE.

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THE exciting cause of this handbook must be looked for in the omission of other Devonshire Naturalists to provide a book of reference on the Ornithology of our County; an omission that may perhaps be accounted for, by the seriousness of the undertaking. The great size of the county, and the large quantity of published notes to be explored, rendered the completion of the task more difficult than I had at all anticipated. Accordingly I thankfully availed myself of the friendly co-operation of the Rev. H. A. Macpherson, who, since the beginning of the present year, has laboured assiduously at the improvement of the text. I have received the sympathetic support of many other naturalists, and tender my grateful thanks to all whose names are mentioned in the text. Though it is impossible to enumerate them here, I can not but express my special obligations to the Rev. M. A. Mathew, Mr. H. E. Rawson, Mr. Mitchell of Tavistock, Dr. Elliot, Mr. Nicholls, Mr. J. H. Gurney, and the Rev. G. C. Green of Modbury, for assistance received. I am, *myself*, solely responsible for the revision of proofs, and claim the kind indulgence of critics for country printers. The classification and nomenclature adopted are those of Mr. Howard Saunder's list of British Birds.

WM. E. H. PIDSLEY.

BLUE HAYES HOUSE,  
BROADCLYST.  
*November, 1890.*

The interior of Devonshire is to a great extent a fertile, undulating region of parks and orchards, of deeply embedded lanes and tall hedgerows, of dense coppice woods and graceful hangers, abounding in moisture and possessing a mild and genial climate. The most beautiful portion of the country is that of the Exmoor district, which offers great scenic variety, Dunkerry Beacon reaching a height of 1668 feet. In marked contrast to all the softer characteristics of this county are the harsh features of Dartmoor, a dreary upland region of moor and morass, the uniformity of which is to some extent broken by cultivation.

Much of the wildness with which the scenery of Dartmoor is invested, arises from the presence of the huge piles of granite, known as "Tors," of which Yes Tor, the most elevated, just exceeds 2,000 feet above the sea.\* Such a happy combination of wild moors and highly cultivated valleys, wooded slopes and terraces, as exists in Devon, may well induce many species of birds to nest in one district or another, while for sea-fowl, there are many suitable caves and breeding ledges all round the coast.

Most attractive of all perhaps, at least to Waders and Wild-fowl, are the sounds, roadsteads, and estuaries supplied by the indentations of the coast lines, and the rivers which flow to the sea from Dartmoor. The Tamar rises in Cornwall, and the Exe springs in Somerset, but the Dart, Teign, Taw, Erme and other rivers have their origin among the bogs of Dartmoor.

Fresh water lakes are curiously rare. Cranmere Pool is the largest sheet of water on Dartmoor, but it falls short of 700 feet, in actual circumference. On the other hand, it must be conceded that Slapton Ley is a fine sheet of water, and, from its position in the neighbourhood of the south coast, is of as much avian importance to Devon, as Breydon Water is to Norfolk.

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\* Yes Tor is usually considered the highest, but Mr. J. L. W. Page states, on the authority of the ordnance survey, that High Willhays reaches an elevation of 2,039 feet, or 10 feet more than Yes Tor (*An Exploration of Dartmoor and its Antiquities, London 1889*).

## II.—FAUNISTIC CHANGES.

OF the faunistic changes that have taken place in the last hundred years, the most unfortunate is the destruction of the birds of prey. The Marsh Harrier, once happily numerous, has been improved away, the Hen Harrier is all but trapped out, and even the beautiful Montagu's Harrier maintains its footing as a breeding bird with difficulty. The Kite was never numerous, but it has received harsh treatment, while the Peregrine and Common Buzzard meet with scanty consideration. Ravens too are scarcer than formerly, and the selfish greed of indiscriminating collectors has well nigh banished the Chough from the precipices of North Devon. The Rock-dove and Goldfinch have likewise become rare. The majority of species show little increase or decrease from year to year, but both the Starling and Stockdove, which fifty years ago were chiefly immigrants in winter, now nest numerously within the area here treated of.\*

## III.—SPECIES INCLUDED AND EXCLUDED.

THE species, included as having nested in Devon on certain evidence, amount to a no less number than 118, but ten of these have only nested with us in rare instances.

Among the species which nest annually in Devon, the Gull Bunting, Dartford Warbler and Cornish Chough deserve special mention. The Wryneck, Lesser Whitethroat and Reed Warbler are almost unknown in Devonshire, and the Common Redstart is rare in the west of the county. The Nightingale is also somewhat of a new colonist. These five species breed numerously in the other southern counties, east of Devon, which appears to lie outside the usual lines of their migration. Great pains have been bestowed upon the elimination of such species as had been enrolled as Devonian upon unworthy or insufficient evidence, or

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\* The Pheasant was comparatively scarce in Devon a century ago. Polwhele states, in 1797, that, in the country between Exeter and Teignmouth, Pheasants "had become very rare till the late Lord Courtenay strictly forbade the disturbing of a Pheasant on his several manors;"

by open error. Hence the Goshawk and Golden Eagle,\* Pine-grosbeak, Crested, Calandra and Short-toed Larks, Little Ringed Plover, Harlequin Duck and some other species have been suppressed : while, the Eagle Owl and Great Black Woodpecker have been placed within brackets, and are excluded from the census of the Ornis of Devon. Savi's Warbler might have been added to this with some show of reason, since Mr. Harting records eggs of this species as taken in Devon (Handbook of British Birds p. 15) ; but this is considered as hardly conclusive, nor is the Roseate Tern included. Mr. Gatcombe was told that two birds of this species were seen in Plymouth Sound in April, 1874 (Zool. 1874. p. 4105), but there is no proof that the species was correctly identified. Devonshire, judged by our present returns, includes a total number of 287 species, and of this aggregate, 108 are breeding species, 42 are winter visitants, 25 are periodical visitants, and 112 species must be regarded as waifs and strays, or at least irregular visitants.

#### IV.—MIGRATION.

IT is popularly supposed that many birds reside with us throughout the year, but recent researches indicate the inherent probability that the majority of birds are wholly migrants, or, at any rate, partially so. We have therefore to face the problem, '*by what routes, do birds travel to, and depart from Devon?*' At present, any attempt to decide this must be accepted as purely tentative. It is quite true that the subject has long been partially considered. A century ago, Mr. Laskey was as much interested in deciding the route followed by the Swallows, which he observed to leave the coast of Devon, as we ourselves can possibly be. But the fact that birds travel to a very large extent during the night, serves to hinder the elucidation of their movements to no small extent. It is also to be regretted that the observations of the Lighthouse keepers collected by the Migration

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\* The White-tailed Eagle, reported by the late Mr. Cecil Smith, as killed at Dove, was originally recorded as a Golden Eagle, Science Gossip, 1872. pp.115. 116. Ibid, 1874. pp. 214. 283. Old traditions of Golden Eagles are equally worthless.

Committee of the British Association, for several years omitted all reference to the Western coast of Britain, while the south coast was never taken in hand by any south-country naturalist. We are grateful, nevertheless, for their services, and the notes furnished from the Eddystone and Start Lighthouses are extremely instructive as far as they go. Studying these last, in conjunction with the land notes of Mr. Gatcombe, we infer that many Wagtails, Wheatears and other small passerine birds cross the English Channel in spring and autumn, making the sea passage between the coasts of France and those of our own S.W. peninsular. Numerous Thrushes, Larks and other birds pass up and down the Irish Channel in spring and autumn, and some of these probably visit the Devon coast. But the greater number of species appear to come from the eastward, or north-east, both in spring and autumn. At the latter season, the Pomatorhine Skuas leave their breeding quarters in Nova Zembyla, pass down the North Sea, but instead of entering the Baltic, or following the course of continental rivers, the greater number appear to enter the English Channel, thence working westward to enter the Atlantic, but appearing in force in Torbay and similar situations, if heavy gales drive them from the open sea. The migration of the Grey Phalarope, as illustrated by the facts brought together in the article on that species, points to a similar conclusion.

Numerous species of Waders follow the coastline of Southern England westward in their autumnal migration. The Little Stint is a scarce bird on the coast of South Devon, but it recurs year after year on the Warren at Exmouth, a favourite place of call for many species of birds. Wigeon, Pintail and other wild ducks in like manner work westward along our coast, upon which they had possibly arrived from the opposite coast of Holland.

Inland routes exist also; indeed, a great highway of birds extends from the Wash to the Bristol Channel, the birds working up the river valleys, from North-east to South-west in autumn and sometimes returning by that or some similar route in spring.

It may be remarked, however, that these suggestions are made more with a view of stimulating future observers to strive to advance the elucidation of difficulties by their own research, than in any hope of deciding details finally. In this particular, it may be well to point out that, though the Yellow-browed Warbler and Redbreasted Flycatcher have occurred on the Cornish coasts more than once, they have not yet been obtained in Devonshire.

The number of American species that have occurred in Devon is remarkable, including the White-winged Crossbill, American Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Surf Scoter and numerous Limicolæ.

#### V.—PREVIOUS WORKERS.

1790-1800. The first serious attempt to frame an account of the Ornithology of Devon, conceived in anything like a modern spirit, must be referred to the closing years of the eighteenth century. The Gentleman's Magazine for 1790 contains an invitation for assistance in collating a history of Devon, in a letter from the Rev. R. Polwhele, who framed numerous queries, as headings for the information desired. Of these queries the seventh related to "Birds, perennial, emigrating, rare birds, when and where seen in this county, such as the Nightingale or Cornish Chough." His enquiries bore fruit, and the sixth chapter of the first volume of his History of Devonshire, published in 1797, contained as explicit a description of local ornithology as the materials at the author's disposal rendered possible, upwards of one hundred and fifteen species being treated of, under the divisions of Land birds and Waterfowl. That his essay was incomplete no one was more fully aware, than the learned and versatile author. "These notices" he writes "are short, and I am but too sensible, imperfect; yet they sufficiently prove that Devonshire exhibits an ample field for the pursuits of the ornithologist," a conclusion amply justified by subsequent experience. Polwhele received assistance from the best naturalists

in Devon, and the results are interesting. His original query, regarding the existence of the Cornish Chough in Devon, resulted in the acquisition of such information as the following : " The Cornish Chough (says a gentleman of Barnstaple) is seen in the Northern coasts of Devon (in lit). In 1790, a Cornish Chough was shot at the sea-side by a son of Captain Gidoin of Modbury. " I saw the remains of this bird (says Mr. Perring) after it had been torn in pieces by a tame hawk. Never having seen a Chough, I kept its bill, it was longer than that of the Common Chough or Jackdaw, sharper, and of a very bright red colour." " I have seen (says Mr. Elford) the Cornish Chough near Plymouth : " and Mr. Yonge of Puffinch, observes that " Cornish Choughs are often observed on the hills along the coast in the western part of the county, distinguished by their different note, and in pairs like the common Carrion Crow."

1800-1815. The next writer to deal with the Birds of Devonshire was the well-known Colonel Montagu. His ornithological dictionary was not in any sense written as a local fauna, and though it contained many references to Devon, he would have no doubt resented any suggestion of local colouring, since he justly claimed to be cosmopolitan. Of this work, published in 1802, he remarks : " The following sheets have been entirely drawn from our own observations, and compiled from the notes of twenty years search and attention to the habits of this beautiful part of the creation, in most parts of this kingdom " (Introduction, p. XLI). He had already read a paper before the Linnean Society, *i.e.* on March 1st, 1796. On the 20th of December, 1803, a second paper followed, referring to the Cirl Bunting and Dartford Warbler, and on the 5th of May, 1807, he read a paper on the plumage of the Hen Harrier. His enthusiasm remained unabated, and induced him to publish a supplement to the ornithological Dictionary in 1813, in which he wrote : " We have continued our observations upon the characters and habits of British Birds, with the usual ardour and indefatigable research, the result of

which has been a very considerable addition to our knowledge in that branch of Natural History."

1830-1837. Dr. Moore of Plymouth, next investigated the ornithology of Devon. As early as 1830, he published a list of the Birds of Devon in the Transactions of the Plymouth Institute of which he was the Secretary. In 1837, he published supplementary lists of the same, remarking that "The subject of ornithology has long been pursued here, and besides my own collection I have access to those of Lord Boringdon at Saltram, of Sir G. Magrath, Plymouth, of Dr. Isbell: of C. Tripe Esq.,: of Mr. Drew, Collector, of Stonehouse: and Pincombe and Bolitho, Collectors, at Devonport." A third instalment of the labours of this excellent naturalist appeared in Rowe's Perambulation of Dartmoor in 1848. We must now return to the period of Dr. Moore's first list. In 1832, or two years after its appearance, we find Mrs. Bray in correspondence with Robert Southey. In a letter written from the vicarage, Tavistock, on June 9th, 1832, Mrs. Bray mentioned to Southey the name of the Rev. Thomas Johnes, Rector of Bradstone, Devon, adding "whenever you honour us with a visit at Tavistock, we hope to take you to his house, that you may see his beautiful collection of birds. These he stuffed himself." In her twentieth letter to the poet, Mrs. Bray includes an account of the ornithology of Dartmoor sent to her by Mr. Johnes himself. It is too extended to be here reproduced, the more so as it is easily referred to in the original, but one significant passage is the following: "The Tors of Dartmoor, lofty though they be and desolate, are yet too accessible to afford shelter to the eagle or its eyrie. Dr. E. Moore of Plymouth indeed mentions a pair, which built some years since on Dewerstone Rock in Bickleigh Vale, but he speaks from report only." Scarcely less interesting is Mr. Johnes's remark upon the Kite: "It is affirmed that Kites were common in this district forty or fifty years ago. At present (1832) they are so rare, that I have never seen one alive, and but one, a very beautiful specimen in the collection of the late W. Baron, Esq., at Tregear."

1839. In this year appeared the Natural History of South Devon, from the pen of Mr. J. C. Bellamy of Yealmpton, who dated the preface in December of the previous year. Bellamy was primarily a geologist, and as an ornithologist he manifestly relied much on the judgment of Dr. Moore, but he was a keen observer of the habits of birds, and must have been a man of considerable scientific attainments. The striking feature of the book is to be found in the elaborate pains taken to describe the physical characteristics of the region investigated.

1863. Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, who, like Dr. Moore, was a Secretary of the Plymouth Institute, published in the year 1863 a list of the Vertebrate Animals of Devon. Of the care bestowed upon its preparation, it would be difficult to speak too highly. To ornithologists, its value is augmented by the fact that the catalogue of birds was revised by the late Mr. Gatcombe, to whose experience the author expresses his indebtedness. Of the papers and lists that have since appeared, the majority were published in the Zoologist, which since its foundation in 1843 has worthily received the support of most British faunists. Their authors include the names of the late Mr. Gatcombe, the late Mr. Stevenson, the late Mr. J. H. Gurney, Baron A. von Hügel, and some others.

Those relating to the North of the County were penned by the Rev. M. A. Mathew, who with Mr. G. F. Mathew accomplished most of the ornithological investigations carried out on the shores of the Bristol Channel. Mr. D'Urban, of Exeter, and the Rev. M. S. C. Rickards have contributed a fair share of separate notes to the same journal, but do not appear to have written papers of any length.

## OBITUARY OF JOHN GATCOMBE.

Of the numerous naturalists who have investigated the Zoology of the West of England, no one ever deserved to be more worthily remembered than the late John Gatcombe, whose ornithological notes form so important a part of the present work. He was born in 1818, at Knowle, in Somersetshire, the son of Richard and Eliza Gatcombe. When he was very young, the family removed to Seaton in Devonshire, and when John was about 10 years of age they removed to London. He was one of twelve children, and the only member of the family who turned his attention particularly to the study of Natural History. He possessed great artistic talent, and as a boy always selected a bird or animal as a subject for his pencil. He was always very delicate, but eventually left London for Plymouth where the sea air contributed greatly to the invigoration of his constitution. A district so favourably adapted for ornithological observations as Plymouth strengthened his natural bias for bird studies, and his ample leisure permitted of his developing his tastes without let or hindrance. He was only twenty-three when he discovered some Richard's Pipits, attracted to them by the recognition of their strange notes. He was already on friendly terms with the Rev. W. S. Hore, an excellent ornithologist, between whom and Gatcombe a life-long intimacy was subsequently maintained. Much of his attention was given to wood carving and painting, in both of which he manifested a remarkable degree of skill. One of the most beautiful of his studies of birds is the figure of an American Wigeon, given in Dr. Morris' work on British Gamebirds and Wildfowl. He was equally generous in assisting the Rev. F. O. Morris, who writes that Mr. Gatcombe "was so obliging as to offer me, though an entire stranger, several designs for some of the birds of my book, and I think I adopted every one of them. Nearly all of them were extremely good, and I added at the end of one of them, the Great Northern Diver, 'It is one of the best figures of a bird I have ever seen'" (in lit. June 2. 1890). His delicacy of touch and accuracy of detail

enabled him to excel as much in wood carving as in painting, and on the few occasions that his productions were exhibited in public they received suitable recognition. Thus, when he was quite young, he won the first prize, a handsome silver medal, from the Devonport Mechanics' Institute for his water colour drawings, and another first class medal from the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society in 1862, which awarded him another first class silver medal for his drawings of birds from life, in 1884, together with a certificate of merit for his wood carvings. He also carried off a first class silver medal for his wood carvings at the Exhibition of Art, Science and Manufactures at Devonport in 1869. But the outdoor study of wild birds was his first love and continued to occupy his attention up to the very close of his life. His careful attention to the notes of birds, and pertinacity in following up all doubtful specimens, resulted in his adding many species to the Devon List, among others the Water Pipit, the Scandinavian form of the Rock Pipit, the Blue-headed Wagtail, Kentish Plover and Rednecked Phalarope. Perhaps his greatest triumph in personally detecting rare birds occurred in 1858, when he fell in with a pair of Alpine Accentors on the cliffs near Plymouth, and after a search of three weeks secured both specimens of this scarce and interesting bird. But he never lost an opportunity of examining the specimens sent to the local birdstuffers, and was thus instrumental in rescuing the Lesser Grey Shrike, the King Eider and some other birds from oblivion. How persistently he studied the arrival of species, even those that were well known, will be understood by any one who considers the trouble involved in making such observations as those which the Editor has collated from Gatcombe's papers in the articles on the Black Redstart, Grey Phalarope, Great Northern Diver, and Greater Shearwater. While thus intent upon studying birds, he was willing to advance the cause of all other branches of Natural History. He did not shrink from recording even a rare crustacean, while strange fishes and cetaceans were sure to receive proper recognition at his hands. Among the Cetaceans identified by Gatcombe, as taken on the

coasts of Devon, must rank the Dolphin, Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Rorqual, Risso's Grampus and White Whale. In the department of ichthyology, he recorded local specimens of the Basking, Thresher and Blue Sharks, Spinous Shark, Porbeagle, Pilotfish, Pelamid, Blackfish, Boarfish, Swordfish, Sunfish, and Eagle Ray with some others. He was also a competent botanist, but ornithology was his grand passion and it is as an ornithologist that he ranks among the most eminent of county faunists. It was impossible for a man possessed of such wide knowledge and generous instincts as Gatcombe, to keep his information to himself. It is true that he seldom published notes as a young man, and that nearly all his papers on Devonshire ornithology appeared between the year 1872 and his death in 1887. Perhaps the flight of Great Bustards which reached North Devon in 1871, and which he duly chronicled had some influence in stirring him to give to the world at large, those stores of information which were always accumulating in his note-books. But he was at all times ready to render aid to his fellow ornithologists. We have seen that he assisted Mr. Brooking Rowe in compiling his catalogue of Devonshire birds in 1863. He was no less ready to assist Mr. H. E. Dresser and the late John Gould in their great works. Mr. Dresser writes, "I am exceedingly glad to hear that you purpose writing an obituary sketch of the late Mr. Gatcombe. I first made his acquaintance many years ago, when he came with Mr. J. H. Gurney to look over my collections, and since then I have been in almost constant correspondence with him, and I formed a very high opinion of him as an ornithologist, and especially as a field naturalist. He was a most accurate and reliable observer and during the time I was engaged in writing the Birds of Europe, he was indefatigable in procuring me any information that I required respecting the ornithology of Devon and Cornwall, and as you have doubtless seen, he sent me from time to time some excellent field notes, and procured for me many valuable specimens which are still in my collection. He was also a very good draughtsman and often sent me paintings of

some of the rarer birds, chiefly with a view to show the colour of the soft parts. Quiet and unassuming in his habits, he was much less known as an ornithologist than he deserved to be, and I shall be very glad if your proposed sketch will throw some light upon his career as an ornithologist. Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., was an intimate friend of his and would I am sure, be able to give you much interesting information concerning him" (in lit. August 14th, 1890).

Mr. Gurney, with characteristic kindness, had already communicated his reminiscences of Mr. Gatecombe, and forwarded several letters addressed by that gentleman to the late Mr. J. H. Gurney and himself. Two of these, selected for partial reproduction here, may serve to show that Mr. Gatecombe was much more than a local naturalist, and possessed considerable acquaintance with continental species.

“ANTWERP, *Oct. 27th*, 1868.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“You will perceive from the above address that I am in Belgium. We left London yesterday morning and arrived here the same night. I did not get your letter until Thursday evening last, when I got your letter at my lodgings in Buckingham Street. I visited Leadenhall Friday and Saturday mornings early, but did not see anything that would suit you. Gould has made a drawing of your Fulmar and it looks well with an adult bird in the same picture, but he is still at a loss how to colour the bill of an old one. What I meant by the bill of the Little Gull being red was that the colour in summer is of a very deep blood or what may be called black red. I believe it is described of that colour by Yarrell and other authors. Gould showed me the drawings of young and old, adult in summer with *dark red* bill, in winter black with red at the base or corner of the mouth only. An old one in the British Museum and another I saw at Cooke's in Oxford Street, altho' stuffed for a long time evidently,

showed that the bill had been red when first killed. Gould will not believe that they are ever killed in this country with the black head, but allowed that a great number might be obtained in the young or winter plumage. You ought to think yourself lucky in getting your summer one, as they are certainly extremely rare in that dress. I visited the market place here to-day, but found only vegetables there, it not being market day, but in a gameshop I saw one Ring Ouzel, one Mountain Finch, several *Wood* and Skylarks, and dozens of *Redwings* with a few Thrushes and Fieldfares. . . . . I saw nothing on the river Scheldt but a few Gulls which were very tame; and nothing in crossing the Channel from Dover to Calais, save a few Kittiwakes, Razorbills, and Guillemots, two or three Gannets and some immense flocks of Scoters; but on landing at Calais the first thing which attracted my attention was a pair of Crested Larks, which pitched on the opposite quay to where I was. A great many Larks were apparently crossing the channel. A long way from land a Purple Sandpiper or Phalarope crossed the steamer's bows. . . . ."

The next letter was written from Paris on November 1st, 1868, and thus commences: "After posting my last letter to you, we started for Brussels, which we found to be a very fine city, though not to be compared with Paris in any way. It contains, besides some fine picture galleries, a capital museum of Natural History, and a very nice poultry market. In the museum I was delighted to find a specimen of the Great Auk, tho' badly stuffed, and I fear rather moth-eaten about the tail, nevertheless they seem to know its value as it is enclosed under a glass shade inside the regular glazed cases which contain the other birds. This I find is the case with all the very rare birds in the British Museum. I made a sketch of this bird, as I did of the one at Neuchatel. The Museum also contains Little Gulls in every stage of plumage, and the adult with black head appears to have had a dark red bill. It is particularly rich in skeletons and stuffed specimens of the Cetacea, one or two

of which measured more than 70 feet. In the market I bought a very fine Great Shrike but which I am sorry to say was in moult and very stale, but I managed to make a tolerable skin of it. It was too far gone to note the sex, which I am very sorry for, as it had two spots on the wings, which Mr. Gould says is peculiar to the *male* only. On Friday we visited Waterloo, and in the church of the village I was surprised to see a single Swallow hawking after flies. . . . Before I left Antwerp I walked along the banks of the Scheldt by the reeds, but saw nothing save a few Hooded Crows, Gulls and Lapwings. The market of Brussels contained the following birds: Wigeon, Shovellers, Scaup, Teal, Pintail, Spotted Redshanks and common, Greenshanks, Ruffs, Purres, Ring Dotterel, Blackbirds, Thrushes, Fieldfares, Redwings, Mountain Finches, Tree Sparrows, Grouse, Pheasants, Woodcocks, Partridges, Jays, Green Woodpeckers, Golden and Grey Plovers, Cormorants, Coots and one or two female Goldeneyes, besides a host of small birds such as Sparrows, Larks, Chaffinches. . . . Before leaving London I spent a very pleasant evening with Mr. Bond, you would like him better than anyone."

Present limits of space unluckily render it impossible to quote either the remainder of Mr. Gatcombe's letters to Mr. Gurney, or those which his old friend and constant correspondent the Rev. G. Robinson of Armagh handsomely offered for the purpose of this work. His relative, Mr. Picthall, to whose kindness the Editor is indebted for much information regarding Mr. Gatcombe, remarks that Mr. Gatcombe was at no period of his life a strong man. For the last nine years of his life he suffered from Vertigo which would seize him in the street or in church. For six years prior to his death, on the 28th of April, 1887, it caused him to be perfectly deaf, which obliged him to have every word written for him. But his powers of endurance, and enthusiasm in the cause of Natural History, enabled him at a late period of his life to continue his rambles and even to extend his ornithological

studies. He was fond of pets, and kept two tame Buzzards in his garden for a number of years, but he was happiest when studying wild birds in their natural haunts ; latterly at any rate, he kept a running diary of the species met with from day to day. Full of sympathy with animals, he was intolerant of wanton interference with breeding birds, but to oblige a friend with a specimen of a Black Redstart or Cirl Bunting or some other uncommon specimen was always a pleasurable interest. Endeared to his personal friends by his singular unselfishness, he was ever ready to assist brother naturalists, with information or with specimens. For himself, to examine a Dotterel killed on Dartmoor or to catch a glimpse of a Richard's Pipit on the cliffs near Plymouth fully gratified his ambition and rendered him a happy man.

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## SLAPTON LEY.

SLAPTON Ley is a fresh-water lake, comprising an area of about 400 acres, situate about mid-way between Dartmouth and Kingsbridge on the south coast of the county. It is the finest and largest lake in the South of England : it is divided into two parts, called the Higher and Lower Ley, by a stone bridge, the road over which leads to the small village of Slapton, about a quarter of a mile distant. The Higher Ley grows a large quantity of reeds averaging from six to seven feet in height, these are annually cut and tied in bundles, and sold for thatching purposes, &c. Of these two divisions, the Lower Ley is by far the largest and most important, extending from the above mentioned bridge, which is nearly opposite the Royal Sands Hotel, to the small fishing village of Torcross, about a mile distant. When visiting the Ley on the 1st of March, 1890, I was struck with the large numbers of Wild-fowl which were swimming about on its transparent waters, and amounting to some 10,000 birds, on a rough estimate, and amongst which I distinguished the Tufted Duck, Teal, Wigeon, Mallard, Coot, Moorhen and Water Rail. Some few acres of this, the Lower Ley, are covered with reeds, which are never cut but preserved as the breeding grounds of the Wild-fowl, and constitute the favourite resort of the Bittern which may be seen almost every winter, standing motionless among the reeds watching for its prey. Whilst at Slapton, the landlord of the Royal Sands Hotel, showed me the very spot where, only two days previously, he had shot a very fine dark-plumaged specimen. W. V. Toll, Esq., who resides near the Ley, told me that he shot two Bitterns this year (1890), one in January and the other in February ; he also informed me that he has seen dozens on the Ley during the time of his residence in the neighbourhood. Through that gentleman's kindness, I had the pleasure of inspecting his collection of Birds amongst which was

a splendid specimen of the Bean Goose, which he informed me was one of three which he was fortunate enough to shoot out of a flock of six seen by him on the Ley.

Amongst uncommon birds, in the same collection were a pair of Shovellers, a female Gadwall, Pintail, Tufted and Golden-eye Ducks, Hoopoe, Green Sandpipers, Grey Phalaropes and an almost pure white variety of the Pied Wagtail. On visiting Stokeleigh House, the shooting box of Sir Lydstone Newman, Bart., (the owner of the Ley) which is situate in a picturesque valley overlooking the English Channel, and about a mile and a quarter distant from the Ley, I was shewn specimens of the Brent Goose, Osprey, Great Northern Diver, Long-eared Owls and several varieties of the Common Pheasant, all of which were shot on the Ley or in its immediate neighbourhood.

The Coot breeds on the Ley in hundreds and the Moorhen in less numbers. On conversing with an old boatman, who has known and worked on the Ley for a great number of years, he informed me that, until within the last two or three years, no Teal were to be seen there in the summer, but in the summer of 1888, a pair or two remained to breed, and in the following year several broods of young birds were hatched. He also told me that he had known a pair or two of Wigeon remain on the Ley the whole summer, but this, I should say, would probably be due to the birds having met with an accident which would prevent their migrating to the north, where they breed.

This lake is divided from the sea by a ridge of sand from between two and three hundred yards wide, and over this the coach runs daily from Dartmouth to Kingsbridge. Studded here and there are low bushes of whin and bramble, amongst which numbers of Stonechats and Whinchats nest, the Wheatear breeds on the sands and the Ringed Plover nests on the shore of the sea. Flocks of Gulls may be observed flying backwards and forwards from the sea to the Ley, and the Cormorant may occasionally be seen. The Lower Ley abounds in Pike and affords excellent sport

for the lovers of Angling, and to which spot Anglers flock from all parts of England. The fishing and wild-fowl are strictly preserved, and all information respecting the same may be obtained from the proprietor of the Slapton Sands Hotel, which is situate on the sands.

Slapton Ley has preserved its natural features intact since Mr. Laskey visited it in 1796. He writes that: "This sheet of water occupies some hundreds of acres, and has no visible outlet, draining itself through the sand of the beach into the sea, which is scarcely distant a stone's throw. It is well stored with the *perca fluviatilis*, perch, *lucius esox*, pike, *cyprinus rutilus*, roach, and immense quantities of the *anguilla*, or eel, and the *fulci*, bald Coot, in abundance, finding here a safe breeding-place among the vast quantities of the *arundo* or reed, here called Sea-reeds. In winter every kind of wild-fowl is to be found on its surface in the greatest plenty" (Gentleman's Magazine, vol. 66. part I. p. 276).

Another notice of Slapton Ley, written by "H. V. D.," and accompanied by an outline of the lake will be found in the Magazine of Natural History, vol. III. p. 396. Sir Lydstone Newman, Bart., has kindly furnished me with a list of 44 species of Birds, all represented in his collection by specimens shot at Slapton Ley. This catalogue includes the Cormorant, Shag, Gannet, Heron, Bittern, Little Bittern, Bean Goose, White-fronted Goose, Brent Goose, Whooper Swan, Sheldrake, Wild Duck, Gadwall, Shoveller, Pintail, Teal, Wigeon, Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Tufted, Scaup, Golden-eye, Long-tailed Duck, Goosander, Red-breasted Merganser, Smew, Spotted Crake, Water Rail, Moorhen, Coot, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Kittiwake, Great Northern Diver, Black-throated Diver, Red-throated Diver, Great-crested Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Slavonian, Eared and Little Grebes.

## LUNDY ISLAND.

AN early description of Lundy Island is furnished by a writer, who contributed a 'Natural History of Biddeford or By-the Ford' to the Gentleman's Magazine of 1755. After treating briefly of some local features, with the naive that "the Aurora Borealis is very common" in the parish, the historian informs us that in Biddeford Bay "lies the island of Lundy, which is five miles long and two broad, but so encompassed with rocks, that it is accessible only in one part . . . . The island is four leagues distant from the nearest land, but it abounds with fine springs of fresh water. The soil in the southern part is good, but the northern part is rocky. There is, among others, one craggy pyramidical rock, so remarkable for the number of rats harbouring about it, that it is called Rat Island. The whole island abounds with rabbits and wild-fowl" (Gentleman's Magazine, 1755. pp. 447-8).

Polwhele, writing in 1797, quotes the statement of Wescote that "The greatest profit that is to be made of Lundy Island is by hogs, coney, and *sea-fowl*. The last it seems were so prolific that in breeding time you could scarcely walk in some places without treading upon eggs" (History of Devon. vol. I. p. 169).

The Island of Lundy has been visited by Mr. Howard Saunders, Mr. J. E. Harting, and Mr. H. E. Rawson, but no professed ornithologist appears to have systematically investigated its bird-life, at least the Editor has failed to find any published account of its bird-life other than that included in the excellent History of Lundy Island supplied by Mr. J. R. Chanter to the Transactions of the Devonshire Association (vol. 4. part 2), and read before that body at Biddeford, August 1871.

Mr. Chanter describes Lundy Island as "A lofty table-headed granite rock, rising to the height of 500 feet, surrounded by steep

and occasionally perpendicular cliffs, storm-beaten and scarred over with grisly seams and clefts, and hollowed out here and there along the shore into fantastic caves and grottoes, with huge piles of granite thereon in wild disorder. The cliffs and adjacent sea, alive with sea-birds, every ledge and jutting rock being dotted with them, or whirling round in clouds, filling the air with their discordant cries." Mr Chanter supplies a list of the species of Birds, which had been observed on the island up to 1871, revised by the Rev. M. A. Mathew and Mr. H. G. Heaven, including 27 residents, 29 summer visitants, 22 autumn and winter visitants, 59 occasional visitants. To this list Pallas's Sand Grouse has since been added. Mr. Chanter states that the commonest small birds on Lundy are the Chaffinch, Linnet, Song Thrush, Lark, Wren, Robin, Stonechat, Hedge Accentor, Yellowhammer, Meadow Pipit and Rock Pipit, while among the rarer small birds figure the Crossbill and Rose-coloured Starling. The Common Starling occurs in large flocks in winter.

Westcote wrote in 1620: "Timber and wood it hath none, only a few stunted elders, which are haunted with such a multitude of stares that you can hardly come to them for the dunging of the birds." The Peregrine Falcon has bred on Walney from time immemorial. We read in the inquisition of 1274: "There is also the eyre of butcher falcons, which have sometimes three young ones, sometimes four. These eyre the jury knew not how to estimate, as they build their nests in a place in which they cannot be taken." Woodcock and Snipe often visit Lundy. "Should the winter be exceptionally severe," writes Mr. Chanter, "and especially should there be a heavy fall of snow, large flights of Woodcocks seek a more genial climate in Lundy, with its numerous springs which never freeze in the hardest frost. They find shelter in the little valleys, in the boggy ground formed by the streams, and in the steep cleaves on the eastern side, locally called the "Sidings." The Island is then a paradise for sportsmen, as in addition to the Woodcock and Snipe: Plovers, Wild Duck, Wigeon and Teal are sufficiently numerous to afford

first-rate sport." But after all the chief interest of Lundy is to be found in the hosts of sea birds which throng its rocky cliffs, of these, the most important in olden days were the Gannets, which "appear at one time to have been very plentiful. They are continually referred to in the old record as constituting one of the chief sources of the riches and revenue of the island."

A journal of 1787, quoted by Mr. Chanter, furnishes the accompanying narrative of fowling, as then practised on Lundy Island: "After dinner we walked to view the rocks on the western part of the Island and saw vast quantities of wild fowl, and the method of taking them in nets, which the inhabitants use for the advantage of their feathers. The nets are just the same as those commonly used for taking rabbits on warrens. They are fixed on the rocks, and sometimes on the ground on sticks in the breeding places. Every morning and evening the natives watch their nets and take out the birds that are entangled. They catch, in a good season, 1700 or 1800 dozen, and make one shilling per pound of their feathers." Mr. Chanter furnishes other statistics, showing that "The eggs are still taken in considerable numbers by the youths on the Island, as well as by fishermen from the neighbouring coasts." On Lundy the eggs are used for cooking purposes, or sold to visitors at Ilfracombe.

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## ERRATA.

- Page 2. —line 3.—*for* "e.g.," *read* "e.g."
- Page 8. —line 4.—*for* "similiar," *read* "similar."
- Page 12. —line 28. —*for* "take," *read* "taken."
- Page 13.—line 15.—*for* "aloc," *read* "alar."
- Page 17.—line 22. —*for* "reorde," *read* "records."
- Page 23.—line 12. —*for* "their," *read* "there."
- Page 30. —line 3. —*for* "commoniest," *read* "commonest."
- Page 32.—line 4. —*for* "spinoletta," *read* "spipoletta."
- Page 53. —line 29.—*for* "through," *read* "though."
- Page 70. —line 7.—*for* "hyargus," *read* "pyargus."
- Page 75.—line 16. —*for* "their," *read* "there."
- Page 89.—line 11.—*del* "ot."
- Page 118. —line 1.—*for* "lot iii," *read* "lot exi."
- Page 127.—line 21.—*for* "collecion," *read* "collection."
- Page 139. —line 25.—*for* "than," *read* "that."
- Page 156.—line 8.—*for* "now," *read* "non."



# THE BIRDS OF DEVONSHIRE.

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## ORDER PASSERES.

*Family* TURDIDÆ.

*Subfamily* TURDINÆ

MISSEL THRUSH.—*Turdus viscivorus*, (Linn).

A NUMEROUS resident, bold and audacious in the breeding season, at other times, shy and retiring. A partial migrant. Its trivial name of “Missel Thrush” is derived from its excessive fondness for mistletoe berries, but in Devonshire it is better known as the “Holm Screech;” “Holm” being a name for the holly, the berries of which are also eaten greedily by this species; individual thrushes taking possession of certain trees, and stripping them of their berries, whilst all intruders are driven away.

SONG THRUSH.—*Turdus musicus*, (Linn).

A NUMEROUS resident, its breeding range extending from the wilds of Dartmoor to our most cultivated districts. Though represented all through the year, many migrate in autumn, their place being filled by immigrants. Pied varieties often occur.

REDWING.—*Turdus iliacus*, (Linn).

A WINTER visitor, generally numerous, but sometimes hardly seen, e.g., in mild, open winters. Many appeared in the autumn of 1887, while in that of 1888, scarcely one was to be met with, a remark that applies equally to the north and south of the county. Near Tavistock, Mr. Mitchell has found this thrush to show a preference for roosting in thick fir woods.

FIELDFARE.—*Turdus pilaris*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT winter visitant, arriving chiefly in October, and occasionally prolonging its stay until the beginning of May. Mr. Mitchell remarks that the flocks of this Thrush which he observes, frequent the *borders* of Dartmoor rather than the moor itself. I have often noticed their peculiar habit of roosting on the ground, for on winter evenings Fieldfares gather from great distances, arriving in flocks at some favourite spot just before dusk, and then roosting on the ground, like Skylarks, generally among coarse grass or in stubble fields. The song of the Fieldfare is seldom heard in England, but Mr. E. Murch records his listening to a singing Fieldfare on January 25th, the notes of which he compares to the blended songs of the Blackbird and Missel Thrush. (Zool. 1846. p. 1297).

WHITE'S THRUSH.—*Turdus varius*, (Pall).

A RARE straggler. “ A good specimen of this

Eastern Asiatic Thrush," writes Mr. W. E. H. Holdsworth, "was killed by Mr. E. Studdy, in Dene Wood, near Ashburton, Devon, during the severe cold weather in January last (1881). It was in company with three or four birds of apparently the same species and, when flushed, was mistaken for a Woodcock, from its heavy flight," (Zool. 1881 p. 108). This bird was exhibited at a meeting of the Zoological Society by Mr. Holdsworth. The fact that it was seen in company with other individuals of the same species is noteworthy, previous records of examples shot in this country, having referred to solitary individuals.

BLACKBIRD.—*Turdus merula*, (Linn).

A NUMEROUS resident, not confined to the cultivated districts, sometimes breeding on the same ground as the Ring Ouzel. Immigrants arrive in early winter, and, during a spell of wet weather, may usually be found searching for slugs and snails in the turnip fields. A cream coloured variety was shot at Warleigh, and pied and pure white varieties being frequently obtained.

RING OUZEL.—*Turdus torquatus*, (Linn).

A SPRING and autumn migrant, often occurring at the Start Lighthouse at the periods of its arrival and departure; many proceed into the centre of the county to breed on Dartmoor, where its nesting habits have been studied by several ornithologists. Thus Dr. Scott writes of this species: "They

appear to confine themselves principally to high and lonely Tors, and there, as you wander amongst the huge detached blocks of granite, they may be observed hopping from stone to stone," (Zool. 1849. p. 2384). "Although the Ring Ouzel moves North and South in large numbers," writes the late Mr. Rodd, "a great number remain in the spring and summer months on Dartmoor and the Cornish moors to breed, and may be observed all through the summer with their nests, eggs and young," (Zool. 1869. p. 1918). The following extract from Mr. Gatcombe's field notes for 1872, describes this Thrush as seen on its nesting ground: "April 7th, again on Dartmoor. Ring Ouzels uttering their somewhat wild and plaintive call notes in every direction, more especially in the neighbourhood of 'Tavy Cleave,' at which place, when botanising with some friends among the rocks, heath and furze a few years ago, we found several nests and eggs; and I feel perfectly satisfied that this species may be found annually breeding in suitable localities over the whole extent of the moor. I have remarked that, when perched, the position of the Ring Ouzel is more horizontal than that of the Blackbird, but its alarm note is very similar and its song not much unlike. It has a habit of hiding under rocks and large stones when pursued, and if found will suddenly start away with rapid flight to a long distance, emitting its chucking alarm-notes all the way. It has also the habit, especially when its

nest is approached, of alighting on a rock or stone near or hopping along the ground with drooping wings and elevated tail, at the same time uttering the quickly repeated 'chuck, chuck, chuck,' of alarm" (Zool. 1872. p. 3099). Mr. Mitchell writes that the Ring Ouzel arrives at the end of March and during the first days of April, on Dartmoor; nesting in rocks on the top of the Tors, in the steep banks of streams, and in old quarries. It feeds on Whortle berries. In September the Ring Ouzels resort to the valleys bordering on the moor, where they subsist partially on Blackberries. They leave in October, when stragglers may be met with on the tops of the sea cliffs; this species occasionally prolongs its stay with us into the middle of winter.

WHEATEAR.—*Saxicola cinanthe*, (Linn).

A NUMEROUS summer migrant, a few birds appearing early in March, before the great flocks arrive. Mr. Gatecombe examined specimens shot near Plymouth, on the 5th of March, and once saw a single bird on Dartmoor on the 6th of that month. The majority of immigrants pass through on their vernal passage, after resting a day or two on the coast; returning in autumn in increased numbers, and occurring at both seasons at the lighthouses. Mr. Gatecombe was shown a Wheatear which had alighted on a fishing boat five miles from land in an exhausted state on April 2nd, its two companions being seen to fall into the sea. A good many Wheatears take up

their summer quarters with us, especially on Dartmoor, where they nest under loose stones and in rabbit burrows.

WHINCHAT.—*Pratincola rubetra*, (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant, numerous represented on Haldon and Woodbury Common, and present in smaller numbers on the edge of Dartmoor. The Editor found it very abundant near Torquay in the summer of 1880, frequenting more sheltered situations than those favoured by the Stonechat. A few pairs generally breed in North Devon. (E. Rawson).

STONECHAT.—*Pratincola rubicola*, (Linn).

A RESIDENT, and partial migrant, nesting in March and April on Dartmoor; generally present in suitable localities, more numerous than the Whinchat in North Devon. A cream-coloured Stonechat, shot on Shenstone Marsh, April, 1863, is in the collection of Mr. H. Nicholls.

REDSTART.—*Ruticilla phoenicurus*. (Linn.)

A SUMMER visitant of partial distribution, common in the neighbourhood of Exeter, and numerous in North Devon (A. Mitchell), but generally a scarce bird in the South and West of the County. About Sidmouth it is rarely seen (A. L. Hine-Haycock). In thirty years experience, the Rev. J. C. Green, of Modbury, has only seen one local specimen, a female, picked up dead upon the sea shore near

Ringmoor, in 1888. Mr. Gatecombe occasionally observed stragglers near Plymouth on their first arrival, and once had reason to suppose that a pair nested in his district. About Broadclyst it is plentiful; I often watch it flitting in and out of our hedgerows, and have heard its sweet song prolonged far into the night.

BLACK REDSTART.—*Ruticilla titys*, (Scop.)

A WINTER visitant in sparing numbers to S. Devon, of occasional occurrence inland and on the North coast, but chiefly met with in certain favourite localities on the Southern coast, between November and March. Bellamy recorded it in 1839, as a winter visitant, under the title of *Sylvia erithacus* the Red-tailed Warbler, on the strength of six specimens shot at Devonport, in November, (Nat. Hist. of Devon, p. 205); a decision soon confirmed by the Rev. W. S. Hore, who stated in 1844, that examples had frequented the neighbourhood of Devonport for the previous five winters, and that a score of specimens have been procured between November 1843, and February 1844 (Zool. 1844. p.p. 495-496). Mr. Hore pointed out that immature birds formed the bulk of these immigrants, that they arrived in November, that though absent during summer, yet they returned to the same localities annually, their stay being limited to three or four months. He remarked on the shyness of the Black Redstart in winter, an experience confirmed at the

same time by Mr. Jordan, of Teignmouth, who found the species frequenting rocks in company with the Rock Pipit, from Torquay, and other localities similar reports followed, but it was reserved for Mr. Gatcombe to complete a series of observations upon this species, carried out with remarkable perseverance during a life-time. In 1857, this gifted naturalist recorded (*Zool.* 1857. p. 5593), that he had for many years ascertained that the Black Redstart appeared on the coasts of Devon or Cornwall the first or second week of November, leaving at the end of March or the beginning of April.

A few irregular observations from his pen followed, but in 1872, he commenced a series of notes which flowed forward in unbroken sequence for twelve years, and these the Editor has taken special pains to separate from the general details of his papers, and to summarise in tabular form.

- (1). 1872. *A.* Spring. March 15th, a Black Redstart seen at Mount Batten; March 20th, another at Rhame Head, "about to take its departure."  
*B.* Autumn. November 12th, wind N.E. blowing very cold, three birds at the Devil's Point, Stonehouse.
- (2). 1873. *A.* Spring. March 7th, two Redstarts seen, March 14th, another, which provokes the comment, "these birds increase in number on

the seacoast just before their departure for the summer'' ;

March 26th, another seen, " I expect the last for the season."

*B.* Autumn, November 8th, an adult male ; 22nd, a young bird ; December 13th, a young bird killed ; December 28th, another seen.

- (3). 1874. *A.* Spring. (At Torquay, two adult males killed in a garden, in January). March 2nd, an immature Redstart seen.

*B.* Autumn. November 3rd, an immature bird, others on the 5th, 7th, 16th, December 1st, some, December 27th, one.

- (4.) 1875. *A.* Spring. No Redstarts reported

*B.* Autumn. November 3rd, an immature bird, others on the 11th, 15th, 22nd, and so to the 28th, December 2nd, some, 9th, some seen.

- (5). 1876. *A.* Spring. January 8th, some, March 13th, one. March 21st, several seen,

*B.* Autumn. November 6th, the first seen ; November 8th, another, an adult ; 24th, another December 11th, another seen.

- (6). 1877. *A.* Spring. January, several immature Redstarts seen during the month, February 22nd, one seen ; March, Redstarts noticed in two localities until the 17th, " but soon after that date they had nearly all left the coast."

*B.* Autumn. November 3rd, two seen ; others almost daily during the remainder of the month.

- (7). 1878. *A.* Spring. March 7th, Black Redstarts still on the coast.

*B.* Autumn. November 1st, several Redstarts arrived, weather very cold, wind N.E.

- (8). 1879. *A.* Spring. January, an old male killed.

*B.* Autumn. October 29th, an immature bird at the Devil's Point, "a day earlier than I ever noticed one in this locality."

- (9). 1880. *A.* Spring. No remarks.

*B.* Autumn. "Notwithstanding that I was daily on the watch, not a single Black Redstart did I see, a circumstance that has not happened to me for at least twenty years." Mr. Gatecombe thought that the immigrants had perhaps perished in crossing the channel during the terrific gales of November, but Mr. Clogg met with two Black Redstarts at Looe, Cornwall, during the season.

- (10). 1881. *A.* Spring. No remarks.

*B.* Autumn. November 18th, first two Redstarts seen.

- (11). 1882. *A.* Spring. No remarks.

*B.* Autumn. November 9th, wind N.N.W. an immature bird ; 11th, more birds ; November 13th, an adult male, wind N.E.

(12). 1883. A. Spring. February 18th, one seen ;  
wind N. cold.

B. Autumn. November 12th, several seen this  
day and subsequently. December, first week  
many seen.

We learn from these statistics, that this Redstart arrives on the South Devon coast chiefly during November, singly or in two's and trios, usually with a Northerly wind ; that their arrival is not accomplished at once but is frequently extended, and that in March the birds gather on the coast in small parties or singly, previous to starting on the journey to their breeding grounds. *Where* their breeding grounds are, must be a matter of pure conjecture. It has been suggested that the birds which visit this county have travelled thither from the Pyrenees, but the Editor is unable to entertain this hypothesis, having due regard to the reports of the occurrence of the species at Heligoland, on the Sussex, Essex, and occasionally Norfolk coasts, and frequent presence on the Irish coasts during the winter months ; to say nothing of its occasional occurrence in the West, Midland and even Northern Counties of England. Everywhere, however, it seems to rank as a rare bird, except in Cornwall and South Devon, where its shyness at this season perhaps makes it appear less abundant than it really is.

Mr. D'Urban's experience differs from that of Mr. Gatcombe in one particular, the former gentle-

man having recorded a female Black Redstart caught near Exeter as early as October 8th, or three weeks before the earliest of Mr. Gatecombe's first arrivals. Both Mr. Gatecombe and the Rev. W. S. Hore, remarked that Black Redstarts frequently seek their food about old quarries, high buildings and outhouses; the Rev. J. C. Green writes me that he has observed a Black Redstart catching flies on his church at Modbury. Those Ornithologists, who are acquainted with this bird's cheery and constantly uttered song (in summer), will be surprised that no one appears to have recorded that it sings in its winter quarters. The Editor says he has heard the Black Redstart singing merrily in September, but it is highly sensitive to barometrical changes, and though at other times, a most sprightly bird, assumes an aspect of misery in broken weather. Mr. Gatecombe himself noticed this in 1875, on the 28th November, the wind being N E. and bitterly cold, he wrote, "The Black Redstarts appear to suffer much from the cold, are very tame, and may be seen hopping or puffed up on the grass above the cliffs, instead of on the rocks below. The severe weather has also been disastrous to the Green Woodpeckers." (Zool. 1876. p. 4784). Mr. Gatecombe noticed that the Black Redstart was not a difficult bird to catch alive, and in this the Editor concurs, having take both old and young birds in an ordinary Nightingale trap, but the species requires insects to keep it in good health, and is too active

and restless a bird to really thrive well in confinement, unless enjoying the run of a large aviary. Bellamy's vague assertion that this bird had nested near Exeter prior to 1839, (Nat. Hist. of Devon p. 206). hardly requires serious consideration, but Mr. Gatecombe was once under the impression that an adult male spent an entire summer in his winter haunts, a supposition strengthened by the fact that Mr. Howard Saunders and other competent observers have met with stragglers of this species in England in May and June. No one understood the changes of plumage in this species better than Mr. Gatecombe who examined many specimens on the continent as well as at home, and gave Mr. J. H. Gurney a specimen of the variety, in which the white aloe patch of the perfectly adult male is entirely suppressed; the specimen being fully mature in all other respects.

RED-SPOTTED BLUETHROAT.—*Cyanecula succica*, (Linn).

A RARE visitant. In September, 1852, a single specimen of the Bluethroat Warbler was shot in a furze brake by Mr. Buller, near Whimble, South Devon, (Zool 1852 p. 3709).

REDBREAST.—*Erithacus rubecula*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT resident, but many migrate before winter and others leave the colder districts for the coast. Writing in December, Mr. Gatecombe remarks, "It is quite surprising to observe the quantity of Robins that frequent the wildest parts of our rocky

coasts during winter, flitting in and out among the rocks and caves (undercliff) all day long." (Zool. 1870, p. 2026). He also observed its pertinacity in driving away Black Redstarts from its haunts. Instances of curious nesting sites might be cited without number, Mr. A. L. Hine-Haycock tells me of a bird at Sidmouth, which built her nest in a coil of rope, hanging up in a tool-shed. The rope and nest were removed and placed on a neighbouring wall. The Redbreast continued to sit upon her eggs and hatched the young out in safety. A saying is current in North Devon, that when a Redbreast perches on the roof of a cottage and utters its plaintive "weet," the baby in the cottage will die. Another and wide-spread belief is that, if a Redbreast happens to die in your hand, the hand in question will always shake, as if with palsy.

NIGHTINGALE.—*Daulias lusciniæ*, (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant, rare or very local, and little known in the county. Montagu met with it at Kingsbridge, and Mr. R. P. Nicholls reports a specimen picked up dead on a road in that locality, April 24th, 1888. At Topsham the late Mr. F. W. L. Ross heard two singing in the summer of 1845, and another was shot near Honiton in May, 1846, (Zool. 1846. p. 1393). Mr. Ross possessed a bird, now in the Exeter Museum, shot in Stoke Wood near Exeter, prior to 1845, and one was heard in the same wood in 1875. It is reported also to have

bred near Exeter in 1872. At Torquay a bird of this species was heard singing in April, 1882, and it visits Sidmouth occasionally, as in May 1884 (A. L. Hine-Haycock). Two were shot at Thurlestone Sands in the spring of 1888, and I have two examples in my collection, killed near Plymouth. A Nightingale was heard at Barnstaple, in 1887, and others at Shute Woods and Gittisham in May, 1889. Mr. Rawson says he first heard of the Nightingale near Ashburton, in Mid-Devon, in 1887, when a pair of these birds took up their abode in a coppice near the house of a friend. He went down to satisfy himself the following year, and found two pairs had established themselves in the same coppice. In 1889 two pairs nested in the old locality, and a third pair nested close by, so that the birds are apparently increasing, and likely to form a permanent settlement.

*Subfamily Sylviinæ.*

WHITETHROAT.—*Sylvia cinerea*, (Bechst).

AN ABUNDANT summer visitant, frequenting our shady lanes and hedgerows, and often pouring forth its fussy song upon the wing. In Devonshire, as elsewhere, it is often called the "Nettle-Creeper," from its partiality for fastening its nest to the stems of that plant.

LESSER WHITETHROAT.—*Sylvia curruca*, (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant, but rare. It has been obtained near Plymouth, but has not as yet been found breeding in the county.

BLACKCAP.—*Sylvia atricapilla*, (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant, more plentiful in the centre and south of the county than on the north coast, though its rich song and loud warning note readily reveal its presence in the breeding season. Its occurrence in winter is reported by Dr. Elliot, who met with a bird of this species near Kingsbridge, in February, 1889.

GARDEN WARBLER.—*Sylvia hortensis* (Bechst).

A SUMMER visitant, fairly distributed but not very numerous, though its retiring habits may cause it to be overlooked, in spite of its rich and pleasing song.

DARTFORD WARBLER.—*Melizophilus undatus*, (Bodd).

A RARE and partial resident, first observed in the county by Montagu, in 1802, who emphasised its comparative scarcity, finding it absent from extensive tracts of furze such as seemed well adapted to its habits, and remarking that it was usually found within a few miles of the coast. Specimens have from time to time been obtained in several localities, as at Budleigh Salterton, where one was shot by Mr. H. S. Percival, in 1871. (E. Parfitt); at Lypstone, from whence a specimen was sent to the Exeter Museum, in 1874; at Bickleigh Vale and Withy-hedge, near Plymouth. In recording the capture of a specimen at Mount Batten, in November, 1877, Mr. Gatecombe remarked that the Dartford Warbler was to be met with in the furze brakes of that locality almost every year. Mr. Mitchell

reports that he has met with the species in the North of the County. Montagu found this species nesting near Kingsbridge, in 1806, building in the thickest furze, about two feet from the ground, a nest resembling in the flimsiness of its structure that of the Whitethroat, composed of dry vegetable stalks, mixed with the tender dead branches of furze, intermixed very sparingly with wool. The nestlings reared by Montagu "began to sing with the appearance of their first mature feathers and continued in song all the month of October."

GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.—*Regulus cristatus*. Koch.

A COMMON resident, and winter immigrant, most numerous in our fir plantations, though often seen in our hedgerows and gardens, generally in small parties, but single pairs are met with during every month. It is a delightful bird to study, appearing to be incessantly in motion, darting from branch to branch in its keen pursuit of insects, often clinging to the under-surface of the boughs of firs in titmouse fashion, either in company with its own kind or associating with Tits and Tree Creepers. Bellamy records a white variety of the Golderest obtained in Devonshire.

FIRE-CRESTED WREN.—*Regulus ignicapillus*. (Brehm).

A RARE visitant during the winter months, only met with hitherto in the South of the County. On the 6th of March, 1873, a beautiful female Firecrest was taken in the flesh to Mr. Shopland, of Torquay,

having been obtained in the vicinity of that town. It was recorded by Mr. J. H. Gurney and Baron A. von Hügel (Zool. 1873. p. 3490. 1874. p. 3906). Mr. Parfitt records two obtained near Devonport, and Mr. Pulman states in his "Book of the Axe," that it has been seen near Axminster; but whether these examples were correctly identified as Firecrests, is unknown.

CHIFFCHAFF.—*Phylloscopus rufus*, (Bechst).

A NUMEROUS and early spring visitant, uttering its monotonous notes from tall trees on its first arrival in March, and continuing its simple song into the summer months. Arriving, as it does before the trees and hedges are in leaf, its presence serves as a pleasant reminder of the advancing season. Stragglers occasionally pass the winter in South Devon, but the Chiffchaff is a less common bird at all times in the North of the County.

WILLOW WREN.—*Phylloscopus trochilus*, (Linn).

A NUMEROUS summer visitant, generally distributed through our plantations and hedgerows, especially partial to meadows, intersected with streams and watercourses, building its domed nest on or near the ground, less artfully concealed than that of the Wood Wren.

WOOD WREN.—*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, (Bechst).

A SUMMER visitant, frequenting tall woods; local in its distribution, though fairly common in some

districts. Mr. Mitchell finds it breeding near Tavistock; the Rev. G. C. Green reports it as breeding at Ivybridge, while on the Eastern border of the County, Prebendary Bassett, of Dulverton, often takes the nest of the Wood Wren, having made this bird a special study. Mr. Aplin found it numerous at Clovelly, and other localities could be cited; but its absence from many districts is as well authenticated as its annual presence in its favourite breeding haunts.

RUFIOUS WARBLER.—*Aëdon galactodes*.

A RARE visitant, only obtained hitherto in the South of Devon. In September, 1859, a single bird of this species, was shot by Mr. Llewellyn, while flying over a stone wall within a hundred yards of the sea at the Start. It was exceedingly thin and had lost its tail. It was presented to the British Museum (Yarrell, B.B. vol. 1. p. 356. 4th ed). In 1876, Mr. H. Nicholls rerorded the recurrence of this species, at Slapton, on the 12th of October, adding; "as a gentleman and some friends were crossing a turnip field, a small bird of a very light colour was seen to rise and fly on to the hedge; its peculiar habit of flying up perpendicularly and alighting again at the same place, with extended tail, attracted attention, and it was approached and shot," (Zool. 1876. p. 5178). The specimen was examined at the house of Mr. R. P. Nicholls by the Rev. Murray A. Mathew, who pointed out its immaturity. Mr. Bastard, who was present when this bird was shot,

informs me that it is still retained in the possession of his family. This example, like the first, was shot in the vicinity of the sea.

REED WARBLER.—*Acrocephalus streperus* (Vieill).

A RARE summer visitant, catalogued as a Devonshire bird by Dr. Moore and subsequent writers, but reported to Mr. A. G. More by Mr. Gatecombe and the Rev. Murray A. Mathew as “not breeding in Devonshire.” The late Mr. J. H. Gurney, who, as a Norfolk Naturalist, possessed an intimate knowledge of this species, observed several Reed Warblers at Slapton Ley, on the 6th of May, 1871, and as he heard them frequently during the remainder of the month, it is not unlikely that they nested in the locality; they undoubtedly nest freely in the West of Dorset. Further research may show that this species nests at Slapton Ley every year; nor is it unlikely that the Marsh Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*) will prove to be a summer visitant to Devon, since it frequently breeds in Somerset.

SEDGE WARBLER.—*Acrocephalus phragmitis* (Bechst),

A SUMMER visitant, plentiful in suitable localities in the North and South, as on the river Clyst, where I have taken many nests, but scarce in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, where the streams are less adapted to meet its requirements.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.—*Locustella naevia* (Bodd).

A SUMMER visitant, uncertain in its numbers, being rare in some seasons, but in others fairly numerous.

I have listened to its curious notes on Woodbury Common, and a specimen in the Exeter Museum was obtained on Stoke Furze Brake, April 26th, 1849; others being procured near Plymouth, Axminster, Leigham, and some other localities. The Rev. Prebendary Bassett considers it a rare bird in the Dulverton district, and Mr. Mitchell reports it as seldom met with in North Devon.

*Subfamily* ACCENTORINÆ

HEDGE SPARROW.—*Accentor modularis*, (Linn).

AN UNOBTRUSIVE but numerous resident, creeping demurely about our hedgerows, often to be seen flitting about old stacks of wood. In early spring it is a vigorous songster, pouring forth its sweet notes from the summit of some shrub or garden railing. White specimens have come under my notice, and some of the pied birds have their plumage prettily varied.

ALPINE ACCENTOR.—*Accentor collaris*, (Scop).

A RARE VISITANT to South Devon. The first procured was shot on the rocks at Teignmouth, January 9th, 1844, by Mr. R. C. R. Jordan, and was stuffed by Drew, at whose house the Rev. W. S. Hore referred it to this species; Mr. Jordan having previously recorded it as a Richard's Pipit (Zool. 1844. p. 566). The following year, Mr. Hore reported a second specimen shot near Torbay, and this bird Professor Newton believes to have been killed at Berry Head; shown to him by its owner, Mr. Lyte, in 1850. No others

seem to have turned up until 1858, when Mr. Gatcombe observed a pair of Alpine Accentors on the cliffs near Plymouth, on December 20th. They were very tame and allowed a near approach, but when he returned with a gun (less than an hour afterwards), they were not to be seen, nor did he meet with them again until January 10th, 1859; when after a search of three weeks, he shot both birds. Their actions, when hopping on the grass on the top of the cliff, were very like those of the Hedge Sparrow, but on being disturbed they immediately flew to the rocks below. Their note resembled the syllables "tree, tree, tree;" and, as he wrote to Professor Newton, "the reddish mark on their sides appeared nearly as conspicuous as that of the Red-wing." The stomach of one of these birds contained gravel, fine sand and seeds, but no insects, (Zool. 1859. p. 6377).

*Family CINCLIDÆ.*

DIPPER.—*Cinclus aquaticus*, (Bechst).

A COMMON resident on our moorland streams, building very early in the year, on the face of rocks, in overhanging banks and under bridges. Its sweet song may be heard nearly all the year through. Mr. Mitchell says that in severe weather many of the Dartmoor birds descend to lower grounds, and it was on the coast at Torquay that the late Mr. Stevenson, of Norwich, first saw the Dipper in a wild state: watching it for days, "flitting across

the little bay, from one range of rocks to the other, flying low over the waves as they broke on the shingly beach, and perching every now and then on the huge stones that form the breakwater jutting out into the sea." (Zool. 1860. p. 6797).

*Family PANURIDÆ.*

BEARDED TITMOUSE.—*Panurus biarmicus*, (Linn).

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore in 1830, catalogued this species as a Devonshire bird, on the information of Mr. Comyns that it occurred in the willow beds opposite Topsham, on the River Exe ; Bellamy stated in 1839, that it was found " in one or two spots near Exeter," but there is nothing to confirm this vague, hearsay evidence. That the species *has* occurred, however, in the North of the County is certain, as the Rev. Murray A. Mathew, in a letter dated January 12th, 1890, writes ; " The Bearded Titmouse occurred to me only once in North Devon, and this was in a salt marsh close to Barnstaple. I was looking out for duck one rough autumn day and a squall of sleet made me run to the shelter of a sedgy fence, and while I was there, hearing some strange bird notes close behind me, I turned and saw some ten or dozen Bearded Tits in the Sedge. I watched them for some time with great pleasure, and did not molest them." It is probable that these individuals were immigrants from the Continent. The Rev. J. C. Green informs me that there is a Bearded Tit in the Torquay Museum local collection,

but I also learn from Mr. F. Pershouse that its antecedents are bad.

BRITISH LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

*Acredula rosea*, (Blyth).

AN ABUNDANT resident in our woods and hedgerows, living gregariously during the greater part of the year.

GREAT TITMOUSE.—*Parus major*, Linn.

A COMMON resident in our orchards and woods during the summer months, in severe weather frequenting the buildings, and feeding on scraps of food.

BRITISH COAL TITMOUSE.

*Parus britannicus*, Sharpe & Dresser.

A CONSTANT resident in our fir plantations, fairly numerous in its favourite haunts throughout the county. It is a very restless Titmouse, always in motion, often associating with other species of Paridæ.

MARSH TITMOUSE.—*Parus palustris*, Linn.

A FAIRLY common resident, more local than the preceding species, but not by any means a scarce bird in Devon. It is less social than the other Titmice, but Mr. Gatcombe observed the Marsh Tit associating, in its autumn wanderings, with large parties of Coal Tits and Long-tailed Tits (Zool. 1872. p. 3260).

BLUE TITMOUSE.—*Parus cæruleus*, Linn.

A PLENTIFUL resident, frequenting our gardens, and often nesting in curious places, in successive years,

as at Coombe Rawleigh ; where a pair of Blue Tits reared their young in a letter box in the years 1883-5, inclusive, undaunted by the postman's discharge of duty. Like the other Tits, this species gathers into droves ; on February the 27th, 1872, Mr. Gatcombe " came across an extraordinary flight of Titmice, composed chiefly of the Bluecap, which were flitting about among the trees and bushes, and every now and then descending in a body to the ground, hopping about and feeding among the grass, just like Finches." When they had to cross a field, they all went in a flock, and Mr. Gatcombe estimated that their numbers far exceeded a hundred individuals (Zool. 1872, p. 3014).

CRESTED TITMOUSE.—*Parus cristatus*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. On the 26th of March, 1874, Baron A. von Hügel noticed a bird of this species in Chelston Lane, Torquay, which allowed of such a close approach that he nearly succeeded in touching it with his walking stick (Zool. 1874. p. 4065). The tameness of this solitary bird exactly coincides with the Editor's experience, for, while droves of this Titmouse are usually shy and anxious to escape notice, the single birds that he has met with invariably admitted of a very close inspection.

Family.—SITTIDÆ.

NUTHATCH.—*Sitta cæsia*, Wolf.

A FAIRLY numerous resident in our parks and orchards, and a delightful bird to study, whether

occupied in hammering nuts with repeated blows, or tapping dead boughs in order to alarm the harbouring insects. An interesting departure from the usual habits of the Nuthatch has come under my notice, a pair of these birds nesting year after year in an old "cob wall," *i.e.* a wall built of mud mixed with stone and straw. Most of the old walls and cottages in this part of Devon were built of this material laid in layers; and our Nuthatches resort year after year to the same unusual nesting place, the female depositing her eggs on a nest lining of dead leaves. A female Nuthatch, sent to the Editor, from Kingskerswell, became exceedingly familiar, and readily accepted bluebottle flies, small moths and other insects from his fingers during the summer months. This bird was partial to canary seed, separating the husks from the grain by deft strokes of her long bill.

*Family* TROGLODYTIDÆ.

WREN.—*Troglodytes parvulus*, Koch.

A RESIDENT, common everywhere, in our gardens, woodlands and even by the seashore; more often heard than seen, from its liquid song, noisy chatter and skulking habits; at home everywhere, and always the same vivacious, fussy little bird. Bellamy states that two white Wrens and their three white young ones were procured at Langdon, in 1837 (*Nat. Hist. of Devon* p. 206).

Family.—MOTACILLIDÆ.

WHITE WAGTAIL.—*Motacilla alba*, Linn.

A SPRING visitant to North and South Devon, identified in April and May by such competent observers as Mr. Rickards, who shot specimens in April 1871, at Northam Burrows, and Mr. Gatcombe, who occasionally met with stragglers in the neighbourhood of Plymouth. The Rev. Murray A. Mathew informed Mr. A. G. More that he considered the White Wagtail a regular spring visitor to the coast of North Devon, and that a pair nested near Ilfracombe, in June 1860, the nest being placed in a wall bordering on a stream; a situation which the Editor has found to be frequently adopted by this Wagtail, though he has also seen nests in outhouses, and in the roots of trees.

PIED WAGTAIL.—*Motacilla lugubris*, Temm.

A SPRING and autumn visitant, many breeding with us, and a considerable number wintering in Devon. The late Mr. Stevenson once witnessed the Spring arrival of Pied Wagtails on the Den at Teignmouth; writing, "On the morning of the 20th of March, a most undoubted arrival of migratory specimens appeared, the slopes in front of the sea being quite covered with them. So unusual was their appearance in such quantities, and so tame did they appear that every one was stopping to look at them, but by the next day this flight had passed on, and only a few pairs, as usual, remained by the sea," (Zool.

1860, p. 6790). Their movements in autumn, when the numbers of old birds are recruited by the young broods, are more extended but quite as noteworthy. One fine September evening, I counted more than a hundred Pied Wagtails clustering together on the telegraph wires near Broadclyst, like a swarm of migrating Swallows. As I watched them, they all suddenly took wing and flew out of sight.

GREY WAGTAIL.—*Motacilla melanope*, Pall.

A SUMMER migrant and partial resident, nesting somewhat sparingly among rocks and in the crevices of walls, breeding chiefly on the higher grounds early in the year. Mr. Mitchell considers it a scarce bird on Dartmoor. Mr. J. R. Earle found an egg of the Cuckoo in the nest of a Grey Wagtail built in the stone-work of an old bridge which crosses the river Otter at Honiton, together with two eggs of the Wagtail.

BLUE-HEADED YELLOW WAGTAIL.—

*Motacilla flava*, Linn.

A RARE spring and autumn visitant to South Devon, not yet reported from our North coast. Mr. Gatcombe obtained a pair of these Wagtails in a marsh near Plymouth, May 1st, 1850, and met with the species again in the autumn of 1874, when he observed a pair of adults in a meadow close to the town, on the 29th, and 31st, of August. He remarked that when disturbed, these Wagtails generally flew off in a different direction from the Yellow Wagtails.

“ The male, although of a fine yellow on the underparts, had a dark spot on the breast, which I suspect is usual after the autumnal moult, the head was pure gray, and the stripe over the eye and throat, white ” (Zool. 1874. p. 4229). The same Ornithologist occasionally noticed a few young Wagtails, which showed none of the usual light yellow colour on any part of the body, and possessed such other characteristics as suggested that they were perhaps the young of *M. flava*. In the spring of 1880, Mr. H. Nicholls shot a pair of these Wagtails near Kingsbridge; these specimens are in the collection of Mr. Andrews (Zool. 1880. p. 487).

YELLOW WAGTAIL.—*Motacilla raii*, (Bp).

A SUMMER visitant, occurring plentifully in spring and autumn, and nesting with us in limited numbers; as at Plymouth, where Mr. Gatcombe found it breeding in 1872, on the line of its migrations. “ For a week or two only,” he writes, “ on the first arrival of this species in spring, small flocks may annually be seen in our meadows and marshes, but on their return in autumn their numbers are greatly increased; large companies, composed chiefly of young birds of the season, with their parents, may then be observed in meadows, marshes, fields, and even on the cliffs all along the coast, just before their departure for the winter ” (Zool. 1872. p. 3166).

MEADOW PIPIT.—*Anthus pratensis*, (Linn).

A RESIDENT and partial migrant, nesting chiefly on our moors where it is perhaps the commonest bird; it breeds also on lower grounds, as at Broadclyst, in low marshy ground.

TREE PIPIT.—*Anthus trivialis*, (Linn),

A SUMMER migrant, arriving in April in most of our well timbered districts, uttering its sweet song as it rises from the top of some tall tree, and nesting in sheltered situations; fairly common in suitable localities.

RICHARD'S PIPIT.—*Anthus richardi*.

A RARE visitant. Mr Gatcombe first met with this species in South Devon, in December 1841, when four specimens were obtained, one of which he gave to the Rev. W. S. Hore, (*Zool.* 1844. p. 496). His attention was first directed to these birds by their very peculiar note, and he described their flight as resembling that of the Wagtail. They did not appear to be on friendly terms with some Meadow Pipits, which were constantly endeavouring to drive them from their feeding grounds. In 1844, another was shot by Mr. Row, and though I have failed to discover that Mr. Gatcombe obtained other specimens, from direct records, yet, there can be no doubt that such was the case, for, in recording an example of this large Pipit seen on the grassy slope of a cliff near Plymouth, March 14th, 1877, he states that he felt satisfied of a hurried identification, "being so

well acquainted with the appearance and flight of the species in a wild state, having at different times met with no less than seven examples in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, besides two others that were brought to our bird stuffers in the flesh." (Zool. 1878. p. 249).

In the North of the County, the species has been detected on three occasions by Lieutenant G. F. Mathew, who first met with it, at Braunton Burrows on December 30th, 1864. "When walking across one of the flats which occur between the ridges of sand-hills, I observed a bird running with great activity among some dead plants of Fleabane (*Mula dysenterica*), and as it seemed to stand much higher on its legs than the common Meadow Pipit (*A. pratensis*), and altogether to appear considerably larger, I walked towards it to obtain a nearer view, and when I had approached to within about fifty yards, it rose and flew for a short distance, uttering a loud sharp note quite unknown to me." Mr. Mathew fired, but "only broke one of its legs, and it flew away for a long distance before again alighting, with a dipping flight similar to that of a Wagtail." Mr. Mathew eventually secured the bird, which he compared with a specimen in the collection of the Rev. W. S. Hore (Zool. 1865. p. 9456). In 1869, Mr. Mathew shot another Richard's Pipit, on Braunton Marsh, "attracted to it by its loud and peculiar note" (Zool. 1869. p. 1561), on the 4th, of January; on the 8th December, 1872, he heard

the unmistakable note of this bird, about the old place, and following it up, shot a third specimen (Zool. 1872. p. 2919).

WATER PIPIT.—*Anthus spinoletta*.

A RARE straggler. Mr. Gatcombe detected this species in South Devon, in 1873, writing, "March 8th, walked for some miles along the coast, and observed . . . a specimen of the Water Pipit, (*Anthus spinoletta*), which species is rarely seen on the Devonshire coast" (Zool. 1873. p. 3563).

ROCK PIPIT.—*Anthus obscurus*, (Lath).

A RESIDENT species on our coast lines. The late Mr. Stevenson writes of its habits, as studied at Teignmouth; "This species in Devonshire, seems to take the place of the Meadow Pipit on the Eastern coasts, frequenting the grassy slopes by the sea, and the rocks at low water left bare by the tide. Here they flit noiselessly from one weed-covered stone to another, searching the little hollows between for insect life, or running along by the edge of the water, dart at the sand-flies as they rise," (Zool. 1860. p. 6798). The vinous-breasted variety of the Rock Pipit, known as *Anthus rupestris*, which breeds on the Scandinavian coasts, has occasionally been detected in spring, on the South coast of Devon. Mr. Gatecombe shot a bird of this form on the rocks near Plymouth, March 21st, 1868, prior to which he knew of a specimen obtained at Torquay. In 1883, additional examples of this race of Rock Pipit

were shot at Beer, in February, and sent in the flesh to Mr. D'Urban, (Zool. 1883. p. 221). It does not appear that this race differs in habits from the common bird. The Rock Pipit is however a more noisy bird in the breeding season, than Mr. Stevenson's remarks suggest, both as regards its call notes and its song. I have chiefly observed it in rocky places but it occurs also where rocks are entirely absent.

*Family* ORIOLIDÆ.

GOLDEN ORIOLE.—*Oriolus galbula*, Linn.

A RARE visitant to Devon, but though less frequently met with than in Cornwall or the South Eastern Counties, has occurred in April and May near Plymouth, on the Avon, at Okehampton Park, at Estover, at Leigham, at Mount Edgecombe and near Barnstaple, where the Rev. M. A. Mathew reported it to Mr. A. G. More, (1865) as having nested in some pleasure grounds. Examples are usually reported in the Spring; but, in 1887, the Rev. H. Haden, who is well acquainted with the Golden Oriole, observed a single bird in the month of July, watching it for some time in an orchard at Stokenham, (Rev. F. J. Dickinson in litt).

*Family* LANIIDÆ,

GREAT GREY SHRIKE.—*Lanius excubitor*, Linn.

A RARE winter visitant. I made the acquaintance of this species at Broadclyst in rather a curious way. On the 24th of January, 1888, I was returning

home from shooting in the dusk of the evening, when a bird flew out of one of the lime trees in the park, where it had evidently intended to pass the night ; as soon as the bird flew out I shot it, and was surprised, on picking it up, to find that I had secured a Great Grey Shrike, an adult male specimen. Dr. Moore records specimens shot at Leigham, and Millaton ; Dr. D'Urban cites one obtained at Topsham, in 1839 ; another at Exeter, in 1845 ; another at Torquay, in July, 1865 ; another near Honiton, January, 1871 ; another recorded by Mr. Gatcombe, shot between Lydford and Bridestowe, November, 1876 ; and a sixth shot at Morchard Bishop, in March, 1882. To these we may add, one shot at Tawton Marshes, October, 1855 ; another seen by the Rev. M. A. Mathew, January, 1858 ; another observed by Baron A. von Hügel, on October, 14th, 1869, at Torquay ; one seen near Barnstaple, March, 1870 ; another observed at Watcombe Park, by Mr. G. B. Corbin, " perching on a Rhododendron," April, 1876 ; and a sixth shot by Mr. Mackie at Kingsbridge, December, 1883 ; this last being the only one that Mr. H. Nicholls has met with in his long experience of that district. Dr. Elliot discovered that this Shrike had impaled a Chaffinch in its larder ; and, on dissecting the body, found a number of *seeds* in its stomach. Whether any of the fifteen specimens, here recorded, should be referred to *Lanius major*, rather than to *Lanius excubitor*, I am unable to say. The majority of occurrences appear to refer to the South of Devon.

LESSER GREY SHRIKE.—*Lanius minor*, Gmel.

A RARE visitant. In 1876, a single example was captured near Plymouth, by a bird catcher on the 23rd of September. It was taken alive to Mr. Peacock, a bird-stuffer, who at once reported it to Mr. Gatecombe as a Great Grey Shrike, a mistake that was rectified as soon as Mr. Gatecombe saw the bird. It proved to be an immature specimen, lacking the black frontal band, but distinguished from the young of *Lanius excubitor* by its size and plain white under parts; another distinction was presented by the outer tail feather of the Lesser Grey Shrike being altogether white, with only the middle of its shaft black, (Zool. 1876. p. 5178).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE.—*Lanius collurio*, Linn.

A SUMMER visitant, local in its choice of breeding haunts and varying in numbers in different seasons. In the North of the County, Mr. Rawson considers it comparatively common, and Mr. Mitchell's experience is similar, but elsewhere it is a scarce bird. About Exeter, for example, it is comparatively rare, and though Mr. Gatecombe met with many in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, those observed were chiefly young birds, preparing to leave the country in August and September. During its stay with us, it feeds on a variety of insects. At Teignmouth, Mr. Jordan found a tiger moth impaled in a Shrike's larder, but the food is not always transfixed. In August 1880, the

Editor spent many minutes one afternoon in watching a brood of young Shrikes feeding greedily on the caterpillars of a butterfly (*Vanessa*), which they picked off from their food plant, the nettle, and bolted whole.

WOODCHAT.—*Lanius pomeranus*, Sparrman

A RARE visitant. Bellamy in 1839, included this Shrike in his catalogue of the Birds of South Devon, on the strength of an example "shot at Mutley by Pincombe of Devonport," (Nat. Hist. of Devon p. 200). Mr. Prideaux recorded an immature bird, as obtained at Kingsbridge, prior to 1852, (Zool. 1852, p. 3474). Mr. Gatcombe purchased a female Woodchat, captured near Plymouth, in October 1866, by a birdcatcher, the Shrike having dashed down at one of his call-birds, (Zool. 1867 p. 557). It was kept alive on raw liver for some days, and eventually entered the collection of Mr. J. H. Gurney, from whom I have been able to gather that the bird was in active moult when caught, and a very light-coloured specimen.

Family AMPELIDÆ.

WAXWING.—*Ampelis garrulus*, Linn.

A RARE winter visitant, a few specimens have occurred at long intervals, but the large flocks sometimes recorded in Eastern Britain, have never left any mark on Devon, which seems to lie too far west to be much favoured by this erratic species.

Examples have been obtained at Kingskerswell, Ashburton, Plymouth, Blackawton, Alphington, Kingsbridge, and other districts. Mr. H. Nicholls possesses two local specimens.

*Family MUSCICAPIDÆ.*

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.—*Muscicapa grisola*, Linn.

A NUMEROUS summer visitant, arriving in our gardens in May and nesting annually in the same situations, wherever in fact suitable shelter happens to be forthcoming.

PIED FLYCATCHER.—*Muscicapa atricapilla*, Linn.

A RARE summer visitant, observed by Mr. Gatecombe on migration near Plymouth, and occasionally recognised as a straggler in other parts of Devon. At Ilsham, near Torquay, a Pied Flycatcher was shot in April, 1866. Mr. Mitchell has only met with the species twice; once, some few years ago he observed a pair in a small wood, where he thought that they were nesting, and again in the spring of 1889, when he observed a single bird near Tavistock. At Dulverton, on the eastern border of Devon, the Rev. Prebendary Bassett identified a Pied Flycatcher in the spring of 1888.

*Family HIRUNDINIDÆ.*

SWALLOW.—*Hirundo rustica*, Linn.

A SUMMER visitant, arriving in great numbers on the South coast of Devon from a S.W. direction, and nesting generally, though many only pass through on

migration. Mr. H. Nicholls adduces evidence to prove that the Cuckoo sometimes deposits her egg in a Swallow's nest; the fact being that, a "nearly fledged" Cuckoo dropped down a high chimney into a kitchen, a brood of callow Swallowings having previously been precipitated through the same shaft. Considering how reluctant the young Cuckoo is to exercise its own powers, the case seems to be a strong one, (*Zool.* 1869, p. 186).

MARTIN.—*Chelidon urbica*, (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant arriving rather later than the Swallow, frequently prolonging its stay into November and even December, on our southern shores. Mr. Gatcombe on various occasions observed Martins nesting in our seacliffs, a habit which Mr. Rawson has noticed between Dawlish and Starcross, and on other points of the coast.

SAND MARTIN.—*Cotile riparia*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT and early summer visitant, nesting in our sandstone cliffs at Dawlish, and no doubt elsewhere, as well as in railway cuttings and banks inland.

*Family* C<sup>E</sup>RTHIDÆ.

TREE CREEPER.—*Certhia familiaris*, Linn.

A COMMON resident, nesting freely wherever old timber affords it an abundance of insect life. Mr. Rawson remarks that he frequently observes

Tree Creepers, when shooting in the woods in N. Devon. Its active movements can be studied to best advantage during severe frosts, when the Tree Creeper will permit of a very close inspection, being absorbed in a hungry search for hibernating insects.

*Family* FRINGILLIDÆ.

*Subfamily* FRINGILLINÆ.

GOLDFINCH.—*Carduelis elegans*, Steph.

A RESIDENT and partial migrant; formerly numerous but of late years a scarce bird. The Exeter Bird-catchers assure me that many perished in the severe weather of the winter 1880-1, but there can be no doubt that its decrease is chiefly due to persecution at their hands. A pair of Goldfinches nested in an apple tree in our garden five years ago, and a few pairs always breed in private grounds, especially orchards. Mr. Rawson writes that the Goldfinch was at one time a common bird at Braunton, and that a few pairs still breed in that district. In July, 1879, the Editor observed many family parties of Goldfinches, on the North Coast of Somerset and Devon, especially near Lynton, and the species is still numerous near Porlock in early autumn. During the winter months small parties of Goldfinches wander over the county in search of food, but the waste lands, upon which they formerly found an abundance of food, have generally been taken into cultivation.

SISKIN.—*Chrysomitris spinus*, (Linn).

A WINTER and spring visitant, of rare occurrence on the north coast, but more frequently met with in South Devon, both in winter, autumn and the spring of the year. I have shot the Siskin, myself, at Broadclyst; Baron A. von Hügel met with it in January, at Torquay; considerable numbers are sometimes caught near Exeter, and Mr. H. Nicholls often observes small flocks of Siskins near Kingsbridge. At Plymouth, Mr. Gatcombe often met with the bird, in 1880, as early as September, in which month some young Siskins were captured in company with Goldfinches; in the spring of the same year a flock of thirty or forty Siskins visited the larch trees in Bickleigh Vale, and four were shot; their stomachs were full of insects, (Zool. 1880. p. 250). In winter these birds chiefly frequent the alder bushes in search of food.

GREENFINCH.—*Ligurinus chloris*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT resident, nesting in our gardens and shrubberies, flocking in the open fields in autumn. Mr. Gatcombe records that extraordinary numbers of Greenfinches visited Plymouth, in the beginning of the winter 1884-5, remaining until the end of March. Places in the docks, where ships discharged their cargoes of grain actually swarmed with them, and when on the ground, although mingled with the usual vast flocks of Sparrows frequenting the locality, their plumage gave a strong green tint to

the assembled flock. Hundreds were caught by the birdcatchers, (Zool. 1885. p. 377).

HAWFINCH.—*Coccothraustes vulgaris*, Pall.

A WINTER visitant, of irregular occurrence, obtained as early as October, at Plymouth in 1878, but chiefly noticed as a shy visitant to gardens in mid-winter. It visits the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge in most winters, I possess a specimen, shot near Exeter, and during the winter 1889-90, Hawfinches were reported all over the county, occurring singly or in twos and threes, and frequenting private grounds notwithstanding the mildness of the winter. The Hawfinch has not yet been found breeding in Devon, but in 1849, a specimen, now in the Exeter Museum, was shot at Starcross, as late as the 26th of April. If the birds that visit us in winter were less persecuted, it is possible that some of them might remain to breed, but Mr. Gatcombe regarded the Hawfinch as an uncommon bird in Devonshire.

HOUSE SPARROW.—*Passer domesticus*. (Linn).

A RESIDENT species. Professor Newton, in the "fourth edition" of "Yarrell's British Birds," drew attention to Mr. Brooking Rowe's statement in his Catalogue of 1863, that the House Sparrow was absent from the moorland village of Shepstor, as being the sole exception to its universal distribution in England known to him. It appears that, if this was an exception in 1848, it is such no longer. The

Rev. C. H. Crooke writes to me under date February 2nd, 1890, "I beg to say that Sparrows are by no means uncommon in our parish (Shepstor), not found perhaps in such large numbers as in some towns and villages, but still frequently to be met with. There are frequently none to be seen in our roads or in our gardens, but, on the other hand, given seed-time and fine weather or even hard frost and snow, Sparrows and Robins, Blackbirds and Thrushes, at other times invisible, put in an appearance pretty freely."

TREE SPARROW.—*Passer montanus*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT resident in our woods and gardens, the migratory movements of which are extensive, often occurring early in autumn. Thus, in the

A WINTER visitant, probably nesting in one or two localities in South Devon. Mr. Gatcombe first met with this species near Plymouth, in March, 1857, when two Tree Sparrows were killed on a farm in that district among other small birds. He had never before met with the species in Devon. The Rev. F. J. Dickinson says, the Tree Sparrow was unknown in the Kingsbridge district, "until a specimen was shot by Mr. Rumidge of Worthy," in January, 1888. Since then Dr. E. A. S. Elliot has shot two specimens, so that there can be no reasonable doubt but that the birds are indigenous, but extremely local.

CHAFFINCH.—*Fringilla caelebs*, Linn.

AN ABUNDANT resident in our woods and gardens, the migratory movements of which are extensive, often occurring early in autumn. Thus, in the

middle of July, 1879, the Editor found swarms of young birds assembled in woods above the sea, near Lynton, adults being remarkable for their absence. It seemed probable that these birds had just crossed from South Wales. Certainly such extraordinary numbers could not have been reared in the locality. Similarly, a great number of Chaffinches, in company with Skylarks, visited Lundy Island at 1 p.m. on September 9th, 1880, with a fresh E.S.E. breeze, (Migration Report for 1880, p. 104).

BRAMBLING.—*Fringilla montifringilla*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant, of decidedly uncommon occurrence, often associating with flocks of Chaffinches. I have shot specimens at Broadclyst, Mr. Gatcombe met with it near Plymouth, and Baron A. von Hügel records its presence at Torquay; most of the occurrences taking place in February, when the birds are probably beginning to move northwards. Its occurrence at any season in North Devon is exceptional, but the Rev. M. A. Mathew records a male in summer plumage, shot at Lankey near Barnstaple, in 1856, on the remarkable date of July 20th. When first observed, this solitary Brambling was flying about a hedge in company with some Yellow Buntings and Greenfinches, (Zool. 1857. p. 5346).

LINNET.—*Linota cannabina*, (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT resident, nesting plentifully on our Commons, and gathering into large flocks in early

autumn. The song of the male is usually delivered from a spray of hawthorn or a furzetop.

LESSER REDPOLL.—*Linota rufescens*, (Vieill).

A WINTER visitant, plentiful about Exeter in autumn, and of fairly general distribution at that season, occasionally lingering into the summer. The Rev. Prebendary Bassett has observed the Lesser Redpoll near Dulverton, in June, and in July, 1879, the Editor observed an old Redpoll feeding a newly fledged nestling on the branch of an ash, near Lynton.

TWITE.—*Linota flavirostris*, (Linn).

A RARE autumn and winter visitant to our salt marshes. The Rev. Murray A. Mathew has shot specimens close to Barnstaple, and has also met with it on high ground in North Devon. There is no satisfactory evidence of its visiting the South of the County, though it may be conjectured that it sometimes strays westward, into the parts of the county bordering on the English Channel.

BULLFINCH.—*Pyrrhula europæa*, Vieill.

A COMMON resident in our woods, both in North and South Devon, much persecuted on account of its destructiveness to buds, though subsisting during the greater part of the year, on the seeds of the Plantain and other weeds, berries of Privet, and other wild fruit. Varieties of plumage occur and a black specimen, formerly in Montagu's collection, exists in the British Museum.

CROSSBILL.—*Loxia curvirostra*, Linn.

AN IRREGULAR visitant, most frequently met with in South Devon ; but large flights sometimes visit North Devon, as in 1868, when many were shot near Barnstaple, (Zool. 1868, p. 1460). Mr. F. Pershouse informs me that he possesses a pair of Crossbills shot on Chappel Hill, Torquay, in March 1867, when they were possibly breeding ; the species undoubtedly bred at Ogwell House, near Newton, in 1839, the birds having been numerous during the previous winter, Mr. Jordan saw the nest on the 10th of April, placed in a spruce fir, and similar in structure to that of the Greenfinch. The female Crossbill continued to attend the nest after her mate had been shot, (Zool. 1843, p. 39). In South Devon, the Crossbill has been procured in many localities, at Kingsbridge, at Exmouth, (1888), at Stoke Cannon and elsewhere, occurring in fact at intervals in every month of the year.

PARROT CROSSBILL.—*Loxia pityopsittacus*, Bechst.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore records that Mr. Newton shot nine Parrot Crossbills near Millaton, in 1838, but whether the birds were rightly referred to this species, or were only large-billed specimens of the Common Crossbill, I cannot say. I have examined two undoubted Parrot Crossbills, shot in a plantation near Exmouth, in 1888 ; a male and a female, submitted to me by Mr. Seward the local taxidermist.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.—*Loxia leucoptera*, Gmel.

A RARE visitant. A fine red male of this nearctic species was found dead and partly covered with wet sand in a crevice of some loose rocks on the shore at Exmouth, on September 17th, 1845, by Mr. E. B. Fitton, who exhibited it at a meeting of the Zoological Society on the 23rd of the same month, (P.Z.S. 1845. p. 91). Mr. Yarrell examined the bird in the flesh, and added a figure of it to his "British Birds."

*Subfamily* EMBERIZINÆ.

CORN BUNTING.—*Emberiza miliaria*, Linn.

A COMMON resident, varying in local abundance from year to year, and rather rare near Tavistock, but plentiful on the north coast as a rule; very abundant in summer and winter alike, in my own district. The Editor met with astonishing numbers at Berry Head, in September 1880, but it is possible that these may have been resting on migration. In winter I have seen these Buntings feeding with Sparrows and Yellow Buntings in the neighbourhood of houses. Prebendary Bassett has observed the species on Exmoor, though he considers it rare at Dulverton.

YELLOW BUNTING.—*Emberiza citrinella*, Linn.

AN ABUNDANT resident, uniformly distributed in all parts of Devon, except where the moorland limits its breeding grounds.

CIRL BUNTING.—*Emberiza cirtus*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species, of somewhat partial diffusion. Judging from my own experience alone, I should consider this a scarce bird; for, even allowing for increased numbers in some years, it is never really abundant in my own district, though a few individuals come under my notice at all seasons. Opinions must vary with circumstances. Mr. Rawson, for example, having paid special attention to the Cirl Bunting, considers that it is well distributed in both North and South Devon, especially the former, and that it is a much more common bird than most people imagine. Mr. Mitchell independently offers exactly the same opinion as to N. Devon, though he finds its numbers decrease in the centre and west of the county. It may be considered as irregularly distributed within our faunal limits. Though now a well known *breeding* bird, its presence in Devon was first ascertained in *winter*; by Montagu, who shot a couple of specimens in the winter of 1800. At this season Cirl Buntings wander through our fields in small flocks, sometimes associating with Yellow Buntings. It breeds early, nesting in similar positions to those adopted by the Yellow Bunting, on a bank, or near the bottom of a hawthorn hedge, or some kindred situation, and two broods are usually reared. The female, when incubating, sits closely, and will permit of a very near approach. The song of the male commences early in the year, and is usually delivered from the lower branches of

an elm, or the top of some hedgerow tree; occasionally from a bare telegraph wire. It is continued throughout August and September, and may exceptionally be heard in winter; Mr. Gatcombe records that, on the 5th of December, 1873, he noticed a male Cirl Bunting singing as vigorously as in the spring of the year. He also remarked that Cirl Buntings assembled with other small birds to gather insects from heaps of decaying sea-weed in the fields. In confinement, as in a state of liberty, I have found the Cirl Bunting to be a shy, retiring species; but Montagu, whose classical description of this species will be found in the Transactions of the Linnean Society, (VII. pp. 276-280), states that a young male, which he reared by hand, "was always sufficiently tame to take insects from the hand, shewing a great partiality to such a repast, and when let out of the cage would catch flies in the windows." Another hand-reared Cirl Bunting, also a male bird, is recorded by Mr. Fox of Kingsbridge, to have paired with a female Canary, and to have produced a hybrid, which "possessed the habit of crushing hempseed with its hard bony palate, instead of shelling it with the edges of the bill, as in the Finch tribe." (Zool. 1848. p. 2020).

REED BUNTING—*Emberiza schaniclus*, Linn.

A RESIDENT, fairly numerous in wet situations on the lower grounds, but seldom seen on Dartmoor or Exmoor; in April, 1888, I met with a flock of

between twenty and thirty Reed Buntings in a marshy piece of ground at Broadclyst, otherwise I have only observed the species in pairs and small family parties.

SNOW BUNTING.—*Plectrophanes nivalis* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant, met with sparingly, chiefly on the coasts of N. and S. Devon, either singly or in twos and threes, large flocks being quite unknown. Stragglers occasionally appear early in October, and in 1880, Mr. Gatcombe examined an adult shot near Plymouth, in September, but mid-winter is the season at which it is most frequently noticed. The same localities are visited in successive years in the Northam Burrows, Exmouth, Kingsbridge and Devonport districts. Mr. Mitchell has only once met with the Snow Bunting in Devonshire, a solitary wanderer, observed on one of the highest tors of Dartmoor, in the middle of winter.

*Family STURNIDÆ.*

STARLING.—*Sturnus vulgaris*, Linn.

AN ABUNDANT resident, nesting generally about our houses and sheds, though fifty years ago Bellamy could only say that it bred “in some few spots in Devon ;” albeit even then occurring “in great flocks through the winter,” (Nat. Hist. of Devon. p. 203). The flights of thousands, that collect at favourite ‘roosts’ during the autumn, exhibit many beautiful exercises. The evergreen oaks in Polsloe Park,

Exeter, used to constitute a favourite rendezvous for these birds, but the ground is now built over. Of equal interest are the migratory movements of this species, which occurs at our lighthouses in large numbers, either alone or in company with Skylarks, Thrushes and other common birds. These migratory movements are not confined to spring and autumn, but sometimes occur in mid-winter. Thus a Starling struck the Hartland Point L.H. on January 20th, 1882, and large numbers occurred at Lundy Island, December 25th, 1880, arriving during the night with a fresh N.N.W. breeze (Migration Report for 1880, p. 108).

On the 15th of April, 1873, Mr. Gatcombe examined (with a powerful pocket telescope) some Starlings, near Plymouth. Among the number "was a fine old bird that appeared to be altogether of a beautiful glossy black, without any spots even on the back" (Zool. 1875. p. 3566). It is possible that this bird was an example of the Sardinian Starling, (*Sturnus unicolor*), which had associated with the common birds in their winter quarters in the south, and had migrated northwards in their company; but it is of course equally possible, that the unspotted bird was only a melanoid variety of *Sturnus vulgaris*. Mr. Backhouse believes *Sturnus unicolor* to have been obtained in Yorkshire.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING.—*Pastor roseus*, (Linn).

A RARE visitant, obtained at wide intervals of time,

chiefly during the summer months. Specimens have been killed at Teignmouth, Aveton Gifford, Brixham, Plymouth, Kingsbridge (twice), and in the neighbourhood of Chudleigh, birds procured at these two last localities being preserved in the Exeter Museum. The Rev. Murray A. Mathew records another, shot near Bideford in October 1875, (Zool. 1875 p. 4720).

*Family* CORVIDÆ.

CHOUGH.—*Pyrrhocorax graculus* (Linn).

A RARE resident. A few Choughs still breed on the coasts of North and South Devon, but it is necessary in the interests of the birds to abstain from naming precise localities. It may suffice to say that Mr. Rawson is intimately acquainted with their haunts, and that the birds have been seen by Mr. Aplin, Mr. Mitchell and other Ornithologists. Mr. Gatcombe unfortunately examined many Choughs killed in S.W. Devon and Cornwall, and suggested that in autumn they are partially migrant. Mr. Toll occasionally observes a Chough on the banks of the River Dart. Of stuffed specimens, a specimen obtained near Torquay, exists in the local museum; two others, preserved in the Exeter Museum, formerly belonged to a flock of Choughs kept by the late Mr. R. Sanders, at Exeter, and two specimens obtained in North Devon are in my collection. The Chough was formerly very numerous at Lundy Island, but Mr. Howard Saunders informed the Editor that its numbers had been reduced very low, if not fatally

so, by the Peregrine Falcon, which is a great enemy to Choughs. Montagu's description of the habits of a tame bird has been too often quoted to require repetition here.

NUTCRACKER.—*Nucifraga caryocatactes* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. Montagu states that "in August, 1808, one of these birds was shot in the North of Devon, now in the collection of Mr. Comyns," (Orn. Dict. 1802). Dr. Moore adds another to the list, shot by Mr. Tucker of Dawlish, near Washford Pyne Moor, in 1829, (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 179). There are other reports of Nutcrackers supposed to have been seen in the county; Graves figures a Nutcracker, with this remark; "The specimen from which our figure was executed, was shot in Devonshire, and presented by Mr. Hamilton of Parliament Street, to Mr. Bullock, proprietor of the London Museum," (Brit. Orn. vol. 1), but no recent occurrences are known to me. The Rev. G. C. Green has kindly called my attention to a Nutcracker preserved in the possession of Mr. L. Sparrow of Strode, near Ivybridge. Mr. Sparrow believes the specimen to have been obtained by his father, but is unable to furnish an exact date.

JAY.—*Garrulus glandarius* (Linn).

A COMMON resident in our wooded districts. In the Tavistock district, Mr. Mitchell generally finds the nest in tall holly and thorn bushes, but he has exceptionally known a Jay's nest built in tall furze.

MAGPIE.—*Pica rustica* (Scop).

A NUMEROUS resident, partial to fir woods, generally flying in pairs, but droves of seven or eight birds are not uncommonly seen with us in winter. In July, 1867, Mr. G. F. Mathew, while walking in the neighbourhood of Buckfastleigh, observed a Magpie grubbing for food in a roadside hedge. A close inspection revealed to Mr. Mathew and the friend who accompanied him, that this individual "possessed a bill of a bright *lemon colour* at the base, but of a darker hue towards the top" (Zool. 1867. p. 1016). Mr. Mathew suggested that this rare variation might be due to some disease inherent to old age.

JACKDAW.—*Corvus monedula*, Linn.

AN ABUNDANT resident, nesting in rocks and old quarries inland, in Rookeries, and in the cliffs of North Devon, where Mr. Rawson testifies to its great increase of late years. I have often found it breeding in old trees, and its fondness for rabbit holes is well known. Many Jackdaws frequent the towers and pinnacles of Exeter Cathedral.

CARRION CROW.—*Corvus corone*, Linn.

A RESIDENT, but diminishing in numbers, and not abundant in North Devon, though still of pretty general occurrence in timbered districts.

HOODED CROW.—*Corvus cornix*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant, of decidedly uncommon occurrence, through stragglers are occasionally obtained.

Dr. Moore records it as at one time met with on the coast pretty frequently, but certainly its visits of late years have been very sparse.

ROOK.—*Corvus frugilegus*, Linn.

A MOST abundant resident, as its numerous Rookeries testify, but these are of course only resorted to in the breeding season, the birds at other times congregating to roost in large woods. Writing under date of September 21st, 1873, Mr. Gatcombe records observing “ sixteen Rooks flying round and dipping in the water among a flock of Gulls, at the stern of the Royal Adelaide in the (Plymouth) Harbour. Acting like Gulls has become quite a habit with the Rooks in our Harbours ” (Zool. 1873 p. 3393).

RAVEN.—*Corvus corax*, Linn.

A RESIDENT, isolated pairs having nested on the sea-cliffs of North and South Devon from time immemorial, and others breeding on Dartmoor. Mr. Warburton informs me that a pair frequent the cliffs at Babbacombe, Torquay, and others breed at Watcombe, near Ilfracombe, and at Baggy Point; it is however much persecuted. Mr. Gatcombe often examined young Ravens brought in to Plymouth dealers from Dartmoor and the sea coast. An adult, which I examined in the flesh, was shot at Downes, Crediton, October 12th, 1888. Mr. A. H. Macpherson, when on the rocks at Babbacombe in March 1887, saw one of the pair of Ravens that nest

there, carrying a fairly long branch for the repair of its nest, not however holding it by the bill, but *carrying it in its feet*, a curious departure from the usual habits of the British Corvidæ. The Rev. Prebendary Bassett writes that he sometimes sees a Raven on Exmoor, and that it is reputed to have once been a breeding species in the Dulverton District, on our eastern border. Mr. Mitchell of Tavistock writes, that the Raven "is often to be seen flying over Dartmoor in pairs, and I have seen them breeding on the cliffs of North and South Devon. A pair nest at Rhames Head, near Plymouth, building in February or even earlier. Another pair builds every year in Morwell Rocks, inaccessible rocks on the Devon side of the Tamar, about four miles from Tavistock. A pair breed in an old, inaccessible lime quarry near Okehampton. Three or four years ago, a pair built three separate nests on Vixen Tor, Dartmoor, but did not lay in either, being disturbed. A pair used to build in a steep rock on the Tavy, about three miles from here. I looked into the nest one year and saw three young ones. They do not breed there now, but the rock is still called the "Raven's Rock." Ravens seem very playful sometimes. I have often watched them circling in pairs over Dartmoor toying with each other, and giving vent to their hoarse croak." A few pairs of Ravens may still be found breeding in the cliffs between Sidmouth and Lyme Regis; Mr. Hine Haycock informs me that a pair nest annually in the cliffs at Peak Hill.

*Family ALAUDIDÆ.*

SKY LARK.—*Alauda arvensis*, Linn.

A PLENTIFUL resident, of general distribution, large flocks visiting us in autumn and winter. A buff variety, obtained at Hoopern, is in Exeter Museum, and albinos are procured.

WOOD LARK.—*Alauda arborea*, Linn.

A LOCAL resident, fairly represented near Kingsbridge, Kingskerswell, Plymouth, Exeter, and some other localities, but much persecuted by birdcatchers, and uncommon in North Devon; on the whole a scarce bird. Mr. Gatcombe generally observed a few pairs in spring, and in autumn met with a few parties of young birds in the same fields. Some times he remarked individual Woodlarks "perched for a length of time on telegraph wires, the long spurs sticking out from the hinder toes producing rather a singular effect" (Zool. 1872. p. 3258).

SHORE LARK.—*Otocorys alpestris* (Linn).

A RARE winter visitant. A single bird was shot at Northam Burrows, January 2nd, 1875, (Zool. 1875. p. 4337). Another shot on Dawlish Warren, is preserved in the Exeter Museum.

## ORDER PICARILÆ.

## Family CYPSELIDÆ.

SWIFT.—*Cypselus apus* (Linn).

A COMMON summer visitant, arriving generally in May, but sometimes during the last days of April; recorded to have prolonged its stay in one instance until the 27th of November (Yarrell B.B. 4th. ed. vol. II p. 365), though it usually leaves the County in August. Its high soaring flight and harsh scream are known to all. It nests chiefly about old towers and under cottage eaves, but the cliffs of our precipitous coasts afford breeding stations to some colonies of this bird. Thus, Mr. Gatcombe instances colonies of Swifts established at Seaton and Beer Head (Zool. 1872. p. 3168). Others might be cited.

ALPINE SWIFT.—*Cypselus melba* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. "When shooting along the coast [near Ilfracombe] with my brother," writes Mr. Rawson, "on the 4th October, 1876, he shot a young specimen of the Alpine Swift (*Cypselus melba*, Illiger) which was flying about with two others in company with *C. apus*, of which there were about a score. We thought they would lodge on the cliff for the night, but nothing was to be seen of them next morning. Unfortunately the other two never came within gunshot. I have the skin in my possession" (Zool. 1880. p. 108). This is a late occurrence for the British Isles, but not the latest.

A specimen of this large Swift, sold at Stevens, May 22nd 1890, was killed in Surrey on the 8th of October, 1841, *i.e.* four days later than the Devonshire bird.

*Family* CAPRIMULGIDÆ.

NIGHTJAR.—*Caprimulgus europæus*, Linn.

A SUMMER visitant, frequenting our moors, commons, and the skirts of large woods, though seldom seen during the day. I have found it rather plentiful on Woodbury Common; Bickleigh Vale, near Plymouth, is another favourite locality. Mr. Mitchell finds the Nightjar fairly represented in West and also in North Devon, often hearing them flit past him after dark, when in pursuit of insects.

*Family* PICIDÆ.

*Subfamily* PICINÆ.

GREATSPOTTED WOODPECKER.—*Dendrocopus major* (Linn).

A SCARCE resident in our more extensive woodlands, rare as a breeding species. Mr. Gatcombe recorded his opinion that “this species is much more commonly met with near Plymouth during winter than at any other time during the year;” an experience no doubt, founded on the immigration of this Woodpecker from the Continent in late autumn. I have a pair in my collection obtained near Exeter, and have met with the species at Broadclyst. Mr. Parfitt records the Greater Spotted Woodpecker as having bred in Exwick Woods, and also near Ashburton.

## LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

*Dendrocopus minor* (Linn).

A SCARCE resident, not so uncommon with us as the Great Spotted Woodpecker, and perhaps overlooked from its preference for the upper branches of trees; but still a local bird, no where numerous. Mr. Mitchell has met with it in N. Devon, others have been shot near Plymouth, Exeter, Torquay and in S. Devon. The late Dr. Scott found a nest of this species in an old apple-tree in one of the Nursery Gardens near Exeter, in 1847, several birds being killed about the same time (Zool. 1849. p. 2384). I have not as yet found the nest of this Woodpecker, but one a male bird regularly visits an ancient oak in my father's park, the noise that this small bird creates, in tapping the hollow branches of the tree, may be heard for a very great distance.

[GREAT BLACK WOODPECKER.—*Picus martius*, Linn.]

[A DOUBTFUL visitant, not included in the present census of the avifauna of Devon, but here inserted in order that its claims to be considered a Devonshire bird may be open to criticism. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes that he thinks the claims of this species are valid. "In a collection of birds formed by the late Mr. Newton of Millaton Hall, Bridestowe, on the N. W. borders of Dartmoor, is a specimen of the Great Black Woodpecker which was shot about the year, 1830, in the neighbourhood of Crediton. I have seen this bird, a female, now in rather a

dilapidated condition, and presenting the appearance of having been mounted from a freshly killed specimen. Indeed, Mr. Newton's daughter informed us (this was in the summer of 1876), that she well remembers the day when her father received the bird, and his excitement at adding such a rarity to his collection. He was ill in bed at the time from gout, and made her write off at once to his friend Dr. Moore of Plymouth to acquaint him of this most interesting acquisition" (Rev. M. A. Mathew, in lit). Dr. Moore evidently believed the specimen to be authentic, since he retained it as late as 1848, in the account of the ornithology of Dartmoor which he furnished to Rowe's Perambulation of Dartmoor. The Rev. Clement Ley writes that he is well acquainted with the note of the Great Black Woodpecker, and that the last occasion he heard it " was in 1876, at Mount Edgecombe in Devonshire," and that " waiting for a few minutes, we got a fine view of the bird," (B. of Herefordshire, p. 92).

It may be interesting to add that Mr. Brooking Rowe included the Great Black Woodpecker in his list of 1863, but afterwards struck it out from the revised copy which he sent to the British Museum Library, as though he had changed his mind about it.]

GREEN WOODPECKER.—*Gecinus viridis* (Linn).

A FAIRLY common resident, during the spring months, its laughing cry may frequently be heard in our

larger stretches of woodland. It often feeds upon the ground and in banks of hedges ; both Mr. Mitchell, and myself, have seen it thus engaged, apparently searching for ants ; one, however, that Mr. Gatcombe dissected, had its stomach crammed with the white larvæ of a wood-boring beetle. In severe weather this bird suffers severely ; Mr. Gatcombe saw many taken to the Plymouth birdstuffers at such times, the males often being in "exceedingly fine plumage." Mr. Mitchell writes that a few winters ago, during a prevalence of sharp weather, a boy caught a Green Woodpecker alive in a deep hole in the bank of a hedge, where the poor bird had crept presumably for shelter. This was in the neighbourhood of Tavistock. In July, 1880, young Green Woodpeckers were unusually plentiful near Plymouth ; many were caught alive, and others killed in various ways (Zool. 1881. p. 197). A curious departure from the usual habits of this Woodpecker stands recorded by Mr. Gatcombe, who wrote, under date February 5th 1873, "walked along the coast to Bovisand, where I observed..... a Green Woodpecker.....busily searching for food along the face of the cliffs overhanging the sea, some miles from any kind of wood. I have often observed the Green Woodpecker on the bare coast before" (Zool. 1873. p. 3466). This interesting observation has been *independently* corroborated, and confirmed, by the Rev. F. J. Dickinson, who writes, "A pair of Green Woodpeckers built their nest

last year (1889) on the cliff, facing the sea, near Hallsands, Start Bay. The nest was in a sort of little hole formed by the rock and an old stump. I saw the birds frequently the whole of last summer" (in lit. March 3rd, 1890),

*Subfamily* IYNGINÆ.

WRYNECK.—*Iynx torquilla*, Linn.

AN IRREGULAR summer visitant, rare in N. Devon and only known to me as a straggler in the South. Mr. Gatcombe recorded a Wryneck killed at Plymouth in April, with the remark that the species is rare in the West of England. Dr. Scott reported another caught at Exeter, in 1848, adding that although he was assured that the Wryneck was found near the city not unfrequently, yet he could find very few people acquainted with the bird, from which he inferred that it was seldom obtained. A specimen in the Exeter Museum was killed at Topsham, May 30th, 1841; two others, both shot at Ilsham, exist in the Torquay Museum. The Wryneck was reported to Mr. A. G. More (1865), as being "very rare in Devon;" the Rev. Murray A. Mathew has never found it to breed in the County, although on the look out for its doing so for the last twenty-five years.

*Family* ALCEDINIDÆ.

KINGFISHER.—*Alcedo ispida*, Linn.

A RESIDENT, breeding in the neighbourhood of most of our rivers, the Exe for example, which is a good

deal affected by Kingfishers; scarce only, where persecuted. The streams on Dartmoor are not so well adapted to its habits and Mr. Mitchell finds it scarce in the Tavistock district; he has often met with it on the Taw in North Devon, and has also seen it on the sea coast near Plymouth.

*Family* CORACIDÆ.

ROLLER.—*Coracias garrula*, Linn.

A RARE visitant, obtained on three or four occasions in the County. Mr. Rowe records a Roller killed at Budleigh Salterton in September, 1841; another was killed on Spriddlestone Farm near Yealmpton, June 21st, 1866, and a third was shot near Alphington, Exeter, on October 20th of the same year. The first named instance was the only one known to Mr. Rowe in 1863.

*Family* MEROPIDÆ

BEE-EATER.—*Merops apiaster*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore writes in 1837, “a fine specimen was shot at Leigham, in April 1818; another at Ivybridge, in 1822; another is in Mr. Rowe’s collection.” Mr. H. Nicholls has written to inform me that he possesses a Bee-eater shot near Kingsbridge in the spring of 1854. Mr. Rowe, in 1863 remarked “there has been no occurrence for many years.” Mr. L. M. Kennaway states that he twice saw a Bee-eater in the neighbourhood of Exeter during the summer of 1889 (*Zool.* 1890. p. 100).

*Family UPUPIDÆ.*HOOPOE.—*Upupa epops*, Linn.

AN IRREGULAR spring and autumn visitant, probably of annual occurrence in the County at the seasons of migration. It has occurred also at Midsummer, *e.g.* a specimen killed near Exeter, July 2nd, 1820, still preserved in the Albert Memorial Museum. As instances of spring occurrences, the following may be cited; one shot at Torquay, April 1851; another obtained at Plymouth, May 1871; two killed at Ivybridge, April 10th, 1872; a fifth procured at Plymouth, April 19th, 1883. This list might be greatly extended. Mr. Dickinson, for example, observed the arrival of a Hoopoe on the coast at Torcross, one rough day in April, 1888. "It came from a Southerly direction, flying along the beach, and alighted about fifty yards from me, when it erected its crest and walked about for a few minutes. It then flew inland" (in lit. March 1st 1890). Mr. Cecil Smith reports a bird killed at Moreton; half a dozen were obtained in the Kingsbridge district alone, between 1840 and 1847. Mr. H. Nicholls has two, killed in September; the Rev. J. Pitt sends me word of a Hoopoe which he saw upon his lawn at Torquay, August 26th, 1888; Mr. H. A. Drew shot another in September 1889, when trying a mangold field near Exeter, for Partridges. Polwele speaks of the Hoopoe as well-known to Devonshire Naturalists at the end of the last century, and even cites the occurrence of a single bird in the month of December.

*Family CUCULIDÆ.*CUCKOO.—*Cuculus canorus*, Linn.

A NUMEROUS summer visitant, of general distribution, arriving in April, leaving in August and September. Mr. Mitchell writes : “ I once found in N. Devon a Pied Wagtail’s nest with some Wagtail’s eggs in it, but *under these eggs*, and *under the lining of the nest as well*, I found two Cuckoo’s eggs. The eggs must have been laid before the nest was finished, and the Wagtails must have built over the Cuckoo’s eggs. The Cuckoo generally lays in the nests of the Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit and Hedge Sparrow.” Reference has already been made to eggs of this species deposited in the nests of the Grey Wagtail and Swallow ; another nest often favoured in a similar way is that of the Redbreast. This bird feeds largely upon the caterpillars of the Fox-moth and other common insects during its stay with us. “ The peasantry of Devon and Cornwall,” writes Mr. Laskey, “ as far as I have had connection with them, believe the Cuckoo feeds on the eggs of other birds ; and that the little bird, as they call it, accompanying them (the *Iynx torquilla* or summer bird), searches for them for that purpose, and feeds him ” (Gentleman’s Magazine, 1796, p. 116).

## ORDER STRIGES.

*Family* STRIGIDÆ.BARN OWL.—*Strix flammea*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species. Mr. Mitchell considers the Barn Owl scarce in the Tavistock district but Mr. Rawson has met with it commonly in North Devon, and I find it pretty generally distributed throughout the Southern portions of the County.

LONG-EARED OWL.—*Asio otus* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant, fairly numerous in some seasons, in others little observed. Large flights appear in certain autumns; Mr. Gatcombe examined a good many specimens killed near Plymouth in different years. Mr. H. Nicholls informs me that in November and December, 1875, more than twenty specimens were brought into Kingsbridge to be stuffed, and that every little wood in the neighbourhood was crowded with them. In the winter of 1888, on the other hand, he only saw two specimens. The Rev. Murray A. Mathew includes this species in a list of those breeding in Devon; I have not, myself, met with the Long-eared Owl during the nesting time, within the limits here treated of.

SHORT-EARED OWL.—*Asio accipitrinus* (Pall).

A WINTER visitant, often numerous in South Devon in early winter, nor are flights unknown in North Devon, but its movements are irregular, very few

examples being some times noticed as compared with the comparative plenty of other years. Mr. A. H. Macpherson has taken great pains to ascertain whether this species ever breeds in Devon, and his enquiries up to the present time only show that it has sometimes been confused with the Tawny Owl, which often nests in rabbit holes, and rarely in open heather.

TAWNY OWL.—*Syrnium aluco* (Linn).

A CONSTANT resident and early breeder, fairly plentiful in the wooded portions of the county, but almost unrepresented in moorland districts. The specimens that have come under my notice display considerable variations in colour, between the two well marked phases of gray and ferruginous.

SNOWY OWL.—*Nyctea scandiaca* (Linn).

A RARE visitant, but has occurred in several instances. A specimen from the "Ross Collection," in the Exeter Museum is said to have been obtained at Exmouth. Another, obtained near Plymouth, entered the collection of the Rev. W. S. Hore (Zool. 1876. p. 4900), and Dr. Moore records a third specimen. Two Snowy Owls were undoubtedly taken in 1876, during or subsequent to "very severe weather." Of these, the first, a small male bird, examined by Mr. Gatecombe, was shot on the 13th of March, on Ditsworth Rabbit Warren, Dartmoor, by the little grandson of the Warrener. The

second was trapped on Exmoor upon the 22nd of the same month, having previously been observed by a shepherd to kill two hares in succession. "A trap baited with the remains of one of these two hares," writes the Rev. M. A. Mathew, "soon proved fatal to the splendid bird" (Zool. 1876. p. 4900). The Exmoor bird turned out to be a female; it is possible that the two birds were migrating North in company, but had become separated before the first was killed on Dartmoor.

LITTLE OWL.—*Athene noctua* (Scop).

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore writes in 1837: "Very rare; one was shot by Mr. Comyns of Dawlish; another was sent to Mr. Rowe for preparation." A third is said to have been killed at Downes near Crediton, in 1851, but Mr. Rowe did not apparently know of it, for he writes in 1863 that: "Only two specimens have been obtained, both many years since."

EAGLE OWL.—[*Bubo ignavus*, Forst.]

[A DOUBTFUL visitant. Dr. Moore writes in 1837: "I have only seen one specimen in Devonshire, and that in a living state, near Honiton, in 1820" (Mag. of Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 115). If Dr. Moore was correct in his identification, and the bird had not escaped from confinement, no doubt the species may be retained in the county list; but the absence of fuller particulars renders its inclusion open to criticism.]

## ORDER ACCIPITRES.

Family FALCONIDÆ.

MARSH HARRIER.—*Circus æruginosus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant, believed to have formerly nested on Dartmoor, which furnished Devonshire specimens to the Exeter Museum. Of late years it has been chiefly remarkable for its absence; the only *recent* specimen recorded, is a male bird, in the second year's plumage, shot at Slapton Ley on November 1st, 1875, in the act of capturing a Coot. This is the only specimen of the Marsh Harrier that Mr. R. P. Nicholls has known to be obtained in the Kingsbridge district (Zool. 1876. p. 4761). Mr. Rowe speaks of this species as formerly numerous on our moorlands, and Polwhele alludes to it as the Moor Buzzard and as being destructive to game.

HEN HARRIER.—*Circus cyaneus* (Linn).

A RARE resident. Though Polwhele does not appear to name the Hen Harrier as a Devonshire bird, it was certainly well established in the county a few years later, when Montagu investigated its habits and plumage. In 1802 we find Montagu remarking: "During the whole of one summer we happened to be situated where we saw several Hen Harriers every day, frequently three or four on wing together; and yet, from the month of March to September, we never saw but one Ringtail" (Orn. Dict. not paged). He then added: "It is remarkable

the young have never been taken and bred up to ascertain the fact," *i.e. whether* the "Ringtail" was really the female Hen Harrier. The significance of this comment was shown in 1807; on the 5th of May, in that year, Montagu read a paper on "Some interesting additions to the Natural History of *Falco cyaneus* and *hyargus*" (Linn. Soc. Trans. Vol. IX. p. 182). He stated that a servant of his friend the Rev. Mr. Vaughan found a nest of this Harrier, composed of sticks rudely put together, nearly flat, and placed on some fallen branches of furze. It contained one addled egg and three very small young ones, covered with white down. The old male was shot and the young were taken in due course. "In about a month it was evident from size, that there was but one male." A female died, but the male and second female lived into the following year, and satisfied their owner that the "Ringtail" was the female Hen Harrier. The researches of Dr. Heysham of Carlisle, had in reality set the matter at rest some years earlier, but Montagu deserves all credit for his successful experiment.

At the present time the Hen Harrier is, unfortunately, a rare bird in Devonshire, though the Rev. M. A. Mathew believes that it still nests within our faunal limits. He records a fine male killed near Barnstaple, in April 1866; the late Mr. J. H. Gurney examined an unusually pale female, killed at Haccombe, May 1871 (Zool. 1866. p. 267).

A bird in the collection of the Earl of Morley was killed at Blagdon, a pair were killed at Chagford in 1871, there are two local birds in the Exeter Museum, one of them killed near Exeter, December 1875; Mr. Hamling records another, killed at Heanton, near Barnstaple, December 1889, and my collection includes a Hen Harrier killed in S. Devon.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER.—*Circus cineraceus* (Mont).

A RARE summer visitant, occasionally nesting in Devon. Montagu added this Harrier to our list on the strength of a bird killed near Kingsbridge, and in 1808 observed a pair of these birds which he thought were nesting. But Mr. Tucker, "the author of the *Ornithologia Danmoniensis*" (Montagu Supplement. 1813), first ascertained positively that the species bred with us. When visiting Montagu's Museum in 1808, Mr. Tucker was shewn a specimen and recognised that it was identical with a bird that he had supposed to be only a *variety* of the Hen Harrier. The gamekeeper of Mr. Templer of Stover had in fact killed a pair of Montagu's Harriers that very summer, and had nailed them up, with their three young ones, against the garden wall. Mr. Tucker had seen them thus suspended, and took down the male bird as being an unusual specimen, but the female and nestlings had been allowed to rot upon the gibbet. Curiously enough, another nest of Montagu's Harrier was discovered in the same district in July, that same year. It was placed on

the ground, among furze, and contained an addled egg and three young ones. Mr. Tucker supposed this second nest to be that of the Hen Harrier, but took and reared the young, which in due time proved to be Montagu's Harriers. The year following, Mr. Tucker found a third nest of Montagu's Harrier, placed among furze, like the last, on a hill near Ashburton. This also contained three young Harriers and a single addled egg.

Coming now to recent records, we find Gatcombe recording "A magnificent adult male Montagu's Harrier" killed at Trowlesworthy, Dartmoor, April 1872, with the comment; "Immature Montagu's Harriers are now and then obtained on our moors, but the fully adults are rarely seen" (Zool. 1872. p. 3101). It was of this bird, that Gatcombe wrote on May 3rd to John Gould; "A few days ago I had a fine old male Montagu's Harrier brought to me. It was killed on Dartmoor, and from its crop and stomach I took no less than fourteen lizards of two kinds" (Introduction to Birds of Great Britain, p. 40). The late Mr. Gurney records a beautiful adult pair of the *dark* race of this Harrier, killed in N. Devon, May 1870 (Zool. 1870. p. 2261). Shopland, the taxidermist, found lizards, a slowworm a field mouse, and some Skylark's eggs, in the stomachs of these birds. Mr. Nicholls found a female, killed near Kingsbridge, May 1847, to contain Skylark's eggs. Mr. G. F. Mathew records

a brood of this Harrier killed near Barnstaple in 1868, and the Editor believes that he refers to the same specimens that Mr. Howard Saunders has reported to him. "I saw the young Montagu's Harriers," says Mr. Saunders, "at the back of the Lyndale Hotel, Lynmouth, about the middle of August, 1868; I was told that the keeper at Simonds bath had trapped the parents. I bought the birds, and some years afterwards, when my collection got too big, I made a present of the case to the Rev. W. Lawson, then Vicar of Lynton. The nest was probably in Devon, but it might have been in Somerset. Last year (1888), I saw an adult female coming back from Malmsmead, and three young birds were several times seen hovering at once over the drives on the hill above our house at Porlock. I noticed that these young Harriers hovered a good deal after the manner of Kestrels, though less stationary. These birds were all seen in Somerset, though close to the Devon border."

Mr. Rawson examined in the flesh a young bird of this species, killed at Santon, N. Devon, August 1885. The Earl of Morley has another, killed at Blagdon, and a few others exist in local collections.

BUZZARD.—*Buteo vulgaris*, Leach.

A RESIDENT species. "In the North of the County," writes Mr. Rawson, "it is still holding its ground. I knew three nests this year and took one clutch of three. I have come across six pairs altogether.

One nest I have known for sixteen years, and with one or two exceptions it has been used year after year. I have often peered into the nest with my glasses, and coveted the richly-marked eggs." Mr. Mitchell has also observed the Buzzard breeding on the North Coast. Gatcombe records it as breeding annually in South Devon; *e.g.* in woods upon the banks of the Tamar; similarly, the late Mr. Gurney noted that a pair nested in a wood at Lustleigh annually, There can be no doubt that, *formerly*, the Buzzard was quite a common bird in most of our well timbered districts. When visiting Rhame Head on March 20th, 1872, Mr. Gatcombe observed "sitting on a rock a fine Common Buzzard which seemed to have been perfectly gorged;" Gatcombe found that the wild Buzzard took a variety of food, including slowworms (*Anguis fragilis*); tame birds were partial to *earthworms*, "which they would regularly hunt for on the grass plots after rain" (Zool. 1880. p. 250). This species varies greatly in colouration. The Rev. Murray A. Mathew records a female trapped near Lynmouth, as "nearly a pure white all over, the back of the head, wings, scapulars and upper tail coverts being narrowly barred with wood brown" (Zool. 1859. p. 6602).

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.—*Archibuteo lagopus* (Gmel).

A RARE winter visitant, immature birds occasionally wander West into Devon, as in the winter 1876-77,

when examples of this species were killed on both Exmoor and Dartmoor. The Rev. M. A. Mathew once obtained a very dark example, which bore a close resemblance to the North American form of the Rough-legged Buzzard. Its food consists chiefly of small mammals, one, that Gatecombe dissected, contained the remains of a small rabbit.

SEA EAGLE.—*Haliaëtus albicilla* (Linn).

A RARE visitant, in immature plumage. Dr. Moore states in his account of the Ornithology of Dartmoor, contributed to Rowe's Perambulation of Dartmoor (1845), that Mr. Gosling of Leigham informed him that a tradition claimed the Dewerstone Rock as a former eyrie of the Golden Eagle; but Professor Newton (Yarrell B. B. vol I. p. 27. 4th. ed), suggests that the species which bred there was probably the Sea Eagle. Dr. Moore also records a bird of this species shot near Kingsbridge, in October 1832, having previously frequented Dartmoor; and a second killed near Bridestowe in 1834. Mr. D'Urban notices a fine example captured alive near Holsworthy in North Devon, in January 1856, and exhibited in Exeter and other towns (Zool. 1856. p. 5096). Mr. Cecil Smith writes that, another Sea Eagle was shot on a wall at Dove, just on the division of the counties of Devon and Somerset, prior to the year 1875. A female specimen was shot at Fordland's Farm, Tiverton, by Mr. R. S. Norrish, on December 24th, 1887. I

have also examined a Sea Eagle presented to the Exeter Museum by Mr. H. Michelmore; this specimen is said to have been obtained in the county.

SPARROW HAWK.—*Accipiter nisus* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species, fairly plentiful in well wooded districts, but becoming scarce as the moorlands are approached. As an instance of the audacity of this species may be cited Gatcombe's observation that in September 1884, a Sparrow Hawk was caught in the middle of Plymouth, having dashed at a caged Goldfinch (Zool. 1885. p. 23). Varieties of the Sparrow Hawk are rare; an albino example, shot at Castle Hill, North Devon, June 28th, 1849, is preserved in the Exeter Museum.

KITE—*Milvus iclinus*, Savigny.

A RARE visitant. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes, that he has proof of the Kite having nested *quite recently* in Devonshire. but even at the beginning of the century it was a rare bird in the South of the County; Montagu only met with it once in twelve years' experience. In recording a specimen of the Kite killed in Cornwall in 1870, the late Mr. Rodd remarked: "I have not heard of a specimen of this beautiful bird occurring anywhere in the West of England for the last fifty years, although I have a vague recollection of the species having (in my school-boy days, at Buckfastleigh near Ashburton,

in Devonshire) regularly bred in a large woodland called King's Wood, not far from Holne Chase on Dartmoor" (Zool. 1870. p. 1980). In his annual summary, Mr. Rodd wrote more decidedly: "No hawk was better known in the large woodland districts of the Central part of Devon, when I was a boy at Buckfastleigh, than the 'Fork-tailed Kit,' as it was commonly called" (Birds of Cornwall, p. 255). Mr. Rodd appears to have been born in 1810, so that his experience of the Kite in Devon would refer to years between 1820 and 1830. The Ootheca Wolleyana mentions an egg of the Kite from Devon, and in 1872 the Hon. Lord Lilford informed Mr. Harting that the Kite *formerly* bred in North Devon. Writing in 1838, Bellamy stated that the Kite might be considered "almost confined to Dartmoor" (Nat. Hist. of Devon. p. 300). also, that, "in former years the Kite was a common bird in this country, but at the present time it is particularly scarce" (Ibid. p. 305). We come next to enumerate specimens of the Kite killed in Devon, the properly authenticated instances are very few indeed.

Writing from the Barnstaple district on May 5th 1861, the Rev. M. A. Mathew records the capture, a few days earlier, of a fine adult Kite, taken in a trap at Kentisbury (Zool. 1861. p. 7544). On the 13th of October in the following year a male specimen was shot on the banks of the Avon near Kingsbridge (Zool. 1863. p. 8325), and another

male was shot near Kingsbridge in March, 1864 (Zool. 1864. p. 9039). The Rev. G. C. Green has drawn my attention to a fine Kite in the collection of Mr. Andrews, who writes; "The Kite, which I have in my possession, came into my hands about fifteen years since, being before that in the collection of the late Rev. C. Bulteel. The bird was known to be in the neighbourhood a little time before it was killed, about twenty five years ago, I should think, but I am not certain at all as to this. It was caught by a boy in a gin on the southern edge of Dartmoor." The Rev. C. Bulteel adds: "I am sorry to say I can not tell you the exact date of the capture of the Kite on Dartmoor, but I was quite a boy at the time, and I should think it was at least thirty years ago." A few other specimens exist in Devon; there is one for instance, in the collection of the Earl of Morley, which was killed at Saltram. Mr. A. L. Hine-Haycock tells me that his brother saw a Kite at Sidmouth in 1887; Mr. R. M. J. Trill observed a Kite in December, 1880, near Newton Abbot (*Field*, Dec. 11th, 1880); Mr. Murray Mathew possesses a *very recent* Devonshire specimen, and one was seen near Chagford in May, 1890 (*Field*, May 24th, 1890).

HONEY BUZZARD.—*Pernies apivorus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant; very few occurrences of the Honey Buzzard can be accredited to *Devonshire*. Birds have, however, been killed in several different

localities, on Dartmoor, near Plymouth, at Slapton Ley, in Woodley Woods and elsewhere. Writing under date of June 2nd, 1866, the late Mr. Rodd remarks: "Mr. Vingoe received from North Devon yesterday a fine specimen of the female Honey Buzzard. There was a chain of eggs in the ovary, but whether they would have been laid this year is doubtful" (Zool. 1866, p. 308). On dissecting a female Honey Buzzard, killed near Plymouth, in October 1881, Mr. Gatecombe found that "the stomach, strange to say, contained nothing but a quantity of white feathers, (apparently its own) in a similar state to those which are often found compressed in the stomach of a Grebe" (Zool. 1882, p. 65).

PEREGRINE FALCON.—*Falco peregrinus*, Tunstall.

A RESIDENT species, included by Polwhele in his account of the Birds of Devon, as the "Gyrfalcon," a curious misnomer. In 1869, Baron A. von Hügel recorded the Peregrine as nesting at Watcombe, near Dartmouth, and at Start Point (Zool. 1869, p. 1846). Mr. Rawson finds it breeding at Baggy Point, and it nests on Lundy Island, or has only ceased to do so very recently. The Rev. Prebendary Bassett has seen the Falcon on Exmoor, and believes that formerly it bred there. Mr. Gatecombe examined a good many Peregrines killed near Plymouth, and gives an interesting account of a young bird: "Some years ago a shipwright's lad took three young ones from a nest at Wembury, one

of which I purchased and kept alive for a long time: and afterwards, hearing that he had still another left, I thought I would endeavour to get that also. . . . On my asking whether he kept it confined in a cage or in a garden, he replied that it was quite free, and flew about wherever it liked, but would come to his call or whistle from any distance within sight or hearing. On landing and walking into the village, my companion began to call and whistle, when suddenly, to my astonishment, I saw the Falcon swoop down from the corner of a high building at the end of a street, and alight on his shoulder. . . . I have often since regretted that I did not buy this docile bird" (Zool. 1877, p. 280). From the precipitous character of its favourite haunts, I have heard this Falcon called the "Cliff-hawk" in Devon. Mr. H. Nicholls of Kingsbridge informs me, that about twenty Peregrines have passed through his hands during his experience, extending over many years. Local specimens may be seen in the Museums of Plymouth, Exeter, Torquay; others are preserved in private collections.

HOBBY.—*Falco subbuteo*, Linn.

AN OCCASIONAL summer visitant. Devonshire lies to the west of the Hobby's proper breeding range in England, but the species is reported to have bred in Lydford Woods, at Warleigh, and one or two other localities. A pair of Hobbies *undoubtedly* nested in Gidleigh Park near Chagford, in 1870; the facts

being fully investigated by the Rev. Murray A. Mathew (Zool. 1870, p. 2304). In this instance, the keeper unhappily destroyed both the old Hobbies and their young. Specimens of the Hobby are killed from time to time in Devon, notwithstanding the comparative rarity of the bird within the County. Three killed near Exeter are in the local museum; the Earl of Morley possesses a specimen killed at Plympton; a male Hobby preserved in the Torquay Museum, was killed on Dartmoor; Mr. F. Pershouse informs me that an immature male was killed at Yarner Wood, Bovey Tracey, September 1st, 1874: my own collection includes a Hobby killed in South Devon.

MERLIN.—*Falco aesalon*, Tunstall.

A SCARCE autumn and winter visitant, reputed to have formerly bred on Dartmoor, but chiefly met with during the colder months of the year, sometimes lingering into April. The Rev. M. A. Mathew regards this species as still breeding in Devon, and the dates at which Merlins have occurred with us favour the belief, but I have no evidence, myself, that the Merlin nests with us. Mr. D'Urban mentions half-a-dozen local specimens, killed near Exeter, at Sidmouth, and at Dawlish; adding, "It is said to have nested near Manaton, on the borders of Dartmoor" (Zool. 1881. p. 57). Others have been killed near Torquay, at Plymouth, and also in the North of the County: being variously trapped, shot, or netted, although in no way injurious to game.

RED-FOOTED FALCON.—*Falco vespertinus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. The late Rev. R. A. Julian, an accomplished ornithologist, informed the Rev. F. O. Morris that he knew of two specimens obtained near Plymouth. One flew on board a vessel in the Channel, near the Breakwater and was captured (Morris B.B. I. p. 108). The other is the bird alluded to by the late Mr. Rodd, in the following words: "When visiting Devonport in June 1863, I saw an adult male of this species in the hands of Mr. Pincombe, naturalist of that town, which had been shot some time previously at Wembury Cliff, . . . on the Devonshire side of Plymouth Sound. . . . This is the specimen referred to by Yarrell as having been in a Museum at Devonport, and killed not far off. It is now in my collection" (B. of C. p. 9).

KESTREL.—*Falco tinnunculus*, Linn.

A COMMON resident, fairly distributed all over the county, though Mr. Mitchell considers it less abundant in North Devon than in the district of Tavistock, in which he now resides. Writing from Tavistock, Mr. Mitchell remarks; "These birds build in the numerous steep rocks around here. They feed largely on *beetles*. When they nest in rocks, they make no nest at all, but scoop a hollow in the mould, among their pellets."

OSPREY.—*Pandion haliaëtus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant to the estuaries and rivers of S. Devon; almost unknown in the North of the

County. Formerly it was more often noticed. Thus, the late Mr. Ross wrote, in 1844: "Ospreys are frequently seen on the Exe, and have been taken in large gins. One has been observed for the last month, but has hitherto escaped capture" (Zool. 1844. p. 1190). A few years later, Dr. Scott of Exeter expressed a similar view, remarking that: "This bird is not a very uncommon visitor, as almost every winter one or two are shot in the neighbourhood" (Zool. 1849. p. 2384). It is unnecessary for present purposes to enumerate all our local occurrences of the Osprey in the present century. In March, 1864, a fine female "was shot at Slapton Ley, where it had been seen fishing for roach and perch for several days previous (Zool. 1864. p. 9039). Another was killed on the Exe in October, 1865 (Zool. 1865. p. 9847). Another was killed near Powderham in 1867, and another on the Dart in September 1875 (*vide* E. Parfitt). A female, killed at Torbay, is preserved in the Torquay Museum. The Earl of Morley has informed me of an Osprey in his collection, killed on the estuary of the Plym prior to 1840. In the North of the County, Mr. G. F. Mathew describes an Osprey shot in Braunton Marshes, September 1868, as "the first that has been observed here" (Zool. 1868. p. 1460). It should be noticed that most, if not all, of the authenticated occurrences of the Osprey in Devon refer to the seasons of migration.

## ORDER STEGANOPODES.

*Family PELECANIDÆ.*CORMORANT.—*Phalacrocorax carbo* (Linn).

AN ABUNDANT species on our coasts. The Rev. M. A. Mathew reports the Cormorant as breeding on the coasts of both North and South Devon. Mr. F. Pershouse kindly contributes information as to its breeding near Torquay, and Mr. Rawson adds that a few pairs also breed on Lundy Island. Mr. Mitchell writes: "I saw three nests close together in the cliffs of Rame Head, near Plymouth, this Spring. When I looked over the cliff, the birds were sitting; they would not leave their nests, even when I threw stones at them, but they kept 'snapping' towards me with their beaks, and stretching out their necks. A bird was shot on Dartmoor lately, at Tavy Cleave twenty-three miles from the sea."

Baron A. von Hügel measured a Conger eel of thirty inches, taken entire from the gullet of a Cormorant shot in Torbay. Gatcombe often recorded the Cormorants, which he watched at Plymouth, as catching Congers, sometimes under circumstances of considerable difficulty, as when a large eel had twisted itself so tightly around the neck of its captor as to almost cause suffocation. Once, when visiting the Tamar river, he was "much interested in watching the struggles of a Cormorant with a large fish on a mud-flat near the river, which it must just have caught, or possibly found left dry

by the tide, but had the greatest difficulty in killing and swallowing. This was the first time I ever saw a wild Cormorant kill and eat a fish out of the water" (Zool. 1884. p. 53).

SHAG.—*Phalacrocorax graculus* (Linn).

A COMMON resident, met with at all seasons on our coasts. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes that the Shag breeds on the cliffs of both N. and S Devon. Mr. Pershouse finds it very numerous at times in Torbay, and Gatecombe observed large numbers in the month of May about Wembury Cliffs, where they presumably bred.

GANNET.—*Sula bassana* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species, a few pairs breeding on Lundy Island, but for the most part a winter and spring visitant in *mature* plumage, young birds being of decidedly uncommon occurrence. Adults often make their appearance in hundreds. Baron A von. Hügel writes, under date February 11th 1874: "About a fortnight ago, a flock of several hundred birds were following a shoal of fish off Paignton, and the effect produced by the contrast of the lovely white of their plumage against the leaden sky and deep green sea was very striking" (Zool. 1874. p. 3906). Similarly, hundreds appeared in the channel off Rame Head in January, 1876, and such were their numbers, that one fisherman described them as "falling like a snow shower" in their pursuit of

fish (Zool. 1876. p. 4823). Upon the North coast of the County it is less frequently observed, but in November 1881 several Gannets were reported as seen flying off Hartland Point during the whole month (Migration Report, 1881. p. 68), and their presence in limited numbers is a common event.

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### ORDER HERODIONES.

#### *Family* ARDEIDÆ.

#### HERON.—*Ardea cinerea*, Linn.

A WELL known resident, constantly to be seen on our rivers and estuaries. Several fine Heronries exist in the county. At Powderham Park, the seat of the Earl of Devon, the Herons nest in some ancient oak trees close to the castle. Formerly a Heronry existed in Shute Park, near Axminster, but some forty years ago the birds migrated to fresh quarters among the woods of Stedcombe near Axmouth. A few Herons breed at Sharpham on the Dart. Mr. Mitchell knows the Heronry at Warleigh, and another at Fremington, near Barnstaple. The Rev. G. C. Green reports another as existing in Little Orcheton Wood, at the mouth of the Erme; Dr. Elliot sends me word of a Heronry in Halwell Wood on the Kingsbridge estuary; Mr. Parfitt records another on Dartmoor, near Princetown. The Rev. Prebendary Bassett

reports a ninth Heronry at Pixton Park near Dulverton. On the Exe, I often meet with Herons; on a fine moonlight night, I have counted as many as a dozen birds scattered along the edge of the river, waiting patiently for their prey.

PURPLE HERON.—*Ardea purpurea*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore in 1837 included this species in the Devonshire list on very imperfect evidence, stating only that an immature bird was seen by Mr. Gosling on the Plym, in April 1824, and that a second was noticed by several persons at Flete, in December 1836. Nor does the Editor know anything of the bird which Mr. H. Saunders states (Yarrell B.B. vol. IV. p. 173), no doubt correctly, to have been obtained near Plymouth by Mr. Plumptre Methuen; but Gatcombe unquestionably obtained an immature Purple Heron at a poulterer's in Stonehouse, October 30th, 1857 (Zool. 1859. p. 6376).

LITTLE EGRET.—*Ardea garzetta*, Linn.

A RARE visitant, having only been observed in our county in a solitary instance. Mr. Gatcombe records that a beautiful specimen was killed at Countess Weir, on the Exe, upon the 3rd of June 1870. It was in perfectly adult plumage, and became the property of Mr. E. H. Harbottle of Topsham (Zool. 1870. p. 2308). This bird is now deposited on loan in the Exeter Museum.

BUFF-BACKED HERON.—*Ardea bubulcus*, Audouin.

A RARE visitant. Montagu added this little Heron to the British list, having obtained a female bird, shot by Mr. F. Cornish at South Allington near Kingsbridge in October 1805, and recorded its history in the Transactions of the Linnean Society (Vol. IX. p. 197), as also in the Supplement to his Ornithological Dictionary. The bird "had been seen for several days in the same field, attending some cows, and picking up insects, which were found in its stomach. It was by no means shy, and was fired at a second time before it was secured. The situation where it was shot is the southern promontory of Devon, very near the coast, between the Start and the Prawl." This immature specimen is preserved in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. It is possible that a record of a bird shot in South Devon, April, 1851, and described by Mr. Cleveland as "*Ardea russata*," may refer to this species (Zool. 1851. p. 3116).

SQUACCO HERON.—*Ardea ralloides*, Scop.

A RARE visitant. Mr. Rowe writes: "Rare. One was killed near Kingsbridge in 1840, and one or two have since been obtained from the Tamar" (Catalogue of Birds, p. 37). There is no doubt at all that a Squacco Heron was killed at Blatchford in June or July, 1840. Dr. Elliot says that a man called "Otter Dairs" shot it, and certainly information was sent to Mr. Yarrell. The specimen

belonged to Lord Blatchford, and was supposed to have passed into his collection. Gatcombe examined the collection in 1873, and pronounced that this bird was in fine condition, and that the stuffer's name was on the back of the case. But the death of the late Mr. Bond has brought to light a second specimen, described in his private catalogue as obtained in 1840 in Devonshire, and Mr. Bidwell reports that the bird entered Mr. Bond's possession in that year. Whether two Squacco Herons were killed in Devon at the same time, or whether one of the birds was mounted from a skin to counterfeit the other, I can not say. Mr. Bond's specimen was sold at Stevens's, May 22nd 1890, as of lot 32, and was purchased for £2 10s by Mr. Chase of Birmingham. Mr. H. Saunders records a third specimen, killed in Devon, in June, 1878.

LITTLE BITTERN.—*Ardetta minuta* (Linn).

AN OCCASIONAL but rare summer visitant, chiefly noticed in South Devon. Various specimens have been obtained at Slapton Ley and elsewhere, prior to 1852. On the 23rd of April, in that year, an adult male Little Bittern was captured at Prawl, and carried, quite uninjured to Mr. Nicholls, who remarks: "It seldom stretched out its neck, except in the act of striking, which it did with much force, drawing blood from the hand of a boy who ventured too near it" (Zool. 1852. p. 3474). In May, 1873, a fine male was shot on the river Erme, and came

under the notice of Mr. Gatecombe (Zool. 1873. p. 3630). The Rev. M. A. Mathew records an adult caught in a starved condition in April, 1876, near Plymouth (Zool. 1876. p. 5046); he also records a specimen of the Little Bittern, killed at Braunton, near Barnstaple, in the first week of May, 1868. Dr. Elliot has a beautiful male, shot June 2nd, 1885, near Kingsbridge, as also a female previously obtained. Other local specimens might be enumerated, but the foregoing evidence will suffice to explain the visits of the Little Bittern. The season at which the majority of birds have been killed, renders it probable, that had they been spared, some of them might probably have bred in the county.

NIGHT HERON.—*Nycticorax griseus* (Linn).

A RARE summer visitant, that might have become a permanent breeding species in the county, had adequate protection been forthcoming. The year 1849 is memorable *with us in Devon*, for the arrival of a flight of no less than eight adult Night Herons in the neighbourhood of Flete, on the river Erme. Forty years ago, there was of course no protection for breeding birds, and the whole flight of birds, four males and four females, were *killed out*, between their arrival on the 23rd of May and the 22nd of June. The Rev. C. Bulteel reports that all the birds were preserved; two are in the collection of Mr. Andrews, and another is in

the possession of Lord Lilford. Mr. G. F. Mathew records an adult male shot on the river Taw, May 14th, 1869; Mr. Howard Saunders says that from information supplied to him by the Rev. M. A. Mathew, it seems probable that a brood was actually hatched out that year near New Bridge on the Taw. Mr. H. Nicholls records a young bird, in the spotted plumage; flushed from a bed of reeds in the vicinity of the Avon, January 7th, 1876, adding: "Some twelve years since, in October, I procured a similar specimen, except that some of the down was quite visible at the tips of the feathers, from the same locality, and a full dressed male a few years ago" (Zool. 1876. p. 4844).

BITTERN.—*Botaurus stellaris* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant, met with annually at Slapton Ley, and of pretty frequent occurrence in the South of the County. In the North of Devon, it is rather more rarely met with. Writing to the Zoologist of 1856, Mr. D'Urban states: "The Bittern, unlike many other species once common in Devonshire has become of late years from a rare bird a regular winter visitor to this county:" After enumerating *ten* recent occurrences (one of the number referring to a Bittern shot by himself on the Exe), Mr. D'Urban proceeds; "They appear to be met with either during or after the prevalence of high easterly winds and cold weather, and are usually not at all shy, allowing of close approach

before taking wing. The specimen killed on the 22nd of December rose within a few yards of me, from the rushes on the 'leek-beds,' when I was looking for Snipe, and had probably only arrived the preceding night, as its stomach was empty" (Zool. 1856. p. 5064). The stomachs of the Bitterns that Gatcombe dissected, killed near Plymouth, contained the fur of water rats and mice, vegetable fibre, the elytra of beetles and many small crabs (Zool. 1879. p. 205). There are several local examples in the Exeter Museum; the Earl of Morley has a bird killed at Saltram; my collection includes one killed near Plymouth. Many others are in private hands. Even during the mild winter of 1889-90, several Bitterns were killed in the County, *e.g.* a fine bird killed at Bradford on December 14th, and a second shot at Holsworthy three days later.

AMERICAN BITTERN.—*Botaurus lentiginosus* (Mont).

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore records the occurrence of this North American bird in South Devon, on the strength of a specimen shot at Mothecombe near Plymouth, December 22nd, 1829. A second example was procured in 1875, in North Devon. "Towards the end of October," writes the Rev. M. A. Mathew, "A fine example of the American Bittern was killed by Mr. Richards, while shooting on some high moor ground near Parracombe; I have seen this bird, which I believe is to be presented to Earl Fortescue, as it was shot upon his lordship's

ground: it is a young bird of the year" (Zool. 1875. p. 4720). Mr. Gatcombe simultaneously recorded this bird, remarking: "Since my return from North Devon, I have heard from my friend the Rev. W. S. Hore, of Barnstaple, that Mr. Rowe had received an American Bittern, in the flesh, I believe killed in the neighbourhood of Ilfracombe" (ibid. p. 4719).

*Family CICONIIDÆ.*

WHITE STORK.—*Ciconia alba*, Bechst.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore writes in 1837: "Three specimens have within the last fifteen years, been obtained on Slapton Ley, according to Mr. Gosling" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 321). Mr. Rowe states: "Dr. Moore mentions three specimens killed on Slapton Ley. The last Devonshire one is mentioned by my cousin in Morris, B.B. vol. IV. p. 151. as having been shot at Topsham on the Exe, July 28th, 1852" (Birds of Devon, p. 37).

BLACK STORK.—*Ciconia nigra* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. "A beautiful specimen" writes Dr. Moore, "was shot on the Tamar, November 5th, 1831, and is now in Mr. Drew's collection; I saw the bird while warm and took note of it" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837 p. 321). This example subsequently became the property of the late Mr. Rodd (Birds of Cornwall, p. 126).

*Family PLATALEIDÆ.*SPOONBILL.—*Platalea leucorodia*, Linn.

A RARE visitant on migration. Montagu mentions that he obtained a young bird, shot near Kingsbridge in November, 1804, as also an old bird, “in the highest state of beauty,” in March, 1807. Dr. Moore adds: “Mr. Comyns has one, shot on the Exe;” another, shot on Kenton Warren, in December, 1829, by Mr. W. Tucker: another, shot on the Tamar, is in the collection of C. Tripe, Esq., of Devonport (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 321). Dr. Scott records a Spoonbill shot on the Warren Sands at Exmouth in December, 1847, and Dr. Elliot reports two others obtained in the Kingsbridge district. Gatcombe on several occasions examined immature Spoonbills, which had been killed in Cornwall, on the borders of Devon; but the visits of this species have become more rare than formerly. A Spoonbill killed at Teignmouth, was sold as lot 87, at Mr. Cecil Smith’s sale at Steven’s, London, on June 24th, 1890.

GLOSSY IBIS.—*Plegadis falcinellus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. Montagu obtained three specimens in the County, one of them being shot “in the interior part of Devonshire,” in September, 1805 (Linn. Soc. Tr. IX. p. 198). Dr. Moore mentions three others, one shot near Warleigh on the Tamar and two killed at Slapton Ley (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837 p. 321). A seventh was shot at Holsworthy

in September, 1851 (*Western Times*, October 11th, 1851). In 1869, an eighth specimen was killed on the river Dart, not far from Totnes, on the 20th of September. This bird, which was not fully mature in plumage, was taken in the flesh to Mr. Shopland of Torquay, and purchased by Baron A von Hügel (*Zool.* 1869. p. 1917). Afterwards it passed into the possession of Mr. J. H. Gurney.

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## ORDER ANSERES.

### *Family* ANATIDÆ.

GREY LAG GOOSE.—*Anser cinereus*, Meyer.

A RARE winter visitant. Our only reliable evidence, for the occurrence of the Grey Lag in Devon, is supplied by Mr. Gatcombe, who purchased a female in the Devonport Market, November 25th, 1858, which is now in the Exeter Museum. It had been killed on the river Tamar. "This species is very uncommon with us," the above mentioned specimen and another, "being the only two I ever observed in our markets, although I have been for many years on the look out for them" (*Zool.* 1859. p. 6376). Mr. E. G. Waddilove writes under date 9th July, 1890: "I once in the winter 1884-5 saw four grey geese which, from their size, I feel pretty sure were Grey Lags, flying at no very great height out seawards, over the sand-bank at the mouth of the estuary (Exe) known as the 'Warren.'"

BEAN GOOSE.—*Anser segetum* (Gmel).

A WINTER visitant, numerous in some seasons of protracted frost, at other times scarce or absent from our estuaries. Specimens have been killed in recent years at Slapton Ley, from which locality Montagu received a couple of live Bean Geese through Mr. Holdsworth.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.—*Anser albifrons* (Scop).

A WINTER visitant, and the Grey Goose generally met with in Devonshire in ordinary seasons. Several were shot near Exeter in 1846 (Zool. 1849. p. 2384). A bird in the Exeter Museum was shot on the Exe in 1850. Mr. Rawson examined three fine birds, shot of a party of five on Northam Burrows. The finest in plumage, that Gatcombe ever saw, was killed on a down near Colstock in 1877. The bands on the breast and belly were so broad and close together, as to make the underparts appear almost wholly black. This bird had been feeding on Dutch clover, of which its stomach was full. It sometimes visits Dartmoor, for Mr. Clark shot a White-fronted Goose in Fox-Tor mire in February 1885; two others were seen at the same time. Several White-fronted Geese were seen near Barnstaple in January, 1888, and one was shot on the Exe estuary in November of the same year.

BRENT GOOSE.—*Bernicla brenta* (Pall).

A WINTER visitant, sometimes numerous on the Exe and other estuaries in hard weather. The Rev.

M. A. Mathew records that in 1861, he shot one and saw six others as late as April 22nd, on the Taw estuary. In 1883, Gatcombe examined a couple of Brent Geese, sent to a Plymouth bird-stuffer as late as May 12th (Zool. 1883. p. 419). We do not, however, get the large flocks of Brent Geese commonly met with in winter and early spring on the east coast. A Brent Goose, shot on the Topsham mud flats in 1850, may be seen in the Exeter Museum.

BARNACLE GOOSE.—*Bernicla leucopsis* (Bechst).

AN UNCOMMON winter visitant. Montagu says: "A large flock of these birds were observed on Slapton Ley in the winter of 1801," and his own collection contained two local birds. Another couple were killed at Slapton Ley in 1860. Mr. Rowe includes this species in his catalogue as "rare," and has added a MS. note that he obtained a specimen for his series in 1864 (Catalogue of Birds of Devon. p. 39). Dr. Moore also met with it.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE.—*Bernicla ruficollis* (Pall).

A VERY rare visitant. Dr. Moore states that: "One was shot on Kenton Warren, in 1828, and is now in the possession of Mr. W. Russell, Dawlish; another was killed on Teign Marshes, February 21st, 1837, by Rendall, of Buckland, and is now in preparation by Mr. Drew" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837). The Red-breasted Goose was at that time so rare in

collections, that imposition is unlikely, and Dr. Moore was too good a naturalist to misidentify so remarkable a species. It is, however, to be desired that information of the present whereabouts of these valuable specimens should be forthcoming.

MUTE SWAN.—*Cygnus olor* (Gmel).

AN INTRODUCED species. That we are also visited in winter by some genuine wild birds, is not unlikely; but it appears to be difficult to distinguish between visitors '*Ferae naturae*,' and full-winged stragglers from private waters.

WHOOPER SWAN.—*Cygnus musicus*, Bechst.

A RARE VISITANT in severe weather. "Wild Swans" says Polwhele, "in flocks of sixty or seventy appear in hard winters . . . . During the frost, about sixteen years ago (*i.e.* about 1780), a Cygnet was shot from Totnes bridge, but the flesh was by no means a dainty. In the hard frost of 1788, a Swan was shot above Staverton, the weight of which was eighteen pounds and a half. In 1788-9 the river Exe, and the marshes of Exminster, and the banks of the Clyst were covered with Swans" (History of Devonshire, p. 111). Dr. Moore writes in 1837, that the Whooper is "rare but obtained in hard winters. A specimen, shot on the Tamar, is in the collection of J. Newton, Esq., at Bridestow, near Okehampton. In the winter of 1830, several

visited our rivers. I saw thirteen in the Plymouth and Devonport markets, and many were shot in the North, of which I obtained one from 'Torrington' (Nat. Hist. Mag. 1837. p. 366).

BEWICK'S SWAN.—*Cygnus bewicki*, Yarr.

A RARE winter visitant. The only recent occurrence of Bewick's Swan in Devon at present known, is that recorded in the Zoologist for 1876 by Mr. H. Nicholls, who states that on the 14th of November in that year a pair of these Swans appeared upon the Kingsbridge estuary. One of them was shot, and being purchased by Mr. Nicholls, proved to be a female. It weighed eleven pounds and a half.

SHELD DUCK.—*Tadorna cornuta* (S. G. Gmel).

A WINTER visitant to our southern estuaries. Dr. Moore records it as breeding on Braunton Burrows in 1837, and Mr. Rawson believes that it still holds out as a resident species. In the neighbourhood of Plymouth, Gatcombe considered it a "hard weather" fowl. Those, which he dissected during the winter months, proved to have fed chiefly on minute shells. Mr. Waddilove says the Sheld Duck used formerly to breed on Dawlish Warren, but it has not, to my knowledge, done so within the last three or four years.

MALLARD.—*Anas boschas*, Linn.

A RESIDENT and breeding species, but the numbers of our home-bred birds are reinforced in early

winter by many immigrants. A specimen of the rare hybrid between the Mallard and Teal was obtained in Devonshire by the Rev. W. S. Hore, and is now in the possession of Mr. J. H. Gurney, from whom this information is derived. Mr. Gurney writes that it is in good plumage, and shows the characteristics of both species. A coloured figure of this hybrid accompanies Severtzow's Pamphlet, "*Ein bastard von anas crecca mit A. boschas.*"

GADWALL.—*Anas streperus*, Linn.

A RARE winter visitant. During severe weather in the early Spring of 1855, Gatcombe found some fine specimens of the Gadwall exposed for sale in the local markets. The Rev. G. C. Green has a large specimen killed on the Erme. A male, shot at Powderham, in December, 1871, is preserved in the Exeter Museum. A female bird was killed at Slapton Ley, in January, 1885. These references all refer to South Devon. The Gadwall does not seem to have been reported from the north of the County.

SHOVELLER.—*Spatula clypeata* (Linn).

A SCARCE visitant, chiefly noticed during the winter months. Montagu obtained a male Shoveller in "eclipse" plumage, shot "on a fresh water lake" (? Slapton Ley), on August 5th 1807; the natural presumption is, that this bird had *bred* that season, since "eclipse" plumage usually succeeds to marital conditions. The Rev. G. C. Green examined a

young Shoveller, shot on Strode pond in 1880, and the Rev. M. A. Mathew records a young bird killed on the Taw, as also a pair of adults shot on the same river about March 20th, 1870. Gatcombe examined a fine old male killed near Plymouth in December 1873, and eight others obtained in the following February, only three out of the nine being female birds. Another male was shot at Brampford Speke, December 13th 1875, and another was killed on a stream near Kingsbridge by the gardener of Mr. Mitchell, in December, 1879.

PINTAIL.—*Dafila acuta* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant in sparing numbers to our estuaries. Polwhele was well acquainted with the "Long-tailed Wigeon or Sea-pheasant" as a visitor to the south coast of Devon in severe weather. Mr. Waddilove, who has had considerable experience of wildfowling, is inclined to think that the Devonshire coast lies to the westward of the Pintail's usual haunts, and regards this species as decidedly rarer at Exmouth than at Poole on the Dorset Coast. Mr. Nicholls of Kingsbridge has recorded specimens in immature or female plumage from his neighbourhood. My collection includes a female shot on the Estuary of the Exe in March, 1888.

TEAL.—*Querquedula crecca* (Linn).

A NUMEROUS winter visitant, but resident at Slapton Ley, where it breeds sparingly. In October, 1875,

Gatcombe examined a drake Teal, killed near Ilfracombe, which possessed a white ring upon the neck similar to that of the Mallard. The late Mr. Bond's collection contained a male Wigeon, exhibiting very perfectly a white ring of the same kind.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL.—*Querquedula carolinensis*.

A RARE visitant. A male specimen of this American Teal was shot by a local gunner on an arm of the Kingsbridge Estuary, November 23rd, 1879. The man who killed it, sold it to Mr. R. P. Nicholls, and after comparison with American skins, its identity was announced by Mr. H. Nicholls (Zool. 1880, p. 70). It has since been exhibited before the Zoological Society by Mr. H. Saunders.

GARGANEY.—*Querquedula circia* (Linn).

A SPRING visitant to N. and S. Devon, but only in very small numbers. A male and female, preserved in the Exeter Museum, were shot in Newport Marsh, Topsham, March 12th, 1850. Gatcombe records the occurrence of a Garganey near Plymouth, March 25th, 1870, and of a fine male killed close to the town of Plymouth, April 13th, 1872, accompanying the second notice with the remark; "This species is seldom met with in our neighbourhood" (Zool. 1872. p. 3099). In 1881, he recorded a third, killed near Plymouth on March 24th. The Rev. M. A. Mathew records a duck and drake

killed on the Taw close to Barnstaple bridge, about March 20th, 1870; and a third in the following April. The Rev. G. C. Green writes; "About the end of March or beginning of April two Garganeys (a duck and a drake), were shot out of a flock of nine on Strode pond, and brought to me for identification."

WIGEON.—*Mareca penelope* (Linn).

A COMMON winter visitant, sometimes present in large numbers at Slapton Ley. Bellamy records a local specimen of the rare hybrid between this bird and the Mallard.

AMERICAN WIGEON.—*Mareca americana* (Gmel).

A VERY rare visitant. The Rev. M. A. Mathew wrote to the Zoologist in 1870: "I hear from Barnstaple of the occurrence of the American Wigeon on the Taw. A specimen of this species, supposed to be a young male, was shot about the 20th of April" (Zool. 1870, p. 2182). He kindly writes that this bird, "at the time was pronounced to be that species [American Wigeon] by Professor Newton, Mr. Harting, and the Rev. W. S. Hore. I still believe it to be *Mareca Americana*. It was certainly shot at large on the river Taw, and was seen by my old friend, the Rev. W. S. Hore before it was skinned. It is in a very queer state of plumage, but is very different to an ordinary Wigeon. It is still in my collection" (*in lit.*, April 18th, 1890).

RED-CRESTED POCHARD.—*Fuligula rufina* (Pall).

A RARE visitant. “A very beautiful Mallard specimen” is recorded by Mr. G. F. Mathew as shot near Braunton, December 20th, 1867 (Zool. 1868. p. 1098).

POCHARD.—*Fuligula ferina* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant, of pretty frequent occurrence in the southern estuaries. Baron A. von Hügel records an adult male killed in Torbay in December, the Earl of Morley informs me of a specimen in his possession from the river Plym, I have another from S. Devon, and the bird is represented in most local series of wild-fowl.

WHITE-EYED DUCK.—*Fuligula nyroca* (Güld).

A RARE visitant. Mr. H. Nicholls informs me that he has a specimen of the Ferruginous Duck, shot at Slapton Ley, November 25th, 1874. It is perhaps to this bird that Mr. H. Saunders refers, when he says; “Mr. Gatcombe is aware of but one instance of the occurrence of a young bird of this species in Devonshire” (Yarrell. B.B. Vol. 4. p. 419).

TUFTED DUCK.—*Fuligula cristata* (Leach).

A WINTER visitant. Montagu states that the Tufted Duck, “Pied” or “Black Wigeon,” was frequently shot on Slapton Ley in his day (Suppl. 1813). Dr. Moore adds in 1837: “Frequently shot on Slapton Ley, and found in the markets in winter.”

At the present time Slapton Ley is still the chief stronghold of this species during its stay with us. The late Mr. Gurney observed a single Tufted Duck diving in the sea off Torcross as late as the 22nd of May, 1871; remarking: "It seems just possible that these ducks may nest in the adjacent reed beds." Confirmatory evidence is at present wanting, but the Rev. M. A. Mathew has reason to believe that the Tufted Duck *has nested* in Devon. Gatcombe met with Tufted Ducks in the Plymouth Markets in November, 1879, and at other times.

SCAUP.—*Fuligula marila* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN and winter visitant to our estuaries, rather plentiful in certain seasons, as in October, 1883, when a good many were killed near Plymouth. The stomach of a drake, which Gatcombe dissected was distended with small spiral shells, mixed with the claws and other remains of minute crabs (Zool. 1884. p. 55).

GOLDENEYE.—*Clangula glaucion* (Linn.)

A WINTER visitant, numerous in the time of Montagu at Slapton Ley, whence he received specimens through Mr. Holdsworth, and called the "Pied Wigeon." Elsewhere it cannot be termed abundant, being in fact only sparsely represented with us in most seasons, Mr. Nicholls answers for several Goldeneyes having been killed near Kingsbridge;

others have been shot on the Exe, the Plym, and in Torbay. Lieutenant Portman shot a fine drake at Slapton Ley in February, 1886.

LONG-TAILED DUCK.—*Harelda glacialis* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant to our southern estuaries, but not met with every year, even in the most favoured localities. Mr. D'Urban records that the Exeter Museum possesses a series of two adult and three immature birds, all killed on the Exe between 1847 and 1877 (Zool. 1877. p. 105). Of these, one is an adult male in summer plumage, killed in 1847. In Torbay, Baron A. von Hügel states that the Long-tailed duck is "of very rare occurrence." He examined a young male killed there in December, 1867. On the Kingsbridge estuary, Mr. H. Nicholls shot a pair of birds in October, 1865, "the male having the very long tail feathers and all the appearance of a full dressed bird." At Exmouth, again, Mr. Cecil Smith obtained an immature bird in November, 1867, and Mr. Waddilove writes, that he believes the sea-faring habits of this duck cause its numbers on the Devonshire coast to be underestimated. An immature bird was shot on the Exe during the present winter, and came into my possession. In the north of the county, the Long-tailed Duck is rarely met with. The Rev. M. A. Mathew records an immature bird, shot near Barnstaple, November 1858.

EIDER DUCK.—*Somateria mollissima* (Linn).

AN OCCASIONAL winter visitant. Montagu obtained an Eider Duck on the Devonshire coast in 1807. Dr. Moore vouches for another obtained near Plymouth in 1830. Mr. Brooking Rowe writes in 1863 ; “ Scarce, but specimens have been obtained from time to time.” Baron A. von Hügel records a female shot in Torbay in the winter of 1866, remarking that the Eider is “ a very rare visitant to our coast ” (Zool. 1874. p. 3908).

KING EIDER.—*Somateria spectabilis* (Linn).

A VERY rare visitant. “ I learn from Mr. Gatcombe,” wrote Mr. J. H. Gurney in 1876, “ that a King Duck was killed at Plymouth some years ago, and seen in the flesh by him at a birdstuffer’s named Mutton ” (Zool. 1876, p. 4803). “ Mr. Gatcombe,” adds Mr. H. Saunders, “ states that some years ago he saw an immature bird in Plymouth Market ” (Yarrell iv. p. 464). The Editor believes that Mr. Gatcombe enjoyed the distinction of being the only ornithologist who has had the good fortune to detect the presence of the King Eider in *Leadenhall* Market. There can be no doubt at all, that he knew the species intimately.

COMMON SCOTER.—*Edemia nigra* (Linn.)

A COMMON winter visitant on our south coast, generally numerous at sea and in our estuaries,

from the end of October until the middle or end of April. Gatcombe noticed that Scoters usually appeared in Plymouth Sound when the wind was easterly.

VELVET SCOTER.—*Edemia fusca* (Linn.)

A RARE winter visitant, occasionally visiting the north and south coasts of the county. Mr. Cecil Smith records a Velvet Scoter shot in Bideford Bay in 1882 (Zool. 1885 p. 4). Mr. H. Nicholls obtained a female bird on the Kingsbridge estuary. A fine adult male and two females were shot in Torbay in November, 1869 (Zool. 1870, p. 1983). In 1879, another was shot in Plymouth Sound (Zool. 1879 p. 206). Mr. Taylor records a seventh specimen, shot in the Estuary of the Exe (Zool. 1888, p. 426).

SURF SCOTER.—*Edemia perspicillata* (Linn.)

A RARE visitant. Mr. F. Pershouse has written to tell me of an immature Surf Scoter, shot in Torbay in 1860. In answer to further enquiry, Mr. Pershouse kindly replies, "The immature specimen of the Surf Scoter was in the collection of the late Mr. J. C. Hele of Newton Abbot. Mr. Hele purchased it from Mr. Burt, then Curator of the Museum (Mr. Burt has been dead several years). At Mr. Hele's death his collection of Birds was sold by public auction. I quite intended to secure the specimen but, thinking there would be no one at

the sale who would know anything about it, I put too low a price and unfortunately missed it. I believe it was taken either to Bristol or London. I did all I could to find out its destination, but failed to do so. I am quite sure the bird in question is an immature Surf Scoter (*Oedemia perspicillata*). Mr. Burt told me he had not sent any notice of its capture to any paper. It is the only specimen I have heard of in Devonshire" (in lit. May 30th, 1890). The remainder of the letter refers to specimens of the Surf Scoter shot at Stromness by Mr. Pershouse's friends, the Rev. A. Walker and Mr. T. M. Pike.

GOOSANDER.—*Mergus merganser* (Linn.)

A WINTER visitant, chiefly in immature or female plumage. Baron A. von Hügel records a female shot in Torbay, in January, 1870; Mr. R. P. Nicholls vouches for a female shot out of a flock of seven on the Avon, and also for two immature birds killed at Slapton Ley, in December, 1875. Mr. D'Urban recorded an adult drake, shot on the Exe near Countess Weir, January, 1880, with the comment, that the Goosander is "an extremely rare bird in the Western Counties in adult plumage," adding that though immature birds occurred at long intervals, he had not seen an adult male killed in the neighbourhood since 1840. Immature Goosanders occasionally came under Gatecombe's notice at Plymouth.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.—*Mergus serrator* (Linn.)

A WINTER visitant to our coast and estuaries. The late Mr. Bulteel once fired at a party of eight Mergansers at the mouth of the river Erme, but his duck gun burst in the firing. Baron A. von Hügel met with this species in some numbers in Torbay, in December, 1869. Gatcombe writes: "The young are frequently met with during severe weather, and even in comparatively mild seasons," but he never saw a bird killed in Devon or Cornwall in adult male dress until 1879, when he examined a bird killed off Loce. In February, 1881, a pair were killed near Plymouth, "the male in full adult plumage, very uncommonly met with in the West of England" (Zool. 1881, p. 198). Two Mergansers, one an adult female and the other an immature bird, were shot at Exmouth, in October, 1888, and are now in my collection.

SMEW.—*Mergus albellus*, Linn.

A RARE winter visitant. Montagu was well acquainted with the Smew and even considered it more numerous in Devon than the Goosander or Merganser. Subsequent experience shows this opinion to be inapplicable to the present day, whatever may have been the case at the beginning of the century. Dr. Moore writes in 1837: "Mr. Comyns has a male and female shot at Exmouth. Mr. Drew, Bolitho and myself have others, killed on the Tamar." The late Mr. Bulteel once shot an old

drake Smew at Flete. Mr. H. Nicholls has a female shot on Kingsbridge estuary, December 30th 1875 (Zool. 1876. p. 4803); a pair were killed on the Dart in 1871; two immature birds were shot near Plymouth, December, 1879; another was killed there in January 1881, and an adult drake was observed in Plymouth Sound, March 11th, 1882, (Zool. 1882. p. 457).

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## ORDER COLUMBÆ.

### *Family* COLUMBIDÆ.

#### RING DOVE.—*Columba palumbus*, Linn.

A COMMON resident in the wooded districts of the County. It is a prolific breeder, and Mr. Mitchell has found unhatched eggs as late as the middle of September. The large flocks of immigrants which appear in some seasons, feed largely on acorns. Mr. Mitchell has taken forty-two acorns out of the crop of a single bird.

#### STOCK DOVE.—*Columba ænas*, Linn.

A RESIDENT but local bird in Devon. Dr. Moore wrote in 1837 that: "The Stock Dove is often seen in large flocks in winter" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837 p. 228). Bellamy, two years later, included the species as occurring "in large flocks in winter," evidently repeating Dr. Moore's words (Nat. Hist. Devon p. 208). The experience of these two naturalists

referred especially to the neighbourhood of Plymouth, and there Gatcombe, even in his later years considered the bird rare. The Rev. M. A. Mathew kindly writes that he has hitherto failed to obtain conclusive proof of the Stock Dove nesting in Devon. That it does breed in the north of the County is nevertheless attested by Messrs. Rawson, Young, and Aplin, each of whom has independently assured the Editor that he has seen Stock Doves nesting in the sea cliffs. Mr. Rawson, who has been pressed upon this point, is certain that Stock Doves nest along the coast between Lynmouth and Baggy Point. Mr. Mitchell of Tavistock, whose observations are those of a purely field naturalist, and one who has spent his life in the county, writes that Stock Doves nest in some steep rocks near Tavistock. He has also seen them frequenting the sea cliffs. Here, at Broadclyst, this bird nests under my personal observation every year, generally in the old oaks in the park, but I once found a nest in the thick ivy which covers one side of the house. I am quite unable to confirm Dr. Moore's statement that "large flocks" occur in winter. On the contrary, I believe the Stock Dove to be at present a scarce bird at all seasons; though, as already stated, it is fully established as a breeding species.

ROCK DOVE.—*Columba livia*, Bonnat.

A VERY scarce resident. "The Rock Dove," writes Dr. Moore, "occurs in flocks, sometimes in winter

associating with the tame pigeons. In the breeding season they are mostly found on the north coast, which is more mountainous and secluded than the south; and the sea cliffs where they breed are more precipitous and afford greater facility for nesting: but Lundy Island is the chief resort of this bird at that period (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 228). Bellamy states independently, "On the southern coast of Devon, and I am informed, on the coasts of Cornwall it also builds. I saw one in June, 1839, on the rocks in a small cove at Dartmouth" (Nat. Hist. Devon p. 209). Mr. A. G. Moore includes this species as breeding in Devon in 1865; the Rev. M. A. Mathew has observed it building in the cliffs about Lynton. Mr. Murray Mathew reports (May 1890) that he thought that the Rock Dove had become extinct in Devon; Mr. Howard Saunders writes, "In Devonshire it is also rare and very local" (Yarrell. B.B. III. p. 14). Mr. Rawson reports this bird as still nesting (April, 1890), in the cliff caves between Lynmouth and Baggy Point, and, on being challenged further, replies; "I am *certain* about the Rock Dove and am not mixing it with the Stock Dove, which also nests along the coast" (in lit. May 4th, 1890).

TURTLE DOVE.—*Turtur communis*, Selby.

A SUMMER visitant. "The Turtle Dove is not uncommon in Devonshire," writes Polwhele; it is a shy retired bird, breeding in thick woods,

generally of oak. But the intelligence I have received both from the North and South of Devon, leads me to conclude that it is not so frequent here, as in many other counties. "It is scarce near Southmolton," says one correspondent ; "It is seldom seen near Modbury," says another. It is still a scarce breeding bird in the county, though Mr. W. E. Toll assures me that, in the neighbourhood of Slapton Ley, it is increasing in numbers every year. Here at Broadclyst a pair of Turtle Doves frequent a clump of holly bushes in an orchard belonging to my Father, returning to their favourite haunt every spring. Mr. Gatcombe considered the Turtle Dove a very uncommon bird in the south-west of Devon, though he ascertained that it occasionally nested on the wooded banks of the Tamar. Mr. Mitchell considers it a scarce bird, but sometimes sees pairs feeding in the country roads, and once found a nest in North Devon. Mr. Rawson met with the species near Braunton.

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## ORDER PTEROCLETES.

*Family* PTEROCLIDÆ.

PALLAS'S SAND GROUSE.—*Syrhaptles paradoxus* (Pall).

A VERY rare visitant. The irruption of Sand grouse into Britain in 1863 affected Devonshire to a small extent only. In June, that year, a flock of thirteen of these birds appeared on the sands at Slapton Ley. Two of the number were shot and taken to Mr. Nicholls, who ascertained by dissection that they had been feeding on grass seeds (Zool. 1863. p. 8721). In December of the same year a solitary female was shot at Heanton Court, Barnstaple. It was in good condition and weighed nine and a half ounces, or two ounces more than the birds killed on their first arrival. When the great visitation of 1888 came, a flight of Sand Grouse visited Lundy Island, and others appeared at Hartland, where Mr. Hamling records that four or five birds were killed in the beginning of June (Zool. 1888. p. 266).

## ORDER GALLINÆ.

*Family* TETRAONIDÆ

BLACK GROUSE.—*Tetrao tetrix*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species. Polwhale writes in 1796, that; “The Black or Moor Game were formerly very plentiful in Devon, but are now almost destroyed.” He quotes the ‘Palkian M.S.’ as an authority of

forty years standing, at which time, though much valued as a delicacy, a Heathpoult sold for eighteen pence. "The whortle-berry (as a gentlemen of Tavistock informs me) is the principle food of the black-cock. This beautiful bird is still to be found on Dartmoor, though not so frequently as it was half a century ago. Heathpoults are also met with on Exmoor, and in the neighbourhood of Southmolton; but according to the information of the late Mr. Bickford of Dunsford, they are much more frequent on the moors of Hatherleigh and Holsworthy, than in any other part of Devonshire. This, indeed, is an excellent shooting country, supplied with abundance of game; and Mr. Bickford's hospitable table was often furnished with the Heathpoult. It does not appear that either the Redgrouse or Ptarmigan was ever seen in Devonshire" (Hist. of Devonshire, p. 104). Montagu writes in 1802; "On Dartmoor and its neighbourhood this bird is now become extremely scarce" (Orn. Diet). Dr. Moore follows in 1837, with the suggestion, "It is very possible that the race of the blackcock may soon become extinct in Devonshire, as the cultivation and enclosure of great parts of Exmoor, and other causes, depending on the want of attention to the preservation of the red deer, in consequence of the decline of the hunt, equally operates against the heathfowl, and will probably lead to the latter becoming ultimately as scarce as the Bustard" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 228).

Writing in November, 1848, Dr. Morris states that the Black Grouse "breeds regularly, but in very limited numbers, on the high ground between Axmouth, Devon, and Lyme Regis in Dorset" (Zool. 1849. p. 2352). Mr. Mitchell writes in 1890, that a few Black Grouse "are to be found on Dartmoor; on Exmoor they are comparatively plentiful, owing to game-preserving." Stragglers sometimes wander from the high moors to the low grounds. Mr. H. Nicholls has sent me word of three specimens, killed on Chantry Farm, Kingsbridge, in 1867. Mr. Heath of Exeter tells me that a few of these birds are seen annually at Hemyock, near Wellington, on the borders of Somerset, probably, stray birds from Exmoor.

*Family PHASIANIDÆ.*

PHEASANT.—*Phasianus colchicus*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species, abundant in such well known coverts as those of Killerton, Haldon, Escot, Powderham and other large estates. 'Pheasants,' says Polwhele, "were, some years since almost annihilated in Devon; but the breed is again (1797) beginning to increase from the attention of some gentlemen, who are endeavouring to preserve them." The Rev. W. S. Hore records male and female hybrids between the Pheasant and Blackgame, obtained in the county. Mr. Whitaker's sale of duplicates at Steven's Rooms, London, May 22nd,

1890, included, as "lot iii," a young male hybrid of the same description, purchased in Plymouth Market on the 29th of October, 1878, by Mr. Gatcombe, who described the plumage and stated that it had been killed a few days previously on the borders of Dartmoor (Zool. 1879. p. 60). The head and greater part of the neck resemble those of a young Pheasant, but the breast and lower parts are of a beautiful glossy black, with violet reflections. The wings and upper part of the back are darker than those of an ordinary Pheasant. The tail in shape resembles that of a hen Pheasant but is not so long, altogether darker and not so distinctly barred. In form the bird resembles the Pheasant more than the Grouse.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.—*Caccabis rufa* (Linn).

AN INTRODUCED species. In answer to enquiries, Mr. W. E. Matthews kindly writes that some birds of this species were introduced into the Plymouth district about 1860, but whether they established their footing he is unable to say. The Rev. J. C. Bulteel writes: "I have only come across the Red-legged Partridges, where they had been turned out, but they were a great nuisance."

PARTRIDGE.—*Perdix cinerea*, Lath.

A RESIDENT species. The Rev. G. C. Green writes that with regard to Partridges in S. Devon: "Although they are not numerous, still they are

more easy of access than in most other places. The high fences and small fields seem to have the effect of making them never very wild, so that the sportsman can get almost as many shots in January as in September" (Natural History and Sport, p. 129). Dr. W. R. Scott writes in the "Transactions of the British Association" for 1869, of Partridges obtained in West Devon between 1859 and 1863, which entirely lacked the usual "horseshoe" of this species, and suggests that they were possibly hybrids between this species and the Red-legged Partridge.

QUAIL.—*Coturnix communis*, Bonnat.

A SUMMER visitant, occasionally wintering. The year 1870 was a great Quail year in Devon. Mr. Harting stated that the Quail nested that year on Lundy Island, and that many were shot in September and October, as many as three brace and a half in one day (Zool. 1871. p. 2521). Quail were shot the same season near Torquay, and Gatcombe remarked that the species was then exceptionally numerous in West Devon, apparently on the autumn migration. In 1885 he commented on a bird shot near Plymouth on the 23rd of August, describing the Quail as "a bird seldom met with in this part of the country." Upon the 2nd of October in the same year, a female was captured at the lantern of Bideford Lighthouse at 11 p.m.

and this was obviously a migrating bird (Migration Report, 1885, p. 124). The Rev. G. C. Green states that the Quail occurs occasionally near Modbury.

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## ORDER FULICARIÆ.

### *Family RALLIDÆ.*

CORN CRAKE.—*Crex pratensis*, Bechst.

A NUMEROUS summer visitant, nesting freely in our mowing-grass fields, and shot in large numbers in September. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes under date of October 30th, 1886, "At this time of the year, I used frequently to flush landrails on the coldest and most elevated bogs on Dartmoor, sometimes seeing five or six of a day."

SPOTTED CRAKE.—*Porzana maruetta* (Leach).

AN AUTUMN and spring visitant, met with in sparing numbers between August and November. Dr. Elliot considers that it may be termed "rare" in Devon. I have a specimen obtained at Crediton. Mr. D'Urban records it as occurring on the Exe. Mr. Gatcombe examined a few Spotted Crakes killed near Plymouth in autumn, as also a bird felled at Tavistock by the telegraph wires, a fate that frequently falls to the lot of this species when migrating. Montagu met with the Spotted Crake

in Devon as early as March 14th, and as late as October 23rd, "but never in the winter months." A winged bird lived for nearly a month in confinement, fed freely on worms the day it was captured, and shared the bread and milk of the Ruffs.

LITTLE CRAKE.—*Porzana parva* (Scop).

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore writes; "The only specimen known to Montagu was in the possession of Dr. Tucker of Ashburton, but another was obtained by Drew in August, 1831, which is now in his possession" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 323). The Rev. C. J. Bulteel informs me that a third specimen of the Little Crake was killed at Hunsden by his father, the late Rev. Courtenay Bulteel.

BAILLON'S CRAKE.—*Porzana bailloni* (Vieill).

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore includes this species as "very rare. One specimen was seen fluttering against a house in Devonport, May 13th, 1829, it was caught by some boys, and is now in Mr. Drew's collection" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 323). The Rev. C. J. Bulteel informs me that a specimen of Baillon's Crake was shot near Kingsbridge some years ago, either by Mr. H. Young himself, or by a friend of that gentleman. On the 4th of February 1876, Mr. G. F. Mathew shot a fine specimen of this pretty little Crake by the side of one of the

numerous pools on Braunton Burrows. "When first observed, it was feeding out in the open; but as soon as it caught sight of me it scuttled off as fast as it could, to the shelter of the thick rushes which surrounded the pool; and as it thus half ran, half flew, I fired and winged it: and it was only by searching each clump of rushes carefully with my hands that I succeeded in finding it, as it had crept into one of the thickest tufts, where it had crouched down and was completely hidden" (Zool. 1876, p. 4844).

WATER RAIL.—*Rallus aquaticus*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species, chiefly noticed in the winter months. The Rev. M. A. Mathew includes this in a list of 'Birds which nest in Devon,' and Mr. Mitchell has taken the nest in the North of the County, though he regards the Water Rail as rare in the breeding season.

MOORHEN.—*Gallinula chloropus* (Linn).

A COMMON resident. Mr. Mitchell remarks that the Dartmoor streams are unsuited to this species, but in other parts of Devon it breeds freely. He once found a nest in an ivy-covered tree, twenty feet above the water, and I frequently find the nest in hawthorn bushes overhanging the water, and more than ten feet above the surface.

COMMON COOT.—*Fulica atra*, Linn.

A RESIDENT breeding species, having its headquarters at Slapton Ley, where Dr. Elliot states that as many as two thousand have been shot in one "drive." Mr. Mitchell has never seen the Coot in the Tavistock district, but has met with them on the Taw in North Devon.

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## ORDER ALECTORIDES.

*Family GRUIDÆ.*CRANE.—*Grus communis*, Bechst.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore states that in September 1826, a fine specimen was shot in the parish of Buckland Monachorum, near Plymouth. It was wounded in the wing, and made a desperate resistance. Dr. Moore adds that it entered Drew's collection (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 322). This bird appears to have been added subsequently to the collection of the late Mr. Rodd, who states that it had frequented the banks of the Tamar for some time before it was shot (B. of C. p. 126). Mr. H. Nicholls records that, in 1869, a Crane frequented the high level fields near the Start Light House, on five or six successive days. "It was very shy and kept in the middle of the fields, frequently in company with the sheep. A friend of mine shot at it twice, but without effect" (Zool. 1869. p. 1866).

*Family OTIDIDÆ.*GREAT BUSTARD.—*Otis tarda*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. Montagu states : “ In the winter of 1798 one was killed near Plymouth in Devonshire, and two others the following year in the same county ” (Orn. Dict. 1802). In his Supplement, the same writer supplies the additional information that “ One of this species shot in Devonshire in 1804, and taken to Plymouth market, was bought by a publican for a shilling . . . . The landlord. . . had it dressed for the dinner of some riders. These itinerant gentlemen being as ignorant as the natives, of the prize set before them, and perceiving upon dissection, the difference in the colour of the pectoral muscle from the other part of the breast, . . . . ordered it from the table. Some neighbouring gentlemen happening to sup at the inn the evening after, and hearing of the circumstance, desired they might be introduced to this princely bird, and partook of it cold at this repast.” Dr. Elliot writes to me, “ We have one that was purchased in the flesh in Plymouth Market at the beginning of the century.” Dr. Moore only refers to Montagu, Bellamy hazards the suggestion, “ formerly not unfrequent on Dartmoor, but is now a questionable resident ” (Nat. Hist. of Devon. p. 209). On the 31st of December, 1851, a Great Bustard was shot at Bratton Clovelly, and became the property of Mr. J. G. Newton (Naturalist, 1852. p. 33). Mr.

Gatcombe examined it in the flesh, and found its stomach full of turnip leaves. In December 1871, a flock made their appearance at Braunton Burrows, and their history was fully ventilated by Mr. Gatcombe, Mr. Cecil Smith and the Rev. M. A. Mathew. Mr. Gatcombe was invited by the Rev. W. S. Hore to visit the locality, and gives the following account of his expedition. "At Braunton we ascertained that the flock consisted of eight when first observed, and that they alighted in a field at Croyde, where one was killed by Mr. William Quick, and another shot, and one wounded by Mr. Wells near Braunton. The remainder of the flock then alighted near some boys who were sliding close to the town of Braunton, who pelted them with stones, upon which the birds flew off, and have not since been seen or heard of. The two killed weighed upwards of nine pounds each. Their sex, unfortunately was not ascertained when opened, but, judging from their appearance, I should say they were male and female, and young birds of the year" (Zool. 1871. p. 2475). Mr. Cecil Smith adds; "The most interesting ornithological event since the irruption of the Sand Grouse is certainly the occurrence of a flock of as many as seven Great Bustards at Braunton, near Barnstaple. Two out of the seven were shot, (both, I am told, females, one weighing seven pounds, the other nine pounds), one at Braunton on the 31st of December, 1870, and the other at a place called Croyde, a few miles

off, where the seven had been seen that morning and on the next day ; both of these were preserved by Mr. Rowe, the gunmaker at Barnstaple" (*ibid.* p. 2476).

In confirmation of the foregoing, the Rev. M. A. Mathew adds: "My father writes to me from Instow that he recently had some conversation with a gentleman who had been invited to sup off a Great Bustard, so that it is really a fact that the third of the Braunton Bustards was doomed to the spit. The flesh of the bird was described as very good, and dark like that of a hare. The bird which met this ignominious fate, was shot on wing, and fell with a broken pinion, and is said to have been one of the flock of eight" (*ibid.* p. 2510). Most of the country people in the neighbourhood of Braunton, considered the Bustards to be wild turkeys, and as such the visitors were duly chronicled in the 'North Devon Journal.' Mr. Gatcombe, at the Barnstaple Railway Station observed a man with some feathers in his hat, and on speaking to him concerning them he replied, taking off his hat and pointing to a particular one, "This here, Sir, belonged to one of them Turkey Buzzards."

LITTLE BUSTARD.—*Otis tetraz*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. Montagu obtained a female bird, shot near Torrington in December 1804, and sold in Plymouth market as a female Black Grouse. He

adds; "In the middle of October 1810, we observed one of these birds in a turnip field in Devonshire, but it would not suffer us to approach near enough to shoot it, but it appeared to be in female plumage" (Suppl. 1813). Dr. Moore records a third specimen, killed at Bigbury in November. In the Kingsbridge district, Dr. Elliot says that three specimens of the Little Bustard have been obtained at different times. One of these is in his own possession and another, a female, is recorded by Mr. H. Nicholls as shot by Lieut. Pearce, on the high open lands adjoining the sea coast, adjacent to the Start Lighthouse (Zool. 1864. p. 9039). In December, 1880, a female Little Bustard was shot on the 6th of the month, in a turnip field near North Tawton, by Mr. W. D. Salter. The weather was fine and the wind south-west. Another female was killed soon after in the neighbourhood of Braunton. Mr. G. F. Mathew examined both specimens, and states that the Rev. M. A. Mathew obtained the second specimen for his collection (Zool. 1881. p. 58).

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## ORDER LIMICOLÆ.

*Family* ŒDICNEMIDÆ.

STONE CURLEW.—*Œdicnemus scolopax* (S. G. Gmel).

AN OCCASIONAL visitant, believed to breed annually in a single locality. Dr. Moore writes; “Although Montagu thought them scarce in Devon, and mentions only two shot in February, near the Start, yet we not unfrequently meet with them. In the winter of 1826, Mr. Drew obtained a specimen, others are in local collections” (Mag. Nat. Hist. p. 319). Dr. Elliot tells me that an odd bird is shot every few years in the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge, and much the same may be said of the Plymouth and Torquay districts, the Stone Curlew being always rather rare, even in South Devon. In the North of the County it is very seldom noticed. Mr. Mitchell writes, that the only Devonshire pair of Stone Curlews known to him, breed regularly on a small common, which he names, within a few hours’ walk from Tavistock.

*Family* GLAREOLIDÆ.

COLLARED PRATINCOLE.—*Glareola pratincola*, Linn.

A RARE visitant. It has not hitherto been killed in Devon, but three independent reports of its occurrence seem to justify its inclusion in the present work. Lord Lilford states that Mr. Buller saw two birds of this species on the Warren, a large

sand-bank at the mouth of the Exe, Sept. 7th, 1851, " They appeared very tame, occasionally alighting on the sand, on which their movements very much resembled those of the Ring Dotterel. Their manner of flight was very much like that of the swallow" (Zool. 1852. p. 3710). Mr Ross informed Mr. Gatcombe that he once saw two on the Warren sands (Rowe's B. of D. p. 32); it is possible that he saw the same birds as Mr. Buller. The third instance is now recorded for the first time: " The Collared Pratincole," writes the Rev. G. C. Green, " was seen by my sons on the 14th of August, 1885, near the banks of the Erme in Flete Park. They had the opportunity of observing it for a long time, and sometimes very closely as it was not at all wild. They could distinguish all its colours and describe them most faithfully. They were attracted to it first by its appearance on the wing, when it looked very like an enormous swallow with its long wings and forked tail, and flight similar to a Swallow. It would frequently alight and run about on the ground, and then it was just like a bird of the Swallow or Plover tribe. Some weeks after I saw in the *Field* the report of a Pratincole from another Western County; very probably the same bird was noticed there."

*Family CHARADRIIDÆ.*

CREAM-COLOURED COURSER.—*Cursorius gallicus* (Gmel).

A RARE VISITANT. A single bird appeared in Braunton Marshes in October 1856, and after a

long pursuit was secured by the Rev. J. Landow (Zool. 1857. p. 5346). This specimen is apparently the bird alluded to by Mr. Gatcombe in the following words ; “ On calling at the house of a gentleman in Braunton, we were shown a lovely specimen of the elegant Cream-coloured Courser (*Cursorius Isabellinus*), well mounted and in nearly perfect adult male plumage, shewing only a few faint semilinear markings peculiar to the young ” (Zool. 1871. p. 2475). In March, 1860, Mr. G. F. Mathew observed two birds of this species in the same district, but failed to secure them, though “ quite certain as to the identity of the species ” (Zool. 1860. p. 6980).

DOTTEREL.—*Eudromias morinellus* (Linn).

AN IRREGULAR visitant. “ It is only at very long intervals that the Dotterel is seen in the West of England,” writes the Rev. M. A. Mathew, in recording three birds killed out of a trip of Dotterel that visited the neighbourhood of Barnstaple in May, 1879 (Zool. 1879. p. 490). Mr. Rowe says that the Dotterel is “ Said to have bred at one time on Dartmoor, but no specimens have been observed for many years ” (1863). Dr. Elliot writes ; “ A few specimens have been obtained, and I have strong reasons for thinking they breed on Dartmoor.” The spring of the year is the time, when the Dotterel generally appears in Southern England ; the Exeter Museum has two birds shot on August

26th, 1870, but *autumnal* occurrences are few and far between. Apparently the only occasion that Mr. Gatcombe met with the Dotterel *in life* should be referred to the year 1875, as described in his own words ; “ October 22nd, walked with a friend to the top of the Great Hangman, a lofty bluff or headland rising a thousand feet above the sea, on the coast, about seven miles from Ilfracombe. On our gaining the summit of this great hill, I at once caught sight of a Dotterel (*charadrius morinellus*), which almost immediately took wing, uttering a rather low or feeble note, sounding to me something between that of the Purre and Ringed Plover. It did not, however, fly far, but alighted again within a short distance, giving me a good opportunity of examining it with my glass, noting its actions and making several sketches of its attitudes. It afterwards became very tame, moving slowly about, now and then stopping suddenly to look round, listen, or pick up something, and finally allowing my approach to within fifteen yards. It was altogether prettily marked, and the white band above the eye was very conspicuous. The top of Great Hangman has rather a wild aspect, reminding one of Dartmoor, being covered with stones, heath and low gorse, and is, I should think, just the place where Dotterels might be found on their first arrival in spring. The view from it is truly magnificent, but the sight of the Dotterel alone (the first I had ever met with in a wild state) far

more than repaid me for a rather hot walk of, altogether, full twenty miles" (Zool. 1875. p. 4717).

It is a touching coincidence that the last lines that Mr. Gatcombe ever penned for the Zoologist refer to the species that he admired so much, including, as they do, the only record of the Dotterel remaining in England until *mid-winter*. The 'Ornithological Notes from Devon and Cornwall,' which appeared in the Zoologist after his regretted decease (terminating "a series of observations communicated by him annually to this journal since the year 1872)," conclude: "On the 12th [December, 1886], I purchased in the Plymouth Market an immature specimen of the Common Dotterel *Endromias morinellus*, and the first local specimen I remember to have met with" (Zool. 1887. p. 379).

GOLDEN PLOVER.—*Charadrius pluvialis*, Linn.

AN AUTUMN and winter visitant. Mr. A. G. More in 1865 included the Golden Plover as "breeding in small numbers in Devon," and Dr. Elliot considers that it now breeds on Dartmoor. The Rev. M. A. Mathew does not, however, include it in his list of Birds which breed in Devonshire, and Mr. Mitchell writes that he has never known the Golden Plover to nest on Dartmoor. He adds that Golden Plovers arrive numerous on Dartmoor early in October, that they leave the moor when

the weather is severe, then resorting to high sheep-walks, or open cultivated lands. They occur abundantly in the neighbourhood of our estuaries at the same season.

GREY PLOVER.—*Squatarola helvetica* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN and winter visitant, but only met with sparingly. A specimen shot on the Exe is preserved in the Exeter Museum.

RINGED PLOVER.—*Ægialitis hiaticula* (Linn).

A COMMON resident in suitable localities all round our coast. I have taken its eggs on the shingle of Dawlish Warren. The fishermen of the Exe call this bird the "Cats-head."

KENTISH PLOVER.—*Ægialitis cantiana* (Lath).

A RARE visitant. In the year 1861, a female Kentish Plover was shot on the 7th of May upon the Plymouth Breakwater. It was killed by Mr. F. C. Hingston in the presence of Mr. Gatcombe, who was the first to pick it up, and by whom its occurrence was chronicled, with the remark; "So far as I am aware, this is the first recorded Devonshire specimen" (Zool. 1861. p. 7647).

LAPWING.—*Vanellus vulgaris*, Bechst.

A COMMON resident, many breed on Dartmoor and other commons in the County. I have taken its nest at Broadclyst in cultivated lands. Large

flocks sometimes visit Lundy Island on migration. Mr. Mitchell notices that most of those which breed on Dartmoor leave their summer haunts in October, returning in March to their nesting grounds.

TURNSTONE.—*Streptilas interpres* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN visitant, occasionally wintering and lingering also in spring, until summer plumage is advanced. Small parties are the rule on our estuaries, but Mr. Gurney reports that large flocks frequented the mud flats at Instow in September, 1871.

OYSTERCATCHER.—*Hæmatopus ostralegus*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant, but met with all the year. The Warren at Exmouth is a favourite locality, and a pair of Oystercatchers seen there in June 1888, were probably breeding. Dr. Elliot writes from Kingsbridge: "A small colony was destroyed around the Start by the dastardly act of a visitor at Torcross a few years ago. A few occur but none breed now." Mr. Rawson reports that it breeds on the North Coast of Devon, and Mr. Mitchell says; "Common on the Coasts of Devon all the year. Nests on Lundy Island." In 1880, we find the keeper of the Bideford Lighthouse reporting; "Hundreds of Sea-pies . . . visit the mussel beds every winter, being seen every day and night from half ebb to half flood" (Migration Report, 1880. p. 112). In 1881 we find a similar

report from this locality, "Hundreds of Sea-pies visit the mussel-beds all the year with Curlews, Gulls and Stints" (Migration Report, 1881, p. 71).

Family SCOLOPACIDÆ.

AVOCET.—*Recurvirostra avocetta*, Linn.

A RARE visitant, obtained on our estuaries at long intervals. Mr. Ross records that a party of six Avocets visited the Exe in November, 1837, and Mr. D'Urban reports a bird shot on the mud flats opposite the town of Topsham in 1855. There are two specimens in the Exeter Museum, one procured at Dawlish Warren in December 1844, and the other shot on the Exe, March, 1867. A male and two female birds were shot on the Kingsbridge estuary in October 1880, one of them falling to the gun of Dr. Elliot, who had previously studied its movements through a telescope. He saw it feeding "In an easy and graceful manner, with rather slow and measured strides, and passing its head from side to side, scooping up the mud and swallowing what it had taken." An Avocet was killed on the Taw near Barnstaple, in November, 1888, and my own collection contains two specimens killed at Exmouth, in the same month and year.

BLACK-WINGED STILT.—*Himantopus candidus*, Bonnat.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore writes "Mr. Comyns has a specimen killed in Devon; and Mr. Gosling informs me of another, shot on Slapton Ley" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837, p. 323).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.—*Phalaropus hyperboreus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant to the South Coast of Devon. Writing in January, 1859, Gatcombe remarks: "I only know one instance of its having been obtained in Plymouth" (Zool. 1859, p. 6378). Exactly ten years later we find him recording a second specimen in perfect summer dress, killed on the 7th of June, 1869, on the Hamoaze, off Torpoint, when swimming in the water, and performing graceful and sprightly evolutions in securing its prey on the surface. He adds: "I had never before seen but one Devonshire specimen and that was obtained in the autumn," referring no doubt to the Phalarope killed prior to the year 1859 (Zool. 1869, p. 1920).

GREY PHALAROPE.—*Phalaropus fulicarius* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN visitant of irregular occurrence, generally scarce, but in some years numerous. Dr. Moore records that, in October 1831, a large dead whale was towed into Plymouth Sound and stranded on the beach. "When first noticed, it was swarming with sea birds, among which the Phalaropes were most conspicuous; they frequented the rivers for two or three weeks, and during that time great numbers were shot. Mr. Drew had above ninety specimens, Pincombe thirty or forty, Bolitho as many" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 322). Dr. Scott of Exeter writes some years later; "We had here, in the winter of 1845, immense numbers

of the Grey Phalarope. Every winter we have a few, but on this occasion they came in such flocks as had never been noticed before. They appeared to have had a long flight, and to be quite worn out, so much so that many were caught with the hand, others knocked down with sticks, and shot in large numbers as they sat, till very closely approached. There were several killed on the quay at Exeter, and it appeared from the many notices in the local papers, that these birds had occurred in large quantities on the whole southern part of this county. The time of their visit was in October. . . . ; and this year they certainly appeared after very strong south-east winds" (Zool. 1849. p. 2384).

In 1857, we find Gatcombe recording that, "Some of these birds have been killed at Plymouth during the past autumn. They are generally considered rare, but a few may be seen every autumn in Plymouth Sound, during the equinoctial gales. Their actions at such times are very elegant ; they alight just outside the breakers, where the froth and seaweed have accumulated, swim with extraordinary activity and lightness, constantly whisking their bodies round, and incessantly nodding their heads and dipping their bills in the water in search of food. So tame and fearless are they at these times, that I have actually seen them give a little spring and flutter only, when fired at and missed, and immediately go on feeding as if

nothing had happened. The stomachs of those that I have examined contained the remains of insects. . . . In 1846 [? 1845], an extraordinary flight of Grey Phalaropes visited Plymouth and the neighbouring coasts : they remained about three weeks, and in such numbers were they, that I saw a sailor with an old rusty musket literally filling his pockets with them. On my asking what he intended to do with so many, he coolly told me that they ‘made *capital pies*’” (Zool. 1859. p. 6377). When the now classical visitation of Phalaropes came, in 1866, of which Mr. J. H. Gurney is the historian, Gatecombe wrote : “The late severe gales have driven an immense number of Grey Phalaropes on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. A few specimens of both old and young are to be met with almost every autumn, on their return from the breeding places ; but within the last three weeks more than a dozen have been obtained in the neighbourhood of Plymouth alone, and some have been observed on inland pools, swimming among the tame ducks. All the specimens examined by myself were much emaciated, and one specimen still retained many of the red feathers on the breast peculiar to the breeding season” (Zool. 1866. p. 500). Mr. H. Nicholls adds that : “On the 19th of September [1866] a flock of about fifty Phalaropes made their appearance on the Thurleston Ley. . . . They appear to have been driven on to this coast by the south-easterly winds”

(Zool. 1866. p. 527). In 1870, we find the Rev. M. A. Mathew writing, on October 22nd; "The heavy gale of last week intercepted a number of Grey Phalaropes on their migration, and caused them to put in for shelter on our Western Coasts. I have heard of sixteen being shot in one day, at Instow in North Devon." He writes again, on the 3rd of November: "I hear of Phalaropes occurring plentifully in many places. The birdstuffer at Barnstaple speaks of upwards of sixty having been brought to him for preservation" (Zool. 1870. p.p. 2386. 2410). Mr. Cecil Smith at the same time recorded a dozen Phalaropes killed in Somerset with the remark; "In the neighbouring County of Devon I hear they have been much more plentiful." Mr. Balkwill obtained eighteen specimens in October 1870, at Plymouth, and states that Grey Phalaropes were scattered over nearly the whole of Plymouth Sound.

The foregoing statements will suffice to illustrate the immigration of this bird to Devon in certain years of exceptional plenty, and to show that both the North and South Coasts participate in receiving the visits of the Grey Phalarope. The Rev. M. A. Mathew points out, for example, than when Phalaropes occurred in such numbers on the South Coast in 1866, many occurred also in September on the estuary of the river Taw. But it should be understood that the visits which we, in Devon, receive from the Grey Phalarope, whether of stragglers or

large flocks, occur almost exclusively in the months of September and October. Mr. Gatcombe however records that he observed single specimens on the S. Coast of Devon in mid-winter, *e.g.* a bird seen on the 8th of January, 1873, and another noticed on the 5th of December, 1876, both near Plymouth. Birds in summer plumage are still more rare. A bird in the full red dress of summer was obtained in Devonshire by the late Mr. Bond, and was sold at Stevens' Auction Rooms, London, May 22nd, 1890. Mr. H. Nicholls has another red-plumaged bird, obtained in the county in May, 1844. In 1876, Mr. Gatcombe examined a nearly full plumaged bird caught in Stonehouse Creek, on the fifth of August, which elicited the comment: "I have never known them to occur in Devon before the middle or latter end of September, October being the usual time of their appearance" (Zool. 1876, p. 5083).

WOODCOCK.—*Scelopax rusticula*, Linn,

A WINTER visitant. Writing of Devonshire in 1796, Mr. Laskey observes; "In the course of my summer peregrinations on the sea coast, I picked up about two years since, the entire skeleton of a Woodcock, perfectly bleached by the rays of the sun. This bird, I supposed, had dropped in the sea in the course of his migratory flight, and by the waves drifted ashore" (Gents' Mag. vol. 66. p. 402). But though chiefly a late autumn and early

spring immigrant, partially wintering, Mr. D'Urban records that a nest containing four eggs was found in the parish of Whitstone, near Exeter, in April, 1853. The Earl of Morley has informed me of a young Woodcock in his collection, obtained from Saltram. A Woodcock with white feathers in the wings frequented a cover in the manor of Monkleigh for several seasons prior to 1837, when it was at last secured. A copy of Charleton's 'Onomasticon Zooicon,' 1668, in the British Museum contains in *M.S.* note, a record of; "A White Ousle killed in Lanerot Wood, Cornwall, a White Robbin in Powhill, Cornwall, and a *White Woodcock at Perthwin, Devon.*" No date is given, but the note appears to be an early one. Dr. Elliot remarks that there are some noted coverts for Woodcock in the Kingsbridge district.

GREAT SNIPE.—*Gallinago major* (Gmel).

AN AUTUMN visitant, of somewhat rare occurrence, between August and November. A Great Snipe was shot at Shaugh Moor in September, 1850, another at Slade, near Exeter, in October 1856, and others near Plymouth in November 1858, on Dartmoor in 1868, at Morley in September 1871, on Dartmoor in August 1876, at Brayton Mere in September 1886, and another in N. Devon the month following. This list might be further extended, but it will probably suffice to illustrate the visits of this species. The Rev. M. A. Mathew

himself, shot a Great Snipe on Dartmoor in 1868, in a gale of wind and rain; three others were recorded from the County the same season. The specimens that occur are believed to be chiefly young birds, but Mr. Gatcombe states regarding the bird killed on Dartmoor on the early date of August 23rd (1876), "Although not a very large bird, I feel sure from the state of its plumage and general appearance, that it is an adult" (Zool. 1876. p. 5126).

COMMON SNIPE.—*Gallinago cœlestis* (Frenzel).

A RESIDENT species. Mr. Jordan writes in 1843, that Snipe "Are in the habit of breeding on Dartmoor every year, where the young ones are sometimes killed before they have got the powers of flight properly developed" (Zool. 1843. p. 362). Modern improvements have largely encroached on the Snipe's favourite nesting grounds in Devon, but Mr. Mitchell still meets with breeding birds on Dartmoor. The late Mr. Rodd drew attention to a variety of Snipe, provisionally distinguished as the 'Russet Snipe,' as differing from the common form of Snipe in its slightly larger size and ruddy brown hue. Mr. Gatcombe met with two specimens of this variety, one of the two being killed on Dartmoor (Zool. 1862. p. 7939). Snipe are occasionally reported from the Lighthouses on the Devonshire coast. Thus in 1884 a Snipe was captured at the Start Lighthouse on November 12th

at midnight. In 1885, another migrating bird was killed at Bideford Bar on the 10th of the same month. Snipe are also reported as visiting Lundy Island at that season, sometimes in company with Woodcock.

JACK SNIPE.—*Gallinago gallinula* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant. Mr. Gatecombe writes in 1878 ; “ Jack Snipe appeared unusually early this year. Two were shot on September 17th, and others a few days earlier.” The Rev. M. A. Mathew furnishes additional evidence of such early arrivals : “ On Dartmoor the 10th September was an average date for flushing the first Jack. On some salt marshes near Barnstaple, I have seen Jack Snipe on September 3rd.” The greater number of those that visit this county arrive in October and November.

RED-BREASTED SNIPE.—*Macrorhamphus griseus* (Gmel).

A RARE visitant. Montagu says ; “ A small flock of these extremely rare birds made their appearance on the coast of Devon in the spring of 1803, one of which was shot in my neighbourhood, and is now in my museum ” (Linn. Soc. Trans. IX. p. 198). He adds, in his Supplement, that this bird was a female, killed near Kingsbridge on the 21st of May, 1803. Dr. Moore records a second Devonshire specimen, in the collection of Mr. Drew

(Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 321). Mr. H. Nicholls, writing in September 1857, records a third specimen as ‘ Taken in this district a short time since ’ (Zool. 1857. p. 5791).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER.—*Tringa maculata*, Vieill.

A RARE visitant. Two examples of this Nearctic Sandpiper were shot at Braunton Burrows on September 12th, 1871, and proved on dissection to be male and female. When first discovered by Mr. Rickards, who afterwards procured both birds, they were running on the margin of a large fresh water pool in a marshy field, and allowed of a near approach. “ When they rose,” writes Mr. Rickards, “ they uttered a peculiar note, rather weak and feeble for the size of the bird, and reminding me more of the note of the Curlew Sandpiper than that of any other species that I have seen. . . . They never flew to any great distance, and after the female was shot, the male described a circle round her and pitched a short distance off, rising and repeating the evolution as I approached within range. . . . I took the Pectoral Sandpipers next day to the Rev. W. S. Hore of Barnstaple, who takes much interest in inspecting all local captures ” (Zool. 1871. p. 2808).

BONAPARTE'S SANDPIPER.—*Tringa fuscicollis*, Vieill.

A RARE visitant. No less than four examples of this small American Sandpiper were killed in 1870, all occurring in the North of the County, to which

they had no doubt travelled in company. Mr. Cecil Smith received one in the flesh on the 7th of November, "shot on the river between Barnstaple and Instow," and another was sent to him on the 10th of the month; both of these birds were sold as lot, 106 at Mr. Smith's sale at Steven's, London, on June 24th, 1890. Of the other two specimens obtained, one was unfortunately too much injured to be preserved; the other entered the possession of the Rev. M. A. Mathew (Zool. 1870. p. 2409, 1871. p. 2441).

DUNLIN.—*Tringa alpina*, Linn.

AN AUTUMN and winter visitant to our estuaries, when large flocks congregate on the mud banks at the mouth of the Exe and other rivers, feeding eagerly in the sand as the tide begins to ebb. Large numbers are supplied to the poulterers in our seaside resorts, the species being numerous from August, when young birds first arrive on the coast; these are for a time confiding and fearless. Mr. Rawson finds the Dunlin common in winter on the Taw river and in Woolacombe Bay, it is equally plentiful at that season on the South Coast. Dr. Moore states in his 'Ornithology of Dartmoor,' (Rowe's Perambulation of Dartmoor, 1848), that the Dunlin breeds on Dartmoor, but this statement has never apparently been substantiated, though the late Mr. Rodd proved that the Dunlin breeds in Cornwall. In August, 1876, Gatcombe detected

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among some Dunlins killed near Plymouth, "A few of the very small variety or race answering to the *Tringa schinzi* of Brehm, one of which was an adult in full breeding dress, with a fine black breast, and really not much larger than the Little Stint" (Zool. 1876. p. 5109).

LITTLE STINT.—*Tringa minuta*, Leisl.

A SPARING visitant to the sandy estuaries of North and South Devon in early autumn, usually in immature plumage. The Rev. M. A. Mathew records an adult killed in summer plumage on August 22nd, shot out of a flock of Dunlins. Little Stints seldom occur on the Devonshire Coasts later than September, but Gatcombe records a specimen killed near Plymouth in 1875, as late as the 9th of December. This bird was in full *winter* plumage, a stage very rarely met with in Great Britain. I have examined a few local specimens in the hands of the Exmouth taxidermists, but these were exclusively young birds, killed in September.

TEMMINCK'S STINT.—*Tringa temmincki*, Leisl.

A RARE visitant. Dr. Moore states; "Two of these birds were shot near Stonehouse Bridge, on Coronation day; and are now in Bolitho's collection" (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 322). This, Mr. Rowe corroborates in the following words; "Two of

these birds were shot in 1837, near Stonehouse Bridge" (Birds of Devon, p. 35). I do not know of any recent occurrences in the county.

AMERICAN STINT.—*Tringa minutilla*, Vieill.

A VERY rare visitant. A single specimen of the present species was shot at Northam Burrows on the 22nd of September, 1869, after a prevalence of south-westerly gales. Mr. Rickards, who obtained the specimen, gives the following description of its habits: "I observed the bird for several successive mornings before I obtained it, on a salt marsh lying between Northam Burrows and the estuaries of the rivers Taw and Torridge, and on every occasion it was alone. It seemed very active and restless, and was rather difficult of approach. When it rose, it always repeated a short hurried note, similar to that of the other two species, though perhaps shriller and more frequently reiterated. Its flight was strong and rapid for so small a bird, and struck me as being something like that of the Common Sandpiper, which bird indeed (except with regard to the vibratory motion of the body peculiar to that species), it somewhat resembled in its movements when on the ground. It always flew away across the water out of sight and at a great height, but it invariably returned to the same spot where I had first observed it" (Zool. 1870. p. 2025).

CURLEW SANDPIPER.—*Tringa subarquata* (Güld).

A SCARCE autumnal visitant. Mr. Gatcombe once saw a compact flock, consisting of more than a hundred, flying across the mud banks of the river Lynher, but it usually appears either in *small* parties of its own species, or associating with the Ringed Plover and Dunlin, from the last of which it may readily be distinguished by the white upper tail-coverts, longer legs and more upright carriage. Adults are always rare, and I have only examined immature birds in the County, but the Rev. M. A. Mathew killed two adult males in fine summer plumage, in August and September, 1856, upon the sandy flat of the Taw estuary.

PURPLE SANDPIPER.—*Tringa striata*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant to the coasts of Devon. Mr. Gatcombe writes that, "Small parties of the Purple Sandpiper visit the rocky Coasts of Devon and Cornwall every year, arriving at the latter end of October, and remaining until the spring; but during the last two months [November, 1865—January 1866], they have been unusually abundant. A few weeks since, on visiting the Plymouth Breakwater with a friend, we fell in with several flocks, from which we obtained many specimens. When feeding on the rocks during stormy weather, the Purple Sandpiper has a habit of crouching on the approach of a large wave, holding firmly on to the

rock, and allowing the spray to dash completely over it; on the receding of the wave it rises and runs about nimbly, feeding until the approach of the next." On the 2nd of October, 1871, Gatcombe watched two on the rocks at Plymouth: they were exceedingly tame, as is usual with this species. On the 11th of November, 1875, he writes; "Purple Sandpipers seem to have arrived in numbers during the past month. I saw some feeding on the rocks at the Point this morning, and many have been shot." In 1879, again, he records the arrival of a small flock of Purple Sandpipers on the 15th of October, a date which he considered early for Devon. Specimens have been obtained in North and South Devon by Mr. Cecil Smith, Mr. Rickards and other naturalists, but Dr. Elliot rightly points out that this bird is distinctly local in its distribution, and almost confined to the rocky portions of our coast-line.

KNOT.—*Tringa canutus*, Linn.

A COMMON autumn and winter visitant to our estuaries, rarely met with in the County in the spring of the year. I have shot specimens on the mud banks opposite Topsham, as early as the 12th of September, but large flocks chiefly arrive in early winter. Mr. Rickards killed a Knot in nearly full summer livery, on the Coast of North Devon early in September 1870, and Mr. D'Urban records

two full dressed birds, one shot at Topsham in August, 1877, the other killed in May, 1844. Abnormal varieties of this bird are rare, but Mr. H. Nicholls shot a White Knot on the Kingsbridge estuary, in September, 1865 (Zool. 1866. p. 526).

RUFF.—*Machetes pugnax* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN visitant, of somewhat rare occurrence on our coasts in early autumn, though Dr. Elliot, the Rev. M. A. Mathew, Mr. Rickards and other naturalists have met with specimens. September is the chief month for its arrival, but Gatcombe records a Reeve killed on Dartmoor as late as October (Zool. 1879. p. 113). The Ruff is seldom observed in Devon on the spring migration: but as long ago as 1806, Montagu obtained a male bird with a white ruff, shot at the mouth of the Avon on the 17th of May.

SANDERLING.—*Calidris arenaria* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN visitant, of occasional occurrence in winter and in the spring of the year. Dr. Elliot remarks that it is principally found on our coasts in September, but he once found a large flock at Thurlestone on the 21st of May; The late Mr. Gurney observed a single bird feeding along the margin of Slapton Ley on the 4th of June, 1871. Gatcombe considered the Sanderling to be generally a scarce bird in the Plymouth district, but he

examined specimens in all stages, young birds killed in August and September, adults in summer dress, and others in winter plumage. Large flocks of Sanderlings frequented Burrow Island in November, 1876 ; many were shot, and those examined by Gatcombe were in winter dress.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER.—*Tryngites rufescens* (Vieill).

A RARE visitant. Mr. H. Nicholls records that a female specimen of this North American bird was shot near Kingsbridge, in September, 1857 (Zool. 1857. p. 5791).

COMMON SANDPIPER.—*Totanus hypoleucus* (Linn).

A SUMMER visitant, often called the Summer Snipe in Devon. It is common during the summer months on the Dartmoor streams, upon which Gatcombe discovered eggs. In autumn, the Common Sandpiper forsakes the moors, and resorts to the estuaries of rivers, preparatory to departing for the winter.

GREEN SANDPIPER.—*Totanus ochropus* (Linn).

A SCARCE autumnal visitant to our rivers and estuaries, chiefly between the end of July and the beginning of October. Gatcombe examined a Green Sandpiper killed in the month of January, "A very unusual date for this species to be met with in our neighbourhood, since it generally

appears early in the autumn, and then but sparingly." Dr. Elliot writes that this bird occurs at Kingsbridge "quite independently of season." Dr. Moore, like Gatcombe, examined birds killed in January.

WOOD SANDPIPER.—*Totanus glareola* (Gmel).

A RARE visitant. The Rev. M. A. Mathew records a bird shot near Barnstaple on the 13th of August, 1859, and a second shot near Barnstaple in the same month, in the year, 1875. Mr. Gatcombe comments on the absence of this species from the Plymouth district, but it occurs on the south coast occasionally. A specimen killed at Slapton Ley is preserved in the Torquay Museum.

REDSHANK.—*Totanus calidris* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN and winter visitant to our estuaries. The Rev. M. A. Mathew includes the Redshank in his M.S. list of birds which nest in Devon; but I have not met with it, myself, in the breeding season.

SPOTTED REDSHANK.—*Totanus fuscus* (Linn).

A RARE autumn (and winter) visitant, only reported from our southern estuaries, and there obtained at long intervals, as a straggler from its proper lines of migration. Montagu records a specimen killed in South Devon in the month of August. Dr. Moore obtained a specimen shot in Hamoaze,

November, 1829. At Kingsbridge, Dr. Elliot only knows of two local specimens, one obtained nearly forty years ago [about 1850], the other shot in August 1885. In the month of February, 1874, Mr. Gatcombe examined a Spotted Redshank, killed in the estuary of the Erme a short time before. He remarks that "It was in perfect winter plumage, and is a rare bird in Devonshire" (Zool. 1874. p. 3944). Most of the specimens of the Spotted Redshank that have been obtained in this country, hitherto, have proved to be in immature plumage. Birds killed in full winter dress are very seldom recorded.

GREENSHANK.—*Totanus canescens* (Gmel).

AN AUTUMN visitant in small numbers to our estuaries, rarely observed with us in the spring of the year. In autumn it occurs at Northam Burrows, on the Teign and Exe, at Kingsbridge estuary and other situations adapted to its requirements. In 1879, Mr. Gatcombe both heard and saw a Greenshank flying up the Tamar on the 13th of January,—“A very uncommon bird with us in *winter*, although a few generally visit our mud-flats during the autumn” (Zool. 1879. p. 206).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT.—*Limosa lapponica* (Linn).

AN AUTUMN and spring visitant to our estuaries. Writing from Barnstaple in 1856, the Rev. M. A.

Mathew states that the Bar-tailed Godwit, "Has been this season unusually plentiful, and great numbers of them have been shot: after the severe gales of the 26th and 27th September, they were driven into the river in large flocks, and were easily approached: they have singular tactics as one walks towards them. While they feed, they are generally scattered over the ooze in a long, irregular line; as one approaches them, the birds on the flank sides of the flock take wing, wheel once or twice over the others, uttering all the while their peculiar cry, and finally settle closer together among the rest; this manœuvre is once or twice repeated as one draws nearer to them, and each time they rise and settle, they form themselves into a thicker body, and if they remain on the ground until one arrives within a reasonable distance for a shot, a great number can always be laid low by a single discharge" (Zool. 1858. p. 5348). Mr. Murray Mathew adds on a later occasion, "Among some Bar-tailed Godwits shot on the sand flats of the Taw on September 13th was one which was already in nearly complete winter dress. It was in company with others, which were still exhibiting some of the red livery of summer" (Zool. 1877. p. 448). Mr. Gatcombe writes that this Godwit, "Seldom remains with us during the *winter*, but one was shot near Plymouth on January 28th, (1877). Mr. G. F. Mathew shot another bird in full winter, on the mud-flats opposite Dittisham, of

which he remarks, "It was by itself and in good condition, so it is strange what it was doing in this country so long after the departure of its companions" (Zool. 1876. p. 4992). Dr. Elliot writes to me of this species as observed near Kingsbridge, "Not numerous as a rule, but some come every autumn and spring. In the spring of 1876, during continuous *east* wind, a large flock estimated at from two to three hundred birds came into the estuary." Mr. Gatcombe independantly remarks, that an unusual number of Bar-tailed Godwits in spring plumage made their appearance on the Coasts of Devon and Cornwall in May, 1876, and many were killed. The females as usual exceeded the males in size and length of bill, but possessed "far less red on the plumage" (Zool. 1876. p. 4992). Those that Gatcombe dissected proved to have been feeding on "sand hoppers."

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT.—*Limosa belgica* (Gmel).

A RARE visitant to the estuaries of N. and S. Devon during the autumn months. It has occurred possibly in spring, for a bird in full summer dress, shot on the Exe, is preserved in the Exeter Museum; but Mr. G. F. Mathew records that a Black-tailed Godwit, killed on the river Taw in the autumn of 1859, proved to be "in fine summer plumage." The same gentlemen records a young bird of this species, shot on the banks of the Taw in September, 1868 (Zool. 1868. p. 1459). Dr. Elliot tells me

that the Black-tailed Godwit is "observed now and then in autumn" on the Kingsbridge estuary; my own collection includes a bird killed near Plymouth.

COMMON CURLEW.—*Numenius arquata* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species, of which Mr. Mitchell tells me that a few pairs breed on Dartmoor every year. Many frequent our estuaries during the winter months, and now breeding birds may be met with at all seasons.

WHIMBREL.—*Numenius phæopus* (Linn).

A SPRING and autumn visitant to our coast lines; well known to the fishermen on the Exe, who, I find, call the Whimbrel the "Cuckoo Curlew."

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## ORDER GAVIÆ.

*Family* LARIDÆ.

*Subfamily* STERNINÆ.

BLACK TERN.—*Hydrochelidon nigra* (Linn).

A SPRING and autumn visitant, sometimes numerous at the latter season in immature plumage. Mr. Gatcombe writes in September, 1866: "The young of the Black Tern have been plentiful this season." Many records of its autumnal occurrence exist, and

Montagu obtained an immature bird as late as the beginning of November. Dr. Elliot writes that, a Black Tern was killed near Kingsbridge, in May of the present year, (1890), adding that vernal occurrences in his neighbourhood are rather unusual.

## WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN.—

*Hydrochelidon leucoptera* (Schinz).

A RARE visitant. "A specimen," writes Mr. Howard Saunders, "in a very interesting state of change from summer to winter plumage is in the possession of Mr. Westlake of Ilfracombe, North Devon, shot there early in November, 1870" (Yarrell. B.B. III. p. 523). The late Mr. Ross appears to have recorded this species as once captured at Plymouth, but as Mr. Rowe excludes this species from his list of 1863, it seems undesirable to repeat a record which may possibly have already been proved to be erroneous.

WHISKERED TERN.—*Hydrochelidon hybrida* (Pall).

A RARE visitant. In May, 1865, a single example of the Whiskered Tern was captured by some fishermen near Plymouth, a bird in full breeding plumage. It was purchased by Mr. Gatcombe, from whom it passed into the possession of Mr. Howard Saunders (Yarrell. B.B. III. p. 528).

GULL-BILLED TERN.—*Sterna anglica*, Mont.

A RARE visitant. Mr. Gatcombe records that an immature bird was killed in Plymouth Sound in the autumn of 1866 (Zool. 1867. p. 557). This specimen is believed to have entered the collection of Mr. J. B. Rowe. A record for the North of the County has proved to be erroneous.

CASPIAN TERN.—*Sterna caspia*, Pall.

A RARE visitant. No Devonshire specimens are noticed in the fourth edition of Yarrell. The responsibility, therefore, for its inclusion here, rests solely with Mr. Parfitt, who states; “ One, an immature bird, was killed at Teignmouth, October, 1861 (R. Cumming), one on the Exe (F. W. L. Ross), and an immature specimen was shot in Torbay, September 26th, 1873 ” (Birds of Devonshire, p. 301).

SANDWICH TERN.—*Sterna cantiaea*, Gmel.

A SPRING and autumn visitant to our coast and estuaries, at the season of migration. In 1876, a flight of Sandwich Terns appeared in Plymouth Sound as early as the 31st of March. One of the flock was shot, and came under the notice of Mr. Gatcombe (Zool. 1876. p. 4903).

COMMON TERN.—*Sterna fluviatilis*, Naum.

AN AUTUMN and spring visitant to the North and South Coasts of Devon, often numerous in our estuaries at the former period.

ARCTIC TERN.—*Sterna macrura*, Naum.

A SPRING and autumn visitant on migration. "Terns of any kind," writes Mr. Gatcombe, "are seldom seen in our harbours before September, and these mostly young birds of the year, but I can remember two extraordinary flights of adult Arctic Terns occurring on the Coasts of Devon and Cornwall in May, many years ago; and strange to say, both flights happened after a dense sea fog" (Zool. 1872. p 3260).

LITTLE TERN.—*Sterna minuta*, Linn.

AN OCCASIONAL visitant, chiefly in the autumn, when immature birds are not very uncommon at Exmouth, Kingsbridge, Plymouth and on the North Coast of the County.

*Subfamily LARINÆ.*SABINE'S GULL.—*Xema sabinii* (J. Sabine).

A RARE visitant in immature plumage. The Rev. W. S. Hore records two examples killed near Brixham, October, 1844 (Zool. 1844. p. 879). The Rev. M. A. Mathew records a third "shot on the South Coast of Devon a few years since"

(Zool. 1863. p. 8448). Mr. Gatcombe records a fourth, killed in Plymouth Sound, in the autumn of 1866 (Zool. 1867. p. 557). A Sabine's Gull killed in Torbay, was sold as lot 150 at Mr. Cecil Smith's sale at Steven's, London, on June 24th, 1890.

LITTLE GULL.—*Larus minutus*, Pall.

A RARE visitant from autumn to early spring, chiefly observed on our Southern estuaries in the winter months. Baron A. von Hügel records specimens killed in Torbay. Mr. Cecil Smith shot one off Teignmouth in 1866 (Zool. 1867. p. 562). Others have been obtained at Plymouth, and Torquay; it has been recorded repeatedly on the Exe, an adult and three immature birds being shot on that river in the winter of 1876-77 (Zool. 1877. p. 105). In the North of Devon it is naturally rarer, but two were shot on the sands near Braunton Burrows in August, 1858, and another was picked up dead at Braunton in January, 1869 (Zool. 1858. p. 6245. 1869. p. 1803). Gatcombe remarks of a female Little Gull, shot in Plymouth Sound, February 3rd, 1862, that although immature and retaining a black band on the tail, "the black head of the breeding season was already partially assumed" (Zool. 1862. p. 7940).

BLACK-HEADED GULL.—*Larus ridibundus*, Linn.

A WINTER and spring visitant in great abundance. "I have never known *even* a young bird," writes Mr. Gatcombe, "to remain with us during the summer" (Zool. 1876. p. 4902).

GREAT BLACK-HEADED GULL.—*Larus ichthyætitus*, Pall.

A RARE and accidental visitant. In the year 1859, an adult specimen of this large Gull was observed in the river off Exmouth, at the end of May or beginning of June. Its size and appearance attracted the attention of William Pine, a boatman, who found it associating with "a flock of ordinary gulls." Pine succeeded in shooting the bird, which proved to be in summer plumage. Having entered the collection of Mr. Ross, it eventually found a permanent home in the Exeter Museum. Mr. Ross recorded the occurrence in the annals and magazine of Nat. Hist. ((3,) IV. p. 467), but a notice of its addition to our avifauna was also communicated to the Zoologist by Dr. Gray (Zool. 1860. p. 6860). Dr. Bree took occasion to figure the species in his Birds of Europe (Vol. V. p. 85), from a drawing of the Devonshire specimen executed by the Rev. F. Wright.

COMMON GULL.—*Larus canus*, Linn.

A COMMON resident on our coast during the winter months. It is not known that any remain to breed with us, though Mr. Rawson is inclined to think

that such may eventually prove to be the case, having regard to a locality in North Devon. The late Mr. Stevenson found this species very abundant at Teignmouth in the spring of the year. "At low water these birds collect in large quantities along the course of the Teign, dispersing themselves in groups over the extensive sandbanks left bare by the tide, and freely mingling with their sable companions from adjacent rookeries, Carrion Crows and Jackdaws, crowd the water's edge in search of food" (Zool. 1860. p. 6793).

HERRING GULL.—*Larus argentatus*, Gmel.

A NUMEROUS resident, breeding plentifully in North and South Devon, on ledges of the sea cliffs. The colonies at Wembury and Berry Head were a source of unfailling interest to Mr. Gatcombe, who frequently visited the former colony in the nesting time. He records that a Herring Gull became so attached to a private piece of water at Ivybridge, as to make its head quarters there, quitting its home "sometimes for a few weeks together for the sea-coast, which is only a few miles distant, but always returning again, looking to be fed" (Zool. 1872. p. 3168). He noticed the variability of size to which the Herring Gull is subject, remarking; "The other day I examined an enormous adult specimen, which was fully as large as an ordinary sized *Larus marinus*, its wing measuring nineteen inches from the carpal joint" (Zool. 1876. p. 4901).

In May, 1878, he observed two immature birds feeding on decayed cabbage, a predilection which he had not observed before in any of the Gull family.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.—*Larus fuscus*, Linn.

A PARTIAL resident. Mr. Rawson finds the Lesser Black-backed Gull breeding at Lundy, Baggy Point and along the coast to Lynmouth. Mr. Gatcombe never discovered any breeding colony in South Devon, although at times the species is very numerous, particularly in the spring of the year.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.—*Larus marinus*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant, but a few pairs breed on Lundy Island, as reported by Mr. Rawson and Mr. Howard Saunders. Gatcombe noticed that these birds chiefly frequented Plymouth Sound during January and February, departing early in March when the lesser species appeared in force. Rough weather, however, in the channel sometimes induces them to shelter in the estuaries during the earlier months of winter. That the Great Black-backed Gull at one time *nested* in South Devon, is rendered certain by the fact that, the Rev. R. Holdsworth sent information to Mr. Yarrell that ; “ From an egg of this species, taken off the Bolt Headland by some of the crew of the *Vigilant*, excise cutter, and kept in a blanket by day, and near the fire place at night for about ten days, a young gull was hatched

and reared by the crew, and for many years lived quite tame in the possession of a smith at Dartmouth. It swam in the river every day, and looked out for the fishermen returning from sea, who used to throw small fish to it" (Yarrell. B.B. vol. III. p. 634. 4th ed.)

GLAUCOUS GULL.—*Larus glaucus*, Fabricius.

A RARE winter visitant, but immature birds occur on the South Coast of Devon nearly every year. Adults are always very rare. The only adult that Dr. Moore met with, was killed while feeding on some carrion in a field at Mutley, near Plymouth, about a mile and a half from the sea. This bird was obtained on the exceptional date of May 21st, in the year 1832 (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 363). Baron A. von. Hügel records another adult, killed off Torquay, in the winter of 1854, and preserved in the Torquay Museum. Gatcombe never examined an adult Glaucous Gull in the flesh *until* 1873, when a bird was killed in Plymouth Sound on the 1st of January. In the winter 1867-8, Mr. J. H. Gurney received from Plymouth a Glaucous Gull, "a specimen in what has been termed the dirty-white plumage intermediate between the old and young" (Zool. 1876. p. 4798.) In 1879, Gatcombe saw a Glaucous Gull, "apparently an adult bird," flying in Plymouth Sound on March 29th. In 1881, he saw an immature bird on the

coast on April 9th, "rather a late date for that species in this locality." Immature specimens are recorded from Plymouth, Exmouth, Teignmouth, and Torbay, of which last locality Baron A. von Hügel remarks ; " Young birds are rare, but regular winter visitants to this coast " (Zool. 1874. p. 3908). Glaucous Gulls are voracious feeders, and a bird, which Gatecombe himself shot, disgorged a short junk of Conger eel, almost as large round as his arm. The stomach of another contained partially digested fish bones.

ICELAND GULL.—*Larus leucopterus*, Faber.

AN OCCASIONAL winter visitant, more rare on the Devon Coasts than the Glaucous Gull. The Rev. W. S. Hore records an Iceland Gull shot in Torbay, in 1844. A specimen shot on the Laira by the Rev. R. A. Julian, January 30th, 1855, induced Mr. Gatecombe to remark, " This species is far less frequent with us than *Larus glaucus* ; indeed the only other one I know of, obtained in this locality, is in the collection of Dr. Moore, of Plymouth, where it has been for many years " (Zool. 1855, p. 4705.). Mr. Gatecombe records an immature bird shot at Plymouth, November 22nd, 1861, and another young bird, killed on the 21st of the following April. Mr. Reading chronicles another killed in December, 1862, at Plymouth. The late Mr. J. H. Gurney reported " a nearly adult specimen shot

from a boat off Brixham, March 23rd, 1868 ; it was in company with a flock of Herring Gulls." On the 4th of February, 1872, Gatcombe watched an Iceland Gull sailing up and down just above the low cliffs at the Devil's Point, which was so tame and came so close that he could plainly see its pale flesh coloured bill, with a very dark tip, and also its pinkish legs. It was in the very light brown or immature plumage. On the 27th of November, 1873, Gatcombe observed an adult bird in Plymouth Sound, "no doubt driven in by the prevailing northerly gales." It is unnecessary to further extend the list of local specimens.

KITTIWAKE.—*Rissa tridactyla* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species, breeding, according to Mr. Rawson, along the North Coast of Devon from Baggy Point to Lynmouth ; "multitudes" says Mr. H. Saunders "make their nests on the precipitous crags of Lundy Island off North Devon" (Yarrell. B.B. IV. p. 651). Stragglers are to be met with all along the South Coast in winter, and sometimes the birds are numerous.

IVORY GULL.—*Pagophila eburnea* (Phipps).

A RARE visitant. An immature Ivory Gull made its appearance at Torquay on the 18th of January, 1853. "It was first seen" writes Mr. Burt in and about our pier, evidently much distressed, as it

kept settling on the pier walls and on the vessels, it was stoned from this by the boys, and followed to Livermead, about half a mile from here, and shot whilst sitting on one of the cliffs" (Zool. 1853 p. 3807). Mr. Rowe endorsed this occurrence, as the only one known to him killed in Devonshire.

*Sub-Family STERCORARIINÆ.*

GREAT SKUA.—*Stercorarius catarrhactes* (Linn).

A RARE visitant. In 1835, a fine specimen was captured near Plymouth, on the 16th of February. It had gorged itself on the flesh of a dead whale, and was secured by a trawl-boy with a boat hook. It was carried alive to Dr. Moore (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 362). Dr. Scott of Exeter records that a short time prior to 1849, an adult specimen was found dead in a field twelve or fourteen miles from the coast. It was in good plumage, but in poor condition (Zool. 1849. p. 2384). Mr. D'Urban adds that a third specimen was shot on the Exe, December 28th, 1855, by a man named Hall. "It had just struck down and was making a meal off a Black-headed Gull, and was so intently occupied on it, as to allow him to approach quite close before he fired" (Zool. 1856. p. 5065). Writing in 1880, Mr. Gatcombe remarks that this species, "now unfortunately so rare on our coast, generally goes by the name of "Old Hen" (Zool. 1880. p. 22).

POMATORHINE SKUA.—*Stercorarius pomatorhinus* (Temm).

A "TOLERABLY common autumnal visitor to the South Coast of Devon, especially about Torbay," writes Mr. Cecil Smith, and this definition is about the best that could be given, for the species occurs in some years in considerable numbers, having previously migrated from the Arctic circle down the North Sea, and thus found its way into the English Channel. "This bird" says the Rev. M. A. Mathew in 1858, "is well known to the sailors at Torquay, who call it and Richardson's bird "Irish Lords," why I could not discover." He adds that it chiefly occurs in *October*, that he and a friend shot five at Torquay, and that he examined others killed about the same time (Zool. 1859. p. 6331). The Rev. M. S. C. Rickards shot an immature bird on the beach at Exmouth in 1868, as early as the 30th of September, a heavy gale blowing from the S.E. (Zool. 1869. p. 1518). In 1869, Baron A. von Hügel reported two immature birds shot in Torbay on the 12th of October. In 1871, two nearly adult and two immature birds were shot in Torbay in the same months, as recorded by the late Mr. J. H. Gurney. In 1879, the year of the memorable visitation of this Skua to the East Coast of England, the Rev. M. A. Mathew received two adults shot at Instow, October 21st, and "probably part of the immense flight which had visited the Coast of Norfolk a few days earlier" Mr. Gatecombe reported that large

numbers of these Skuas were seen at the same time by the fishermen on the South Coast of Devon.

ARCTIC OR RICHARDSON'S SKUA.—

*Stercorarius crepidatus* (Gmel).

AN AUTUMN visitant to the North and South Coasts of Devon, occasionally met with in the Spring months ; as was the case in 1860, when a male bird was picked up dead in a field near Kingsbridge on the 29th of May, and taken to Mr. H. Nicholls (Zool. 1860, p. 7106). On the 25th of November, 1872, Gatcombe “saw a fine adult Richardson’s Skua fly past the Devil’s Point at Stonehouse. Its somewhat gliding flight was swift and elegant, but it did not attempt to molest any of the smaller gulls on its way, so I think it was merely seeking refuge from the heavy gale that was blowing at the time. I was near enough to see that its upper plumage was smoke-gray, with a white patch or two on the wings, such as most, if not every species of Skua is sometimes subject to. The top of its head was very dark, nearly black, and the neck light tinged with straw yellow. I possess a mature specimen of Richardson’s Skua, the butts of the wings of which are pure white, and there are also white patches on other parts of the body ” (Zool. 1873, p. 3402).

LONG-TAILED OR BUFFON’S SKUA.—

*Stercorarius parasiticus* (Linn).

A RARE visitant, having only been obtained in autumn in two known instances, both on the S.

coast. In 1860, an adult bird was shot in June on the Kingbridge estuary, and taken to Mr. Nicholls (Zool. 1860. p. 7106).

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## ORDER PYGOPODES.

*Family* ALCIDÆ.

RAZORBILL.—*Alca torda*, Linn.

A RESIDENT species, nesting at Lundy Isle, and on the North Coast of Devon. It may possibly breed occasionally on our South Coast, for Baron A. von Hügel records that “a Razorbill, still in the downy plumage, was shot in Torbay on the 7th of July: this fact would seem to prove Torbay, or rather the cliffs, to be a breeding place of this bird” (Zool. 1869, p. 1846). Gatcombe comments on the numbers of Razorbills and Guillemots which perish on the South Devon Coast during protracted gales.

GUILLEMOT.—*Uria troile* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species. There is a large colony on Lundy Isle, and Mr. Rawson states that Guillemots breed up the North Coast of Devon towards Lynmouth and on Baggy Point. Specimens of the Ringed variety occur on the South Coast, *e.g.* a bird shot on Slapton Sands in 1852; An adult shot in Torbay, October, 1869; Another shot near Plymouth, March, 1870; And a fourth obtained in January,

1872, in Torbay, where, however, according to the late Mr. Gurney, this variety is extremely rare. The Torquay Museum contains two interesting white varieties of the Guillemot, killed in that locality.

BLACK GUILLEMOT.—*Uria grylle* (Linn).

A RARE visitant to the South Coast of Devon, not yet reported from the northern sea-board. In December, 1862, a single bird was shot in Plymouth Sound, eliciting from Mr. Reading the comment: "This species is a rare bird in Devonshire; the specimen that has recently occurred is an old bird in winter plumage" (Zool. 1863, p. 8448). Similarly Mr. Gatcombe writes that a bird of the year, shot in Plymouth Sound, December, 1886, was the only specimen he remembered having seen in the locality (Zool. 1887, p. 378). The Black Guillemot has also been shot in Torbay and on the Exe.

LITTLE AUK.—*Mergulus alle* (Linn).

A RARE winter visitant, but one or two are recorded from some part of the county almost every winter, and that of 1889-90 was no exception to the rule. Gatcombe met with specimens in the neighbourhood of Plymouth on a few occasions, between the months of October and March, generally after severe gales. Others have been taken inland, or on the coast, as at Kingsbridge, Slapton Ley, and in

Torbay. In the North of the County, Mr. G. F. Mathew reports three washed up dead on the Taw, in 1868; Another was captured on the same river near Barnstaple, in December, 1875 (Zool. 1876. p. 4814).

PUFFIN.—*Fratercula arctica* (Linn).

A RESIDENT species, scarce at all times on the South Coast of Devon, but numerous during the summer months in the North, breeding at Lundy Island. Mr. H. Saunders points out that this locality owes its Scandinavian name to the myriads of Puffins which breed in its grassy slopes; ‘lunde’ meaning Puffin, and ‘ey’ signifying island.

Family COLYMBIDÆ.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.—*Colymbus glacialis*, Linn.

A FREQUENT winter visitant to our larger estuaries and sea-board, chiefly met with in the south of the County. Mr. Gatcombe studied this species no less carefully than the Black Redstart, and the notes, which appeared from his pen, during his later years, are full of interest. In 1871, a fine old bird in nearly full summer plumage, made its appearance in Plymouth Sound on the 30th of October, “rather early for this species.” In 1875, another was killed there on the 11th of November, “still in nearly full summer plumage.” Five others were shot a few days later. On the 19th of December, he writes: “There were three Great Northern Divers off Firestone Bay

this morning, two of which would turn almost completely over on their backs, with one leg in the air, during the act of preening the feathers of the breast." In 1876 he observed a bird *flying high* across the Sound, February 15th. "This species, however, is but seldom seen on *the wing* in the winter, unless moving to a distant place." In the autumn of that year, he observed the first arrival of this species on the 30th of October; a little later he writes: "The severe and long continued gales in December, brought an unusual number of Great Northern Divers to our coasts;" examining twelve in the flesh, and observing as many more in life, justified the comment. Many were killed also in January and February, almost exclusively immature birds. The species had in fact been more plentiful during the winter 1876-77, "than for many years past." In the autumn of 1877, Gatcombe observed the first Great Northern Diver of the season on October 29th, and two were killed the next day, on which he remarks: "Northern Divers have made their appearance early this season, as they seldom visit the Sound before November." In 1878, two arrived on the 12th of October, and eight were shot in November and the early part of December. Although the winter 1879-80 proved to be severe, very *few* Great Northern Divers appeared at Plymouth. In 1880, the first appeared in Plymouth Sound on the 27th of November; one was immature, "the other

had lost but little of its summer plumage. Adult birds in such plumage are rarely met with in Plymouth Sound at any time, much less so late in the autumn." In 1882, the first appeared at the Devil's Point on the 5th of November. A period of more than ten years of close research at Plymouth having thus been covered. Reference may be made to other localities. At Kingsbridge, an adult was shot in November, 1865. From Torquay, Baron A. von Hügel writes : " These birds in immature plumage, are unusually numerous this winter (1869-70) in Torbay The first of these fine Divers was shot on the 17th of December, since which I have heard of no less than eight or nine of these birds being obtained in the bay, and of course many others have been seen." He adds that a pair in full summer dress had been killed in Torbay some years before. Of the Exe, Mr. D'Urban writes : " Several immature birds were shot in November and December, 1870, and one on January 16th, 1879. Others, both adult and immature, have occurred on the Exe, in summer as well as in winter " (Zool. 1881, p. 58). In the north of the county, the Great Northern Diver is less often seen, but the Rev. M. A. Mathew records the presence of several immature specimens on the Taw in December, 1857 ; and Mr G. F. Mathew reports two birds in nearly full summer dress (only a few grey feathers appearing on the head and throat), shot on the Taw, near Barnstaple, in the last week of November, 1880.

All the foregoing occurrences took place between October and April. But Mr. Gatcombe killed a Great Northern Diver off the coast at Seaton, on the 15th of *June*, 1861. Unfortunately, the bird was in moult and had but partially completed its summer dress. He found the food of this species to include eels, fatherlashers, flat-fish, worms, prawns and swimming crabs. "Divers," he says, "seem to feed largely on *crabs*, as I have often found their stomachs full of them."

BLACK-THROATED DIVER.—*Colymbus arcticus*, Linn.

AN OCCASIONAL winter visitant to our estuaries, usually in immature plumage. Mr. Gatcombe, when recording two immature birds killed near Plymouth in 1879, took occasion to remark, "I have never yet seen or heard of an adult bird of this species having been obtained near Plymouth," adding that the most advanced specimen which he had examined was a bird shot by his brother near the Devil's Point many years previously. At Kingsbridge, an adult bird was obtained in November, 1865, by Mr. Nicholls (*Zool.* 1866. p. 527),

RED-THROATED DIVER.—*Colymbus septentrionalis*, Linn.

A WINTER visitant to our estuaries. Immature birds largely predominate, but the numbers vary much in different seasons. Many frequent the neighbour-

hood of Teignmouth, they are sometimes numerous in Torbay, and Plymouth Sound is a noted haunt, but on the whole their numbers seem to have decreased latterly. In the late winter and early spring of 1869 and 1870, they were very numerous at Teignmouth and in Plymouth Sound, but Baron A. von Hügel found them very scarce in Torbay during the winter 1869-70. In the spring of 1879, Mr. Gatcombe remarks, "I am glad to say that Redthroated Divers are now becoming more numerous than they have been for some years past. After severe winters, they used formerly to appear sometimes in great numbers, and on such occasions many remained on our coasts until they had assumed their full breeding plumage" (Zool. 1879. p. 207). But in 1880 he writes, that this species "was unusually scarce in the winter 1879-80, and is becoming more uncommon every year" (Zool. 1880. p. 247).

*Family* PODICIPEDIDÆ.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE.—*Podiceps cristatus* (Linn).

A WINTER and spring visitant to our larger rivers and estuaries, generally considered rather a rare bird in Devonshire, though Baron A. von Hügel considered the Great Crested and Slavonian Grebes the most numerous of the genus in Torbay. At Plymouth Mr. Gatcombe met with specimens in March, 1870, and on some other occasions. On the Avon, a female bird was shot in December, 1875.

Mr. D'Urban states that the Great Crested Grebe "is *not* common on the Exe, but has been obtained in various stages of plumage" (Zool. 1877. p. 105). The late Mr. Stevenson has left a pleasing sketch of the habits of the Great Crested Grebe, as studied on the Devonshire coast in March, 1859. "I was somewhat surprised," he writes, "to find these birds not only in the tranquil waters of the bay at Torquay, but also out at sea, off the coast, at Teignmouth. . . . On one occasion I saw a party of three, apparently an adult pair and a young bird, having no perceptible crest. The old male was a most splendid specimen with about the finest crest I ever saw, and as I watched him through the glass, between the intervals of diving, the silky whiteness of his neck and breast contrasting with the rich chestnut fringe, glistened in the sun as he rose and fell on the rippling waves. I afterwards saw single birds, even in rough weather, diving into the large billows, or floating lightly over others, as much at home on the 'troubled sea' as the Guillemots or Razorbills" (Zool. 1860. p. 6797).

RED-NECKED GREBE.—*Podiceps griseigena* (Bodd).

A WINTER and spring visitant, of comparatively rare occurrence on our Devonshire estuaries. Mr. Gatecombe, when recording a specimen killed near Plymouth in October, 1861, writes; "Of late years this species has become very rare." He met with

others subsequently, notably in 1870. In this year "the sudden and severe frost of mid-February," as the Rev. M. A. Mathew points out, "sent a number of Grebes to the tidal rivers of all parts of the coast. The Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes occurred abundantly during the latter part of February and beginning of March, along the whole seaboard of the S.W. Peninsular of England" (Zool. 1871. p. 2437). Mr. D'Urban contributes an interesting account of this Grebe in the neighbourhood of the Exe. An immature bird was shot near Topsham in 1850, and entered the collection of Mr. Ross, in which it subsequently passed into the Exeter Museum. In December 1852, two frequented a flooded marsh near Topsham for a week, when one was shot and proved to be immature. Mr. J. T. Drake shot another off Starcross, in the estuary of the Exe, January 8th, 1881 (Zool. 1881. p. 58). During the immigration of 1870, specimens were shot on the Teignmouth coast, and on the Taw in North Devon.

SCLAVONIAN GREBE.—*Podiceps auritus* (Linn).

A WINTER visitant; "A species which has become scarce of late years, but was formerly often seen in our bays and estuaries during severe weather" (Gatcombe, Zool. 1879. p. 115). It has occurred on Slapton Ley, and appears to be met with pretty regularly in Torbay. It also visits the estuary of

the Taw and Torridge in North Devon. Gatcombe's notes of such Slavonian Grebes, as came under his own notice at Plymouth, refer chiefly to the months of December and January.

EARED GREBE.—*Podiceps nigricollis* (Brehm).

A RARE spring and winter visitant to our estuaries, usually met with in immature plumage. There are, however, four separate records of its occurrence in Devonshire in full, or nearly full nuptial dress. Baron A. von Hügel reports that "an old bird in full summer dress, shot off Paignton in May, 1853," is preserved in the Torquay Museum (Zool. 1874. p. 3908). Mr. G. F. Mathew records a fine male shot out of a party of five on the Taw near Barnstaple, April 7th, 1865 (Zool. 1865. p. 9618). "This," he adds "is the first time to my knowledge that it has been noticed in the North of Devon." Mr. Cecil Smith has given a delightful account of a male bird captured in the same locality in April, 1874, and sent to him by Mr. Rowe (Zool. 1875. p. 4333). Lastly, Mr. Gatcombe examined a beautiful adult in perfect breeding plumage, killed in Plymouth Sound, March 23rd, 1871 (Zool. 1871. p. 2646). Gatcombe adds, "A few immature examples are occasionally obtained on our coast during the autumn and winter, but many years have elapsed since I examined a previous adult specimen." Mr. Cecil Smith writes, of the bird sent to him alive

in 1874. "At first I kept it indoors, when it was most amusing to see it run about the rooms as hard as it could go, keeping itself perfectly erect on its legs. I never saw it attempt to fly, though it would sometimes flutter its wings when it ran, as if it intended to rise, but it never actually got off the ground. I suppose it either did not get run enough to give it impetus, or it wanted a strong wind to rise against. It would stand as it ran, very erect on its legs; but I never saw it sitting up with the back part of the tarsus on the ground, as Grebes are so frequently figured as doing, and as Guillemots and Razorbills do. We were obliged to feed it entirely on fish, live ones for preference, which it would catch out of a pan of water with great dexterity. If a fish hid under a stone or some bits of weed in the water in the pan, the Grebe would either turn him out of his hiding place, or failing that lie in wait for him to come out. It would eat a few other things, such as worms, while it was in the house, would occasionally catch and eat a black beetle, especially if it was put into its water-pan, but did not really care much for anything but fish [Mr. G. F. Mathew found the elytra of two or three species of Coleoptera in his specimen of the Eared Grebe]. It died after I had had it a week, whether from any injury it received when first taken, or because I could not get it fish enough, I do not quite know. It was a male bird, in almost complete breeding plumage. While

alive, the irides were the most brilliant red I ever saw" (Zool 1875. p. 4332).

LITTLE GREBE.—*Podiceps fluvialilis* (Tunstall).

A RESIDENT species, common in Torbay and Plymouth Sound during the winter months, of fairly general distribution in the breeding season.

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## ORDER TUBINARES.

*Family* PROCELLARIIDÆ.

FULMAR.—*Fulmarus glacialis* (Linn).

A RARE winter visitant. A Fulmar was captured near Plymouth in November 1844; Mr. Cecil Smith captured another on the South Coast of Devon, November 30th, 1866. Mr. J. H. Gurney received from Plymouth a Fulmar caught alive in that locality, October 24th, 1867, which he describes as "a female, a young bird and darker than any which I afterwards got." A specimen killed near Topsham, on the Exe, is preserved in the Exeter Museum. Pulman records the Fulmar as having been killed on the Axe (Book of the Axe, p. 27). In the North of the County, the Rev. M. A. Mathew records a bird captured in Barnstaple, during the prevalence of a N.W. gale, February 2nd, 1859.

GREAT SHEARWATER.—*Puffinus major*, Faber.

A RARE visitant, and one of great interest, first brought to light as a Devonshire bird by Dr. Moore, who, having obtained Eyton's History of rarer British Birds (1836), searched the Plymouth collections for specimens, and found that Drew and Pincombe had several specimens, which they had not distinguished from the former species [the Manx Shearwater], but merely considered as a larger specimen than usual (Mag. Nat. Hist. 1837. p. 362). Bellamy, two years later, describes this species as "recognised in the Museums of this neighbourhood by Dr. Moore, it is rare" (Nat. Hist. of Devon. p. 216). Mr. Banker records the capture of two Greater Shearwaters in Plymouth Sound, December 11th, 1852 (Naturalist, 1853. p. 204), one of which was afterwards figured in Dresser's Birds of Europe. "The specimen I have figured," writes Mr. Dresser, "was obtained near Plymouth by Mr. J. Banker in December, 1852, and after his death purchased of his widow for me by my friend Mr. Gatcombe" (B. of Europe. VIII. p. 528). The other specimen as Mr. J. H. Gurney writes, was sent to the late Mr. Gurney, and is preserved in the Norwich Museum. In 1865, two more Greater Shearwaters were captured with hooks on the whiting ground outside Torbay, and one of these is in the collection of my informant, Mr. F. Pershouse; the other is in the Torquay Museum. In 1867, apparently in the

month of October (Zool. 1868. p. 1295. 1876. p. 4794), an adult female was caught exhausted on a trawler off Plymouth, taken alive to Rogers, a birdstuffer, and sent by Gatcombe to Mr. J. H. Gurney. In February, 1869, "one of these fine birds was shot near Berry Head," writes Baron A. von Hügel (Zool. 1869. p. 1720). In 1874, we find Gatcombe writing; "After an almost entire absence for many years, I am glad to say that the Greater Shearwater, or "hackbolt," has again visited the coasts of Devon and Cornwall in some numbers, as I had the pleasure of examining three specimens, in the flesh, obtained off Plymouth on the 6th of November, and the next day two more, out of four that were captured off Penzance" (Zool. 1874. p. 4262). A month later he writes; "Since my recent note on the occurrence of the Greater Shearwater off the Coasts of Devon and Cornwall, I have been informed that, the gentleman who shot two or three from his yacht, and brought them to Plymouth for the purpose of having their skins made into screens, said that off the Start Point, there were hundreds of them, and that he could have killed any number had he only known they were at all rare or of any value whatever. Although I have made every inquiry, on account of the many letters I have received from ornithological friends residing in various parts of the Country, begging me to secure specimens for their collections, yet I can not learn of any more having been since

obtained either on the Devon or Cornish coasts" (Zool. 1875. p. 4300). In 1876, Gatcombe records another Greater Shearwater, killed off Plymouth at the end of July, adding; "It is a very fine adult bird, with the underparts much whiter, or apparently much more bleached than they are just after the autumnal moult, with scarcely a shade remaining of the dusky patch on the belly, so conspicuous on the birds generally obtained at the beginning of winter. I understand there were no others with it when shot" (Zool. 1876. p. 5127). A specimen of the Greater Shearwater, in the collection of the Rev. M. A. Mathew was shot on the Devonshire coast and obtained through Mr. Gatcombe. There *are* apparently *no* records of this bird from the North Coast of the County.

SOOTY SHEARWATER.—*Puffinus griseus* (Gmel).

A RARE visitant. Mr. Dresser figures this species in the 'Birds of Europe,' from an example from Plymouth, previously in Mr Gould's collection, of which he furnishes measurements. He also states; "Mr Gatcombe says that it is met with off Plymouth, and that a friend of his possesses two specimens" (B. of Europe, VIII. p. 524). "On former occasions" writes Mr. Gatcombe in 1874, "when the autumnal visits of this species [the Greater Shearwater] were more frequent, many young birds in their first *dark* plumage (similar to one of

Yarrell's figures) were obtained, but as yet I have not heard of any in that stage having been taken" (Zool. 1874. p. 4262). The description "dark" is italicised by Gatcombe himself, and as the dark bird figured by Yarrell proved eventually to be a Sooty Shearwater, though at the time supposed to be a young Greater Shearwater, it is clear that the "young" birds mentioned by Gatcombe were also, specimens of the Sooty Shearwater. In justice to Gatcombe, it may be well to point out that, in regarding the Sooty Shearwater as the young of the Greater Shearwater, he was only following the then accepted belief of the most competent authorities. His more recent information to Mr. Dresser was of course made after the distinction between the two species had become generally known.

MANX SHEARWATER.—*Puffinus anglorum* (Temm).

AN AUTUMN and spring visitant, sometimes present in large numbers off the South Coast of Devon, as in March, 1877, when Gatcombe says that "hundreds" were to be seen in the Channel off Plymouth. "They breed on Lundy Island" writes Dr. Moore in 1837 (Mag. Nat. Hist. p. 362); an expression of opinion which has never been confirmed though Mr. Howard Saunders in 1885, suggested that, "a few may perhaps inhabit Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, where the bird is well known

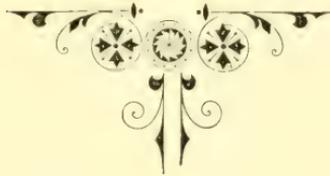
under the name of 'Cuckle' (Yarrell. B.B. IV. p. 22). Mr. Rawson dissents from this view, but thinks that a breeding colony may possibly be discovered on the North Coast of Devon. Attention has been drawn to what apparently must be considered a dimorphic variation in colour of this Shearwater; regarding which the Rev. M. A. Mathew writes; "Mr. Vaughan Davies of Skomer Island informed me that the young Manx Shearwaters resembled the adults in having white underparts, as you have reported in this month's Zoologist. Every autumn there are great numbers of the Manx Shearwater in Torbay, and some years since I shot several birds which had all the underparts a dark ash-gray. At the time we endeavoured to make out that these were Sooty Petrels, but they were unquestionably only young Manx Shearwaters" (*in lit.* Oct. 30. 1886).

FORK-TAILED PETREL.—*Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (Vieill)

AN OCCASIONAL, perhaps rare visitant, chiefly during stormy weather during the last two months of the year, when exhausted birds are occasionally found on the North and South coasts of the County. Mr. Brooking Rowe mentions a bird caught in the middle of the town of Plymouth (Zool. 1866. p. 102). Mr. G. F. Mathew picked up another, dead on Braunton Burrows; Mr. H. Nicholls has two local specimens from the Kingsbridge district.

STORM PETREL.—*Procellaria pelagica*, Linn.

AN OCCASIONAL visitant, chiefly noticed in boisterous weather during winter. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes that this species *nests* upon Lundy Island, where Mr. Rawson has met with the bird in the month of June. Even on the South Coast, stragglers sometimes occur during the breeding season. Mr. Gatecombe records that a Herring Gull knocked down a Storm Petrel in the Docks at Plymouth, on the 22nd of June, 1883; as also, the capture of several exhausted birds in Plymouth Sound, on the 16th of August, 1876. In October of the former year, he examined a very young specimen, still shewing some of the nestling down, though captured by a cat in a garden in the centre of Plymouth. I have a specimen in my collection which was shot at Topsham, October 16th, 1886.



## ADDENDUM.

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MEALY REDPOLL.—*Linota linaria* (Linn).

THIS SPECIES proves, unexpectedly, to have been taken in Devon, though apparently unrecorded hitherto. The Rev. M. A. Mathew writes to say that among some birds which he purchased at the sale of Mr. Cecil Smith's collection, he acquired a Mealy Redpoll in full adult plumage, labelled "North Devon." He adds that this is the only Devonshire specimen of *Linota linaria* that he has ever seen.

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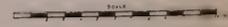
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