BRITISH BIRDS' EGGS & NESTS

REV. CANON ATKINSON. D.C.L.

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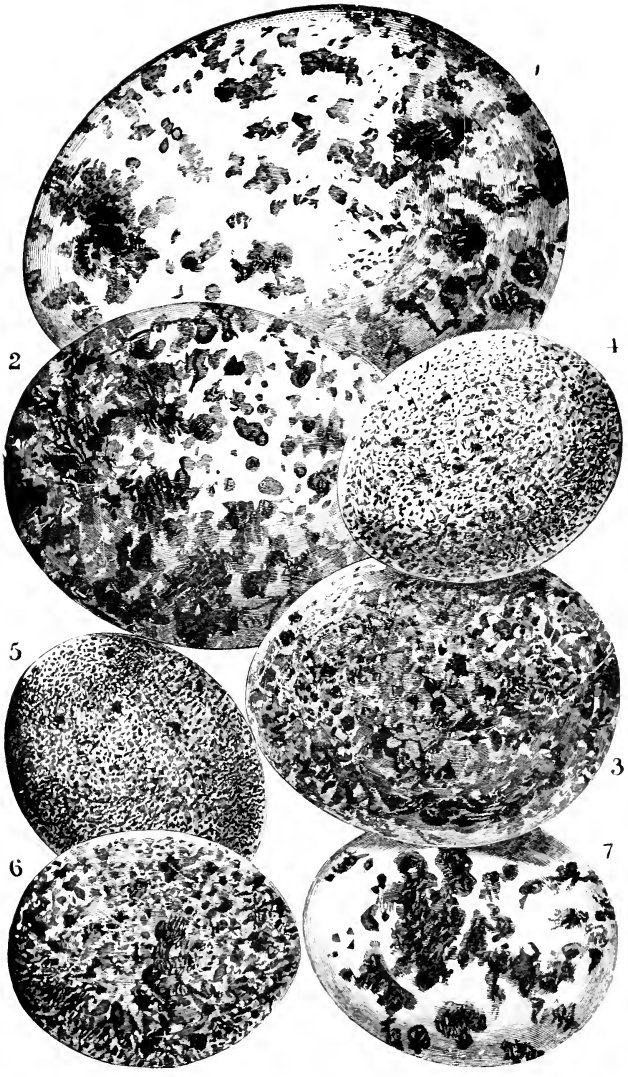
PLATE I.



1. Golden Eagle. 2. Osprey. 3. Peregrine Falcon. 4. Hobby. 5. Merlin.
6. Kestrel. 7. Sparrow Hawk.

BRITISH

BIRDS' EGGS AND NESTS

POPULARLY DESCRIBED

REVISED AND RE-EDITED

BY

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"WALKS AND TALKS," "PLAY HOURS AND HALF HOLIDAYS," "SKETCHES IN NATURAL HISTORY," "THE CLEVELAND GLOSSARY," "THE HISTORY OF CLEVELAND," "FORTY YEARS IN A MOORLAND PARISH," "MEMORIALS OF OLD WHITBY," &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. S. COLEMAN

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PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION[1]

THE object proposed in this volume is, in the first place, to present our young readers with a complete and systematic list of our British birds:—the word British being taken to mean such as, being truly wild birds, either inhabit Britain throughout the year; visit Britain statedly for longer or shorter periods of each year; or have been proved to reach the shores of Britain two or three times, or oftener, under the pressure of any incidental circumstances whatever.

In the next place, the attempt has been made to distinguish at once between the rare or casual visitors, and such as are really denizens of the land, whether for a few weeks or months annually or by unbroken habitation.

But the principal object and intention of the book is to present accurate and trustworthy accounts of the Nests and Nesting-sites, the Eggs, and any ascertained

[1] The Editor thinks it better to reproduce these portions of the original book as they were written nearly thirty-five years ago, partly because they are important parts of the volume of which the present is simply a New Edition, and partly because what in them was worth printing then is worth printing still. Where modification, more or less noticeable, is called for, attention will be directed to the circumstances in notes or otherwise.

nesting or breeding-season peculiarities of every undoubtedly British-breeding species. And the author's difficulty has often been, out of the large mass of available materials at his command, acquired by personal observation or from the reading and notes of many years, to select what might be instructive, interesting, or amusing, without burdening the book with unnecessary details, or encroaching too much on the allotted space.

The principle adopted in the illustrations has been to omit all representations of eggs either white or nearly white in colour, in order to husband space for the admission of a greater number of those characterised by varied colours and markings. On the same ground, although it was earnestly desired by the artist to give more than one representation of some of the very marked variations occurring in the eggs of several species, he has been compelled to content himself with selecting and figuring the most typical or normal forms in all such cases. All the illustrations given have been carefully drawn from unquestionable specimens, and Mr. Coleman desires to acknowledge in this place the assistance which, in this matter, has been afforded him by that excellent and accurate practical naturalist, Mr. F. Bond.

An Appendix is subjoined, in which a notice will be found of the habits of nidification, the nest and eggs of several birds, which, though regular inhabitants of Britain or some part of it, for a given portion of each year, still retire to foreign and distant localities for the purpose of nest-making and rearing their young.

Finally, an attempt has been made to exhibit at one

glance, and in a very condensed and systematic form, as much information as possible touching the nest, its customary site and materials, and also the eggs, their number, colour, and markings, and any noteworthy breeding peculiarities of each separate British-breeding species. It is hoped this attempt, somewhat novel as it is, and almost inevitably imperfect as it must be in too many respects, will not be regarded as altogether unacceptable by the youthful nest-hunter and egg-collector.

The author has only to observe, in conclusion that he has scarcely thought it necessary in the majority of instances to notice the common and well recognised fact that any particular species under notice, in common with many or most of our common British birds, rears two broods, or even more, in the course of the summer. Neither has he thought it requisite to attempt to define the average season for the commencement of nidification in the case of this or that species as they came successively under review.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

TO THE

ORIGINAL EDITION.

CHAPTER I.

THE object with which this book is written is that it may be interesting and useful to young egg-collectors. It is not easy to make a book, which is to be devoted to such details as the length and breadth, and shades and markings of some two or three hundred different eggs, either interesting, or even barely readable. But there is no necessity that a book of British Birds' Eggs and Nests should be devoted to merely such details as those. For my own part, I do not find it easy altogether to dissociate the eggs laid from the bird which lays them; and when I see a beautiful nest I can hardly help being led to think something about the builder, its means, objects, powers, instincts and intelligence. And I don't see why a book about eggs and nests should not follow the direction given by those same objects to my thoughts, and the thoughts

of hundreds and thousands of other men besides me, and I am sure too of hundreds and thousands of boys and girls as well. I am as sure as if I could see into the minds of the young nest-hunter generally, that when he finds one day the wonderfully neat and beautiful Chaffinch's or Goldfinch's or Crested Wren's nest, and the next, lights upon some littering Jackdaw's nest, or some inartistic, careless-seeming Jay's or Ring-dove's, that the wide, wonderful contrast and difference sets him thinking — What is the reason of this strange dissimilarity? Is one of these birds really less clever than the other? Did God make one of them a careless, disorderly, unthrifty bird, while the other He made such a wonderfully neat and dexterous and contriving one?

And I am equally sure that a little measure of observation and thought will be enough to show the young inquirer not only that the Great Maker of birds and Giver of their instincts and understandings and capacities has not left some of His creatures imperfect in some of their qualifications and endowments, but that the very contrasts and unlikenesses which first set him on questioning at all, all teach one great lesson and illustrate one great truth,—namely this, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!" and to add the inquiry suggested by what follows the words quoted,—"Hast Thou not in wisdom made them all?"

Perhaps an Egg-book might be so written as to help such thought and observation as is here supposed, and now and then, besides, to suggest explanations or lead to investigation or communicate a knowledge of facts such as to illustrate and make

clear, and even entertaining or amusing, the every-day incidents and facts which fall commonly enough beneath the notice of the moderately sharp-eyed and observant nest-hunter.

The difficulty of making such a book useful to the systematic collector of eggs, however young, is not nearly as great as that of making it interesting to the many, who, though not inspired with the ambition of owning a real grand cabinet, and of arranging its manifold drawers with neatly ordered and ticketed egg-cards, are yet sensible of a real pleasure and enjoyment in noticing the nests and eggs of their numerous "feathered friends," and in identifying such as may chance to be less familiarly known than the majority of those met with under ordinary circumstances. Faithful description and accurate representation are clearly within our reach, and such description and representation are sufficient in nineteen cases out of twenty for the purposes of identification in all instances of usual occurrence.

The cases in which identification is difficult are of two or three kinds. Sometimes the difficulty arises from the near resemblance of the eggs laid by different allied species, sometimes from the wide discrepancies in the markings and especially in the shadings or tints of eggs laid by the same species; but much more frequently from the doubtful eggs being met with apart from the containing nests, or from want of proper or sufficiently accurate observation of the nests at the moment of discovery. The young egg-fancier should always recollect that the fashion and materials and site of the nest, taken in

connection with the eggs, will almost always, with the aid of a tolerably accurate and well illustrated Book of Eggs, enable him to decide without hesitation as to the real owner of the nests and eggs in question; while there are very many eggs, such as the Common Wren's, those of one or more of the Tom-tits, the Lesser Willow Wren, etc., of which specimens may be found so nearly resembling one another in shade and size and spots, that it requires a very nice and experienced eye to allot the several eggs to their certain origin. In such a case as this, recourse must be had to some kind and experienced oologist.

A few words on another subject. The author has been gravely taken to task by some of his conscientious friends, for delineating in one or two of his former books the pleasures and excitements of egg-hunting, or the satisfaction of trying to form a methodical collection. He has been more than once asked—"Do you really mean to encourage boys in robbing birds' nests? Can you defend such a practice from the charge of cruelty?"

If I thought there was any real or necessary connection between a love of egg-hunting—yes, and egg-collecting, too,—and cruelty, I would not say another word for it or about it. But I am sure that the real lover of birds and their nests and eggs is not the boy who is chargeable with those torn and ruined nests—"destroyed" as they may well be styled—which grieve one as he walks along the lanes and hedge sides. If the nest is taken, or rudely and roughly handled, or the eggs all plundered, there is cruelty: for in the one case, the poor parent-birds are warned

by their instinct, if not their intelligence, to forsake their treasured charge; in the other, they suffer from pitiless robbery of what they most care for. But if the parent-bird be not rudely and repeatedly driven from her nest,—if the nest be not pulled out of shape, or the containing bushes or environing shelter be not wilfully or carelessly disturbed—if two or three eggs are still left for her to incubate, there is, so far as human observation can reach, no pain, or concern, or uneasiness, to the little owners from the abstraction of one egg or more; and, therefore, of course, no cruelty in the abstraction. The legitimate pursuit of sport in the stubbles and turnip fields, or on the open moor, does not differ more widely from the cruel proceedings of the cold-blooded, hard-hearted slaughter of his dozens of Rock birds (many of which are always left to die lingeringly and miserably), than the object or manner of action of the true lover of birds and their ways and nests and eggs, from the ruthless destruction of every nest and its contents which may happen to be met with by some young loutish country savage.

Again, a few words more, and this time about classification. I should like, if such a course were profitable, or even practicable, to make just such a classification as an active, sharp-eyed, observant, persevering nest-hunter would, as it were, find ready made for him, by the results of his rambles and investigations and discoveries; that is to say, to group the birds and their eggs according to their frequent occurrence, their comparative, but still not positive, infrequency, or their downright rarity. By this

means, and the subdivisions which would be suggested by an enumeration of the most usual sites of the several nests, an interesting, and at least partially instructive as well as practical system of classification would be devised. But I am afraid such a system would not have much to recommend it besides its novelty and interest, and practical hints "where to look for this bird's nest or the other's; and how to look so as to find." One great disadvantage would be that such classification, so called, would have the effect of breaking up groups which nature has put together. There is, generally speaking, what may be called a great family-likeness between the eggs of the various species of any given genus, or kind of birds. Take the Buntings, for instance: anyone who is familiar with the common Yellow Hammer's egg would at once guess at the eggs of either of the other species as belonging to a Bunting; and the same of the Titmice, Linnets, Thrushes, Crows, and so on without end.

So that, although it may seem at first sight that scientific classification is hard and troublesome and half unnecessary, and may often prompt the question in the boy-collector's mind, Why wouldn't it do just as well to write down the English names on the cards and in my catalogue, and arrange them all my own way?—still it should be remembered that such classification after all is far from arbitrary, and on the contrary, and as far as it is really good, only follows out the teachings or guidings of nature. And this quite independently of the trouble which is saved by it to anyone who wishes to consult books of reference, and still more to examine large and well-arranged

collections of eggs, whether for his own direct instruction, or merely in search of interesting pastime. If a boy only knows that a Reed Sparrow is called a Reed Sparrow or a Black-headed Bunting, and he wanted to find the Reed Sparrow's eggs in a well-stocked collection, he might be half an hour before he hit upon what he wanted; but if he knew that the generic name of the Bunting was *Emberiza*, and the specific name of the Reed Sparrow, *Schœniclus* he would be able to pitch upon his quarry in half a minute. Besides all which, no one was ever the worse for learning habits of orderly and systematic arrangement, even though he had to pay the price of doing a little puzzling head-achy work, and had to bother himself with a good many ugly-looking, ill-sounding, jaw-cracking words, such as Coccothraustes, Troglodytes, Platyrhynca, Phalacrocorax, and the like.

It is proposed in this little book to adopt a classification which seems to meet with very general acceptance or acquiescence, and principally for that reason;—that, namely, which was employed by the late Mr. Yarrell. This classification depends on the system which divides all birds whatever into five great classes,[1] *viz*:—

[1] It will possibly be thought by some of my readers—and I must admit that I have again and again debated the consideration with myself—that it was scarcely necessary, perhaps desirable, to suffer this and what follows to reappear in a new Edition. On the whole, I thought it was; because it will at least serve to direct attention to the greatness of the changes consequent on more careful and more scientific investigation which have been introduced during the period which has elapsed since the first appearance of this little book. These will in this way be caused to appear less abrupt and startling, and the reader to be better prepared for them, when he comes to the

I.	*Raptores*	Prey-catchers.
II.	*Insessores*	Perchers.
III.	*Rasores*	Scratchers.
IV.	*Grallatores*	Waders.
V.	*Natatores*	Swimmers.

Each of these classes, or "Orders," as they are technically called, is again divided either into distinct Families, or (at least in some cases) into Sub-classes, or Groups; these Groups being then further sub-divided into families. Again, these Families are made up of more or fewer *genera*, and each *genus* of more or fewer *species*. These *species*, so many of them as compose any particular genus, all differ from one another more or less, but yet have a strong general resemblance, or (what may familiarly be called) strong family likeness to each other.

The general scheme or, as I may almost call it, the skeleton of our classification, will therefore stand thus:—

ORDER I.—RAPTORES.

FAMILY	I.	*Vulturidæ*[1] . .	Vulture-kind.
	II.	*Falconidæ* . . .	Falcon-kind.
	III.	*Strigidæ*	Owl-kind.

more modern arrangement which will be found at the close of the Introduction to the present Edition.

[1] *Vulturidæ*, *Falconidæ*, and the other similar names of Families, are, most of them, Latin words, with Greek forms or terminations. The true or real meaning of any one of them would be, that the birds in the Family so named are the children, or descendants, of the bird or birds whose name is used—thus, *Vulturidæ*, sons of a Vulture or Vultures—which, of course, is nonsense, as the words are applied.

ORDER II.—INSESSORES.

Group 1.—Dentirostres (Tooth-Billed).

Family	I. *Laniadæ*	Butcher-bird-kind.
	II. *Muscicapidæ* . .	Flycatcher-kind.
	III. *Merulidæ* . . .	Thrush-kind.
	IV. *Sylviadæ*[1] . . .	Wood-bird-kind.
	V. *Paridæ*	Titmouse-kind.
	VI. *Ampelidæ* . . .	Waxwing-kind.
	VII. *Motacillidæ* . . .	Wagtail-kind.
	VIII. *Anthidæ*	Anthus-kind.

Group 2.—Conirostres (Cone-Billed).

Family	I. *Alaudidæ* . . .	Lark-kind.
	II. *Emberizidæ* . . .	Bunting-kind.
	III. *Fringillidæ* . . .	Finch-kind.
	IV. *Sturnidæ* . . .	Starling-kind.
	V. *Corvidæ*	Crow-kind.

What is *meant* by the use of the words in question is that the birds grouped together in any one Family, all participate in some likeness of kind—are, so to speak, "connections" of each other, or that there is a sort of kinship among them. This I have tried to convey in the annexed translation. It ought to be observed also that the bird whose name is given to the entire Family is selected for such purpose as possessing the characteristic qualities or peculiarities of the Family in question, or, at least, most of them, in the strongest and most marked degree. [The reader should, on this point, consult the Introduction to the present edition.]

[1] *Sylviadæ* I have translated Wood-bird-kind, because *Sylvia* means something connected with wood, if it means anything. *Sylvia* is taken, in bird-nomenclature, to denote a Warbler; and it may be said, that most of those birds which come under this division are Warblers in some sense, and are, in some degree or other, of sylvan habits; at least if we give to the word "sylvan" some latitude of meaning.

GROUP 3.—SCANSORES (CLIMBERS).

FAMILY	I.	*Picidæ*	Woodpecker-kind.
	II.	*Certhiadæ* . . .	Creeper-kind.
	III.	*Cuculidæ*	Cuckoo-kind.

GROUP 4.—FISSIROSTRES (CLEFT-BILLED).

FAMILY	I.	*Meropidæ* . . .	Bee-eater-kind.
	II.	*Halcyonidæ* . . .	Kingfisher-kind.
	III.	*Hirundinidæ* . .	Swallow-kind.
	IV.	*Caprimulgidæ* . .	Goatsucker-kind.

ORDER III.—RASORES (SCRATCHERS).

FAMILY	I.	*Columbidæ* . . .	Dove-kind.
	II.	*Phasianidæ* . . .	Pheasant-kind.
	III.	*Tetraonidæ* . . .	Grouse-kind.
	IV.	*Struthionidæ* . .	Ostrich-kind.

ORDER IV.—GRALLATORES (WADERS).

FAMILY	I.	*Charadriidæ* . .	Plover-kind.
	II.	*Gruidæ*	Crane-kind.
	III.	*Ardeidæ*	Heron-kind.
	IV.	*Scolopacidæ* . . .	Woodcock-kind.
	V.	*Rallidæ*	Rail-kind.
	VI.	*Lobipedidæ* . . .	Lobed-foot-kind.

ORDER V.—NATATORES (SWIMMERS).

FAMILY	I.	*Anatidæ*	Duck-kind.
	II.	*Colymbidæ* . . .	Diver-kind.
	III.	*Alcadæ*	Auk-kind.
	IV.	*Pelecanidæ* . . .	Pelican-kind.
	V.	*Laridæ*	Gull-kind.

Such being the skeleton of our classification, the details necessary for the completion of the entire system or frame will be most conveniently given as we proceed to notice in detail the various Orders, their component Families and subordinate members.

CHAPTER II.

ANY one who is conversant with Yarrell's admirable "British Birds," will most likely have noticed that that author gives in almost every case very precise measurements of the eggs of each particular species of bird described. And it might, at first sight, seem to be so necessary to give such measurements that one would very likely feel half inclined to pronounce a book of birds' eggs very imperfect, which omitted all notice of dimensions. But the fact is, such measurements are, in so very many different instances, altogether fallacious and likely to mislead. Thus Mr. Yarrell's measurements of the Blackbird's egg are, "the length one inch, two lines; the breadth ten lines." That is no doubt a good average or approximate measurement, but I have Blackbirds' eggs before me which vary between half a line, or $\frac{1}{24}$ of an inch, less, and a line, or $\frac{1}{12}$ of an inch, more in length, and between half a line more or less, in breadth. Again, I have two Starlings' eggs on my table, both taken from the same pigeon-cote in Essex; one of which is $1\frac{9}{50}$ inch long by $\frac{45}{50}$ inch broad; the other $1\frac{5}{50}$ inch long, and $\frac{38}{50}$ inch broad; while to the eye the latter is not much more than half as large as the former. Moreover, Mr. Yarrell's measurements for this bird's eggs are precisely the same as for those of the Black-

bird, and not only not tallying with those of either of my eggs, but not even presenting a near approach to the medium dimensions.

Great numbers of similar instances might be adduced, and in connection with the very commonest birds. Even eggs from the same nest may continually be met with, presenting great disparity in bulk; one in the number being frequently so small in comparison with the others, as invariably to set one thinking it must have been the last laid, and that a partial failure of egg-producing power in the mother-bird must be the explanation of the phenomenon.

It seems scarcely open to question that the physical condition of the parent-bird must exercise a great influence over its egg-producing capacity. Its powers may be impaired by age, by the effects of recent injury or sickness, by a partial failure of some necessary element of food, by undue pressure on the egg-producing organs, such as must occur by the loss of one or more early layings. Indeed all these causes are well known to interfere with the reproductive energies of animals at large, and it is a thoroughly ascertained fact that both the first and the last act most strongly in the case of many birds. The comparative size of birds' eggs, therefore, seems to me a matter to which it is unnecessary, if not inexpedient, to direct the young collector's attention; in any other way, at least, than as to a matter of curious observation and contrast. As a means of identification it fails completely, and is only adverted to here for the purpose of obviating a portion of the perplexity which may often occur in practice to the youthful egg-fancier from the differ-

ence in size between different specimens of what are in reality eggs of the same species of birds, but seem to him, from their discrepancy of dimensions, not possibly so.

Again, the colour and markings of many different species of eggs are found to admit of great variation. The most familiar and striking instance is in the case of the Guillemot; but one more within the reach of every nest-hunter is presented by the eggs of the Blackbird. Sometimes the spots on them are very minute and multitudinous; almost confluent from their number and minuteness; sometimes large and well-defined and permitting the ground-shade of the shell to be very apparent; sometimes reddish in colour, closely approaching the shade of those on the Ring Ousel's egg, and sometimes brown in hue, with no reddish tinge at all; and sometimes they disappear altogether, or very nearly, and leave the egg with a strong resemblance to the little-spotted Thrush's egg.[1] To such an extent is this the case, that a year or two since I was misled into assuming that four eggs which I found in a nest with all the characters of a Blackbird's nest, must most certainly, from their colour and markings, be assigned to a Thrush original and not to a Blackbird. Other familiar instances of the same kind may be noticed as met with in the House Sparrow, the Tree Pipit, the Sky Lark, the Yellow Hammer, one or more of the Hawks, etc.

In the fabric and materials of nests, again, as constructed by birds of the same species, much dissimilarity, under peculiar circumstances, will be found to

[1] Yarrell, i. 204. Hewitson, i. 63.

prevail. But really not more than might have been looked for beforehand, if it were not that, in our usual way of thinking about birds and other animals, we lay so much stress upon Instinct, and do not so much as admit to our notice the possibility that many of their actions may be prompted by a measure of intelligence, and not simply an unconsidering, unreasoning influence, which we term their Instinctive endowment. No doubt Instinct teaches them both to build and how to build their nests, and what materials are the most suitable, and the sites that are most eligible. But it is scarcely Instinct which sets the Eagle and the Crow, when their abode is in a place that does not furnish the sticks they commonly or instinctively use for building their nests, to adopt instead of sticks the sea-weed stems which their home does produce. And so too of the House Sparrow, which, if it selects a tree or ivy for its site, builds a huge domed or well covered-in nest, but only lines the bottom of the hole in thatch, or a wall, with abundant feathers or hair or straw. The Wren, again, which usually builds its nest so that it may easily be removed entire and compact, may be found to avail itself of such a site for its nest, that it may be built on the principle of application—like the Martin's to the wall beneath the eaves—so that, when taken from its site, it shall appear to have had a segment completely cut out or sliced off from it.

The adaptation of materials to site also, so as to secure a greater degree of concealment by making the intrusive structure assimilate in external fabric and hue to the surrounding objects, is well worthy of

receiving attention, as supplying not only fresh sources of seeming unlikeness in nests of the same species of birds, but also fresh instances of the little feathered architect's wonderful adaptive intelligence.

The question,—Why are birds' eggs, in so many cases, so variously and beautifully ornamented? Why are their hues and markings made so attractive to look at? has often been asked, and two or three different answers or modes of answer have been suggested. I have seen the idea started that the design of such various colouring and marking is intended to facilitate concealment, by the adaptation of the general hue of the egg to that of the recipient or supporting substances. The theory is at least original and amusing; but unfortunately less happy than when applied to the plumage of the birds themselves which lay the eggs. It is no easy thing to detect a Partridge as she sits, lifeless-seeming, amid other objects not more still than herself, and presenting no great contrast in colour to her feathers: but there is no difficulty in seeing her eggs as they lie in the nest, And so well aware is she of the fact, that she always covers her eggs with some convenient and suitable material—last year's oak leaves, for example—when leaving her nest deliberately, or not under the impulses of alarm. The Hedge Sparrow's eggs again, or any other blue egg, how can they be supposed to become less conspicuous by their colour when reposing in some earth-brown or hay-coloured nest-cup?

If it had been said that the Golden Plover's eggs, the Peewit's, the Snipe's, the Norfolk Plover's—not to name many others of which the same might be alleged

—were of such general hue, so shaded and so marked as to be anything but conspicuous, as to be indeed well calculated to escape any but a most scrutinising notice, in the apologies for nests which usually contain them, the entire truth of the remark would have appealed to every nest-finder's experience and assent: but it will not do so in any other form.

It is impossible to lay down any rule for the colours of eggs in connection with the places, or nature of the places, in which they are laid. White eggs are not laid in nests built in dark holes as a rule—indeed, very much the contrary; witness the Dove's eggs, and so many of those of the Duck tribe; nor are dark-coloured eggs invariably found to be laid where exposed to the greatest amount of broad daylight. There seems to be no rule in the matter.

Again, another answer to the question just noticed is, Eggs were made so beautiful, and so various in their beauty, to gratify and gladden man's eye. I don't dispute the fact that the beautiful shape, and the beautiful tints, and the beautiful markings do gratify and gladden the human eye and human heart too. I know they do, and in thousands of cases, and with a great, pure pleasure. But that is a very different thing from saying that God made them so for no other reason, or even for that purpose as a principal reason. How many thousands of eggs, for ten that are seen by man, escape all human notice whatever! How many millions upon millions in the old-world times before there were men to see them, must have had their fair colours, and delicate symmetry, and harmonious intermingling of hues, for no purpose

whatever according to this view! No, no. Nature should not be read so. God made the Beasts of the Field, and the Birds of the Air, and the Fishes of the Sea, and the Insects, and the Shells, and the Trees, and Herbs, and Flowers, all, as a rule, wonderfully, gloriously, harmoniously beautiful, because He is a God of order, and beauty, and harmony; because it would have been inconsistent with His own Being, with the necessary purposes of such a Being, with the declared objects of such a Being in Creation, not to have made all "very good;" and the same reason which accounts for the beauty of the myriad flowers "born to blush unseen," for that of the innumerable shells and insects of past days and the present day, for that of the glorious birds of Tropic lands, is all that we want in the way of explanation of the symmetry and beauty of the bird's egg. God made it as well as all other things "very good."

Something more to the point for the practical egg-hunter, and even although he may be not very juvenile, is to recommend the practice of jotting down notes of any peculiarity of either nest or eggs or behaviour of parent birds, in any supposable case that may be a little unusual. Such notes are always interesting and very often useful at some long subsequent period; useful in themselves, and useful too as commenting on or else illustrated by, the similar memoranda of other observers. Besides, in what is put down upon paper while the incident is still fresh, and the memory of it not interfered with by other and newer matters of strong interest, the record is sure to be accurate; while mere recollection at a later

date is about sure to be insufficient or untrustworthy.

Perhaps the boy-collector too may not think a few sentences about blowing and drying and mounting his egg-treasures either tiresome or unnecessary. As a rule, let the egg intended to be kept be blown and dried as soon as possible. There are several reasons for this piece of advice. The light shells travel more safely than the full egg; the egg shells do not suffer detriment from lying overlooked, with their contents rotting within, as often happens with the collector of uncareful and unprecise habits; they are put into a state of comparative readiness for prompt and complete preparation and arrangement; and though last not least, a good, useful, methodical habit is encouraged in the collector himself.

There are several ways of blowing an egg and going through the preparatory stages of fitting it to take its place in a collection. There are also instruments for extracting the contents of the shell so as to obviate the necessity of making more than one hole. I don't think they are likely to be of much use to a mere boy.[1] I am sure they would be a great deal of trouble, and I don't think that the end gained would repay the

[1] If, however, the boy has or acquires them, the following note is useful:—"The simplest and best way of blowing eggs is to drill a hole in one side (not at the ends), then taking the egg, hole downwards, between the finger and thumb of the left hand, place the blowpipe point just outside the hole, and blow into the egg; this will force out the contents. When this is done, blow a little clean water into the egg, and shake it well; then remove the water in the same way as above, and allow the egg to dry hole downwards on blotting paper; it will then be quite clean." This note was appended to the first Edition.

trouble and care expended. I have always found a small hole, only just large enough to admit the passage of sufficient air to expel the contents, made very carefully and neatly at the small end, and a larger one about half-way between the great end and the line of greatest diameter, which need not be more than a line in breadth for the very largest eggs (if not "hard-sat") quite sufficient for my purpose, and not objectionable on the score of disfiguring the shell; for by mounting the egg with the larger or vent hole downwards—the smaller hole being practically invisible in a great number of instances, at least until looked for—it appears to be altogether entire and perfect.

Any tolerably strong pin will do for the purpose with small eggs. For the larger and harder shells something more efficient will be required. A hard steel instrument fashioned like a "glover's needle"—that is with the penetrating end furnished with three edges all lost in the point—is as good as anything that could be devised, and by having two or three of different sizes, every case of necessity would be provided for. The sharp-pointed pen-blade may be employed, but great care is necessary lest, when the perforation is just effected, the instrument should slip a little farther in than was intended, and an ugly fragment of shell be wrenched out.

When the egg is thoroughly blown, it is advisable to draw up a little clean water into it by the process of immersing the vent-hole and sucking or drawing in the air from the shell with the mouth through the other—just reversing the late process of "blowing," in short. The shell, when half-full, should be well

shaken, and the water then expelled as the legitimate contents had been: a very gentle puff will suffice for this. Repeat the process two or three times, or until the water comes out as clear as it went in; then dry the egg as well as you can by blowing through it at intervals, after it has been so held that the moisture on the inside may all trickle down towards the vent-hole; after which it may be set up for some hours in an airy, but not sunny, place to dry thoroughly. Some collectors varnish their eggs. A little of the white of the egg itself is all-sufficient, and that should not be applied unless the egg is perfectly clean, which is by no means the case with the eggs of many ground-building birds when taken from the nest. I have taken Dabchicks' eggs also so completely muddied all over, that it was almost impossible to get them clean. One, met with on one of the Essex marshes a year or two since, which was the only one yet laid and apparently not a day old, was so engrained with dirt or mud that it defied all efforts to restore it to its pristine whiteness. In the case of an originally white egg, such efforts at cleansing will not do much harm; in the case of an egg strongly marked with deep colours, it is a different matter. The efforts to remove the clay or dirt imparted by the feet of the parent bird may succeed in removing the stains in question, but may also very likely remove some of the tints or stronger colouring too. It must be remembered that the deeper colours of many eggs are not "fast," at all events when they have not been long laid, and that attempts at cleansing, more vigorous than judicious, may easily produce an undesired result.

If the vent-hole is necessarily made large, there is no objection to placing a piece of thin or gauze paper, wetted with the varnish or white of the egg, so as to cover the entire orifice, and so exclude dust or other intrusive substances. As to mounting the eggs, and labelling for insertion in the collection, much depends on taste. An ordinary "printer's" card is as good for the purpose as anything, and a little very strong gum-water is the only other requisite. A little attention to placing the eggs symmetrically and neatly, and the use of a few gun-wads or halfpence or small wooden wedges, to retain the eggs when accurately set in their true position, until the gum has had time to harden, are matters which will almost surely suggest themselves to any youthful egg-fancier who is only tolerably given to admire the "*simplex munditiis*." As for labels, they may either be neatly written, or procured, at a very slight cost, printed on purpose for such application. [See the remarks on the "Ibis" list in the Introduction which follows.]

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

THIRTY-FIVE years ago the author did not regard the writing of introductory chapters to the Original Edition of the present book either difficult or accompanied with risk. But the writing of an introduction to a New and Revised Edition, under the circumstances of the present time, is by no means so easy a task or one to be lightly undertaken. Then, it was all comparatively plain sailing, with no hidden rocks ahead, or risk of running upon hazardous quicksands. But now, there are breakers ahead in the diversity of conflicting views as to divers matters closely connected with ornithological questions; and, apart from the shoals of error which it may require the nicest steering to avoid, it is only too certain that there is no chart laid down of sufficient accuracy to save the course of the craft from being interfered with by the influence of divers currents of differing and discordant views and opinions.

It is quite true that, within the interval of time just adverted to, vast and most interesting additions have been made to our knowledge about birds, and matters connected with them; their habits, their haunts, their life-history, and especially the general run of facts connected with their nests and eggs, their places of nidification and all other circumstances of interest to the egg-collector.

But, recognising in the fullest manner that this is so, it is, at the least, equally open to recognition that, notwithstanding the acquisition of a certain very large amount of positive information and knowledge on these and such-like topics, there is still a vast array of ornithological matters remaining under debate, which, moreover, are discussed with the usual amount of warmth and mutual "agreement" still "to differ."

But interesting as all such discussions may be and are to the scientific student and observer, it scarcely follows that it would prove to be of interest to the commencing bird-naturalist or the boy nest-hunter and egg-collector. And what the editor of this "New and Revised" issue of his book has especially to think of is that the readers he has to desire as well as to write and provide for, must mainly belong to a class who are not, as yet, at least, either scientific or deeply read, whether as bird-observers or ornithological students. The time may come when they will be both. But in the meantime, it seems to be an object to be aimed at by the editor of this new edition of a book, merely elementary (the kindly reception of which by many past generations of nest-hunters and egg-collectors has greatly gratified the author), while

steering clear of uninteresting, perhaps unnecessary technicalities, to be equally careful alike to admit nothing such as to discourage the attempt after more accurate knowledge, and, on the other hand, by no means to omit to notice anything that may possibly serve to assist all such as desire, or may be aspire to, fuller and completer knowledge.

With such views, then, the reviser might, and most likely would, make a great mistake if he burdened the few pages available to him for fresh matter with disquisitions as to the superiority of this or that system of arrangement over some other or others; or the preferableness of this or that classified list of genera and species, orders, families, and sub-families over this or that other. The misfortune is—and it really is a great misfortune to very many juvenile enquirers about "our feathered friends"—that there are so many differences or divergences or contentions as those above alluded to. It will be our endeavour to keep as clear of them all as one possibly can in a book of this sort.

Still, it is absolutely necessary to the very being of the book itself, that there should be some preference shown, inasmuch as without it there could be no attempt made at arrangement or classification of any sort or degree whatever. In the Original Edition the author took the then recent work by the late Mr. Yarrell—a book welcomed with the liveliest and heartiest recognition by all the ornithological world—as his standard book or book of reference. In the interval between the completed publication of the original edition of Yarrell's work and the present time, that

book has passed through three other editions. Of these "the second and third editions," as the editor of the first two volumes of the fourth edition says in his "Prospectus," "with the exception of some few, though not unimportant, additions and alterations, were, as a whole, mere reprints of the first, which appeared some thirty"—now more than forty—"years ago." But the same cannot be said of the fourth and last edition; and, least of all, can it be said of the third and fourth volumes thereof. Certain systematic changes were made, as well as alterations rather than merely additions, in the first two volumes (for the original three volumes had been expanded into four in the latest issue), such as might be looked upon as satisfactorily established. But the editorship of this new edition expired when it was half way through, and at the close of the second volume—the last edited by Professor Newton—he writes as follows:—"I am not responsible for anything that may follow by another editor."

This was in 1882; and the changes that have been made under the direction of "another editor" are very great; and it may be added that there is, if not an universal, still a very considerable consensus of opinion that the systematic changes and alterations adverted to are such as may be regarded as in the main satisfactorily established. But, still, there is no question possible but that they have introduced a very marked incongruity between the systematic arrangement adopted in the former editions, and even in the former half of the fourth edition itself, and that exhibited in the later and concluding moiety of the same.

Thus, Mr. Yarrell himself begins with the order *Raptores*, an arrangement followed in all the three earlier editions, and by Professor Newton in the commencing volume of the fourth. But the newer systems put the *Passeres* (or as it is in some lists *Pico-Passeres*) as the first order; and it is unnecessary to dwell upon the almost utter subversion of Mr. Yarrell's classification that is occasioned by this change alone. Only it is very far indeed from standing alone. It is but the first of a series of changes which may almost be characterised as startling.

Unhappily, there is not complete accordance, nor too striking an approach to it, among those who depart from the older arrangement; and the present writer feels that the best he can do for the readers, for whom the present book is principally designed, is to mark the differences of System, Classification, Nomenclature, and so forth, in such a way as shall tend the least to confuse the young reader's mind, and, at the same time, make it evident that many matters are still left for further and fuller enquiry; taking, however, every care to avoid interference with the main object of such a book as this—which ought to be of course, and is intended to be, to render help to the young nest-hunter and egg-collector; to help him, in fact, to classify the results of the prizes he gains and discoveries he makes, as well as, perhaps, in the desire to compare the collection he compiles with other and larger and more complete and well-arranged collections within his reach whenever such an opportunity may happen to offer itself.

Such an object as this renders unnecessary, even if it does not exclude as mistaken and misplaced, any attempt at scientific disquisition as to the differences or divergences just now referred to; but perhaps it apologises, even if it does not call, for some notice of another topic not altogether unconnected. I mean, the resort to some list or key-list, some catalogue, or summary, or systematic sketch of the orders, genera, and species of British birds. The writer has several before him as he pens these lines. One by Mr. Henry Seebohm; another by Lieutenant-Colonel Howard Irby, for instance. Then there is the "Ibis" List, which is the list compiled for the British Ornithological Union, besides some others of more or less considerable standing. Then again, there are the lists one can make for oneself by copying from some such book as Saunders' "Manual of British Birds," or from the earlier pages of the several volumes of the last edition of Yarrell's "History of British Birds," so largely referred to above. All of these, however, will be found to differ more or less in divers matters; such, for instance, as the number of birds whose names should be admitted into the list of British birds; or the arrangement proposed or followed; or the nature of the nomenclature adopted. Among more than one of the drawbacks thus enumerated, Mr. Seebohm's list has certainly this advantage, that, besides giving a most valuable summary of the geographical distribution of each British bird, it is also arranged for "Labels of Collections of British Birds or Eggs." The name of each separate species, together with the information about it, is printed on one side of the paper

only, so that the list can easily be cut up into separate slips as desired.

There is, however, one special advantage attaching itself to the "Ibis" List. I mean that it gives the various synonyms that have been proposed (and by different authorities accepted) by scientific systematists for our various British birds. To give an instance of what I mean:—Take the well-known bird called the Bullfinch. In different systems it is called *Loxia Pyrrhula, Pyrrhula Europœa, Pyrrhula Vulgaris, Pyrrhula Rubicilla,* and *Pyrrhula Pileata.* Here are five scientific "*aliases*" for one familiar bird. The Lesser Redpoll and the Mealy Redpoll each have six such "*aliases*," and the Common Guillemot is so very far from being ordinarily "respectable," that it has a list of seven scientific "*aliases*" belonging to it. Of course all this is, to an outsider, very absurd;[1] while to a would-be learner it is very perplexing. The "Ibis" List tables all these *aliases,* as I have called them—"synonyms" the learned call them—and they may be seen and scanned at one glance.

"The nesting-places," says Mr. Headley ("Structure and Life of Birds," p. 348), "the nesting-places of all the British migrants except one, the Curlew Sandpiper, have been found, thanks chiefly to the energy

[1] It is, however, intensified, and in a much more serious degree, in the list of synonyms (or as I have called them "aliases") given in Mr. Henry Seebohm's "History of British Birds," refixed to the letterpress belonging to the description of each several species. Thus the very familiar English bird, the Chiffchaff, has no less than twenty-seven scientific synonyms printed below its English (or common) name. And for the purpose of this illustration, I opened on it by the merest hazard.

of our English ornithologists. Our summer visitants have been seen and recognised in their South African winter resorts by English travellers." That is quite true, but it is not much more to our special object and purpose—which is mainly limited to British-breeding birds—than a detailed notice of the differences and vagaries of opinion as to the purely scientific matters of Structure and System to which reference has been made in the nearly preceding paragraphs. Our business certainly lies with the birds which build nests and lay their eggs in England—at least in Britain—and more especially with those which are most commonly met with.

But from time to time the nest and eggs of a bird that breeds but rarely among us are met with, and some notice of such bird is called for; as also of the helps and facilities which are afforded, in other books, towards the identification of such birds, and their allocation among the order, or group, or family they belong to.

With this view, I append here a sketch of the systematic arrangement adopted in the last edition of Yarrell's "British Birds"; and to the subsequent letterpress will be added notices of some of the members of the several groups therein specified, or such additional nesting notes as may seem to have either some approach to novelty, or else some attractiveness or helpfulness for the juvenile nest-hunter and collector of eggs; who, though not a scientific ornithologist at present, may easily be a real lover of birds and their ways and belongings now, and grow up in increasing regard and admiration both for

themselves and the wonderful objects of study their history reveals.

A comparison of the scheme which follows with that which is left standing in the "Introductory Chapter to the Original Edition" may be not altogether without profit to one who desires really to study the general subject. The orders, it will be noticed, are altered, and both in name and constitution, and the same as to groups or sub-orders. The same as to families and sub-families; and again, the same as to the genera constituting these latter divisions. But it is hoped that neither what is left, nor what is substituted for the old, will be such as to interfere with the utility and interest of the book to the rising ornithologist.

ORDER.—ACCIPITRES.

FAMILY	I.	*Vulturidæ* . .	(2 members or species.)
	II.	*Falconidæ*	(22 members.)
	III.	*Strigidæ*	(10 „)

ORDER.—PASSERES.

FAMILY	I.	*Laniadæ*	(4 members.)
	II.	*Muscicapidæ* . . .	(3 „)
	III.	*Oriolidæ*.	(1 member.)
	IV.	*Cinclidæ*.	(1 „)
	V.	*Ixidæ*	(1 „)
	VI.	*Turdidæ*	(9 members.)
	VII.	*Sylviadæ*	(30 „)
	VIII.	*Troglodytidæ* . . .	(1 member.)
	IX.	*Certhiadæ*	(1 „)
	X.	*Sittidæ*	(1 „)

XI.	*Paridæ*	(6 members.)
XII.	*Panuridæ*	(1 member.)
XIII.	*Ampelidæ*	(1 „)
XIV.	*Motacillidæ*. . . .	(11 members.)
XV.	*Alaudidæ*	(6 „)
XVI.	*Emberizidæ* . . .	(10 „)
XVII.	*Fringillidæ*. . . .	(20 „)
XVIII.	*Icteridæ*	(1 member.)
XIX.	*Sturnidæ*	(2 members.)
XX.	*Corvidæ*.	(9 „)
XXI.	*Hirundinidæ* . . .	(4 „)

ORDER.—PICARIÆ.

FAMILY	I.	*Cypselidæ*	(2 members.)
	II.	*Caprimulgidæ* . . .	(1 member.)
	III.	*Cuculidæ*.	(3 members.)
	IV.	*Upupidæ*	(1 member.)
	V.	*Coracidæ*	(1 „)
	VI.	*Meropidæ*	(1 „)
	VII.	*Alcedinidæ*	(2 members.)
	VIII.	*Picidæ*	(4 „)

ORDER.—COLUMBÆ.

FAMILY	I.	*Columbidæ*	(5 members.)

ORDER.—PTEROCLETES.

FAMILY	I.	*Pteroclidæ*	(1 member.)

ORDER.—GALLINÆ.

FAMILY	I.	*Tetraonidæ*. . . .	(4 members.)
	II.	*Phasianidæ* . . .	(4 „)

ORDER.—HEMIPODII.

FAMILY I. *Turnicidæ* . . . . (1 member.)

ORDER.—FULICARIÆ.

FAMILY I. *Rallidæ* . . . . . (7 members.)

ORDER.—ALECTORIDES.

FAMILY I. *Gruidæ* . . . . . (1 member.)
II. *Otididæ* . . . . . (3 members.)

ORDER.—LIMICOLÆ.

FAMILY I. *Œdicnemidæ* . . . (1 member.)
II. *Glareolidæ* . . . . (1 „)
III. *Charadriidæ* . . . (10 members.)
IV. *Scolopacidæ* . . . . (36 „)

ORDER.—GAVIÆ.

FAMILY I. *Laridæ* . . . . . (30 members.)

ORDER.—TUBINARES.

FAMILY I. *Procellariidæ* . . . (9 members)
II. *Oceanitidæ* . . . . (1 member.)

ORDER.—PYGOPODES.

FAMILY I. *Alcidæ* . . . . . (7 members.)
II. *Colymbidæ* . . . . (3 „)
III. *Podicipedidæ* . . . (5 „)

ORDER.—STEGANOPODES.

FAMILY I. *Pelecanidæ* . . . . (3 members.)

ORDER.—HERODIONES.

FAMILY	I. *Ardeidæ*	(10 members.)
	II. *Ciconiidæ*	(2 „)
	III. *Ibididæ*	(1 member.)
	IV. *Plataleidæ*	(1 „)

ORDER.—ODONTOGLOSSÆ.

FAMILY	I. *Phœnicopteridæ* . .	(1 member.)

ORDER.—ANSERES.

FAMILY	I. *Anatidæ*	(44 members.)

BRITISH BIRDS, THEIR EGGS AND NESTS.

In the following pages I shall endeavour, as far as my subject will permit, to avoid mere dry and uninteresting detail. It is, of course, quite inconsistent with the nature of the book to omit matter-of-fact descriptions altogether, or even in any very great degree; but an effort will be made to relieve the whole from wearing the appearance of a catalogue in disguise, and to give it as much of a life-like practical character as possible. How many incidents in a school-boy's life are connected, in his memory, with some nesting expedition, some recollection of perhaps an accidental discovery of a nest and eggs he had never seen before, or possibly wished and tried to find, but always wished and tried in vain. Such experiences are always pleasant and interesting in their detail to the real lover of birds and their belongings; and often almost as much so when detailed by others as when reproduced in his own recollections of former days, and their hopes, and plans, and successes, and disappointments, each often renewed, or often repeated under some varying form Why, then, should not such matters stand here and there in these pages?

Our plan, therefore, will be to omit all special notice of the nests and eggs of so-called "British Birds," whose only claim to the designation lies in their having been met with once or twice, or even some half-dozen times in the British Isles: to omit it, that is, in the body of the book, and to give such reference or description of at least the more interesting species and their eggs, as space may allow, in an Appendix. Accounts will be, however, given of the habits of nidification and the eggs of all unquestionably British birds, even although their breeding habitat be in another country, or most rarely and exceptionally within the compass of the British seas; such birds, for instance, as the Fieldfare, the Redwing, the Snow Bunting, and others, besides several of the *Anatidæ*. We begin, therefore, with our first Order.

ORDER.—ACCIPITRES.

FAMILY I.—VULTURIDÆ.

Two members of this Family, classed by some naturalists as belonging to the same *genus*, by others as species of two different *genera*, have been met with in Britain; but I believe one of them, the first-named below, only once, the other only twice or three times. They are only mentioned here as showing the justification there is for claiming the family of *Vulturidæ* as being in anywise exemplified in birds belonging to the British Isles.

GRIFFON VULTURE—(*Gyps; fulvus* formerly, *Vultur fulvus*).

EGYPTIAN VULTURE—(*Neophron percnopterus*).

FAMILY II.—FALCONIDÆ.

There are several species belonging to this family of sufficiently common occurrence even still in these days of game preservers, gamekeepers, and vermin-killers.

Time was, and not so long since either, when many even of those most rare now were familiarily met with in almost all parts of the country; and Eagles and the Kite and several of the larger and more conspicuous Falcons and Hawks were not yet become so much like Black Swans, as they are now in so many English and even Scottish counties.

These birds differ, with a marked distinction, from those belonging to the Vulture-kind; and as much in habits and food and power of wing, as in appearance, formation, bill and claws, and other matters, such as the scientific naturalist notices for the purpose of enabling himself and others to distinguish between family and family, genus and genus, species and species.

Thus, the Vulture's food is usually carrion, the flesh of animals killed by other agency than their own, and in numberless instances in a state of putridity more or less complete.

The food of the Falcon tribe generally consists of the flesh of creatures taken and killed by themselves

I say generally;—not invariably. The Eagles in a state of nature do not disdain to gorge themselves on the flesh of a dead sheep, for instance, although they have had no hand—or rather beak and claw—in the death. Still the rule is, and admitting not many exceptions when the whole family is considered, that the Falconidæ hunt for, or surprise, and slay their prey for themselves. And very intent on this business are they oftentimes, when engaged in discussing the meal which their craft, or still vigilance, or fierce impetuous speed and dash has secured for them. Often, too, not a little sleepy and heavy are they after having been lucky enough to secure a large prey, and greedy enough to stuff themselves full with it.

The bird which stands at the head of the family and alike deserves and does credit to his rank is the

GOLDEN EAGLE—(*Aquila chrysaetos*).

It seems almost too tame to talk of an "Eagle's nest," and we seem almost to feel as if different words might well be applied to the nursery-structure of the King of Birds, and that of the tiny Tom-tit or the Wren. So, independently of the old meaning of the word eyry[1] which makes it so suitable as applied to the egg-home of the grand kingly birds, called Eagles,

1 Probably from Saxon *eghe* (*g* sounded like *y*) "an egg." The modern English form of the word would be *eggery* therefore; the old English form *eyry* or *eyrie*. Chaucer (about 1400) wrote *ey* for "egg." Professor Skeat, however, does not approve of the derivation from the Saxon, which would make the word equivalent to *eggery*. He would refer it rather to the Icelandic *arahreidr*, meaning "an eyrie, an eagle's nest"; Icel. *ari*, "an eagle"; *hreidr*, "a wreath," "a bird's nest."

we feel a sort of satisfaction in limiting the use of the word eyry to the Eagle's nest alone.

No easy matter is it always to cultivate a visiting acquaintance with an Eagle. His home is not in a place easy of access to any but himself, or those like himself, up-borne on wings. On rock platforms (not too scanty in size), in mountainous districts, and guarded by rugged, stern, precipitous rock-walls, utterly forbidding, in almost every case, access by human members from below, and not often to be safely reached from above, the great pile which forms the nest is usually built. Sometimes, but very rarely by comparison, it may be found on some large, possibly shattered, forest-trunk amid some wild, seldom-approached scene of loneliness or desolation. It is four to five feet in diameter, made of sticks of no mean size and length, sometimes lined with softer materials, sometimes not; the new or more recently constructed nest placed upon those of last year and other preceding years; and it would require a willing and able labourer to clear it thoroughly away, and no slight touch of the quality of the gate-bearing Jewish hero in the juvenile nest-seeker who might aspire to carry off such a trophy of his nesting exploits. The site chosen for the nest-pile too is almost invariably one which commands a wide, unhindered look-out; partly, it is likely, under the influence of the strong instinct of vigilance in self-preservation, partly also for the advantages offered by such a dwelling-place towards the detection of a distant prey.

The number of eggs deposited is usually two, sometimes three. They are commonly of a dull whitish

ground, mottled or marbled nearly or quite all over with a sort of rusty hue.

The young ones, while yet too young to leave the nest, are amply catered for by their parents. Lists are sometimes given of the spoils, feathered and four-footed, found in what may be styled the Eagle's larder —Black Game, Moor Game, Partridges, Hares, Rabbits, Lambs, young Roes, and so on, to an amount that would seem hardly credible to one not conversant with the Eagle's power of vision and mighty sweep of wing. Indeed there is a story told of a man in Ireland who got a fair provision for his family in a season of scarcity by no other effort than was requisite in plundering an Eagle's nest of the food brought in by the parent birds for their young. He is said also to have prolonged the season of supply by preventing the young ones from flying, by clipping their wings as the feathers grew. Instances have been known where the prey seized was human. Professor Wilson tells a touching story, in a touching way, of an incident of the kind, in which the infant was seized as it lay and slept where its mother had placed it, while herself busy not far off in the harvest field, and carried off by the strong bird to its eyry. The poor mother, frantic with her loss, blind to everything but the thought and effort for the recovery of her babe, safely scaled the precipice, high up on which the nest was placed—though no man, however skilful and expert as a crags-man, had ever dared attempt the ascent—found her babe alive and unhurt, and smiling in her face, descended again—a more perilous feat still—in safety; and once more on level ground at the foot, swooned

helplessly away. The Eagles did not attack her in reality, though their fierce menaces made the spectators tremble. Our boy readers if ever they found an Eagle's nest, which is not likely, might well need the protection of a good strong cudgel, fearlessly and skilfully wielded, before they succeeded in possessing themselves of one of its eggs.—*Fig.* 1, *plate I.*

SPOTTED EAGLE—(*Aquila nœvia*).

Met with in Britain once or twice only.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE—(*Haliætus albicilla*).

Called also Erne, Cinereous Eagle, Sea Eagle.—This species—a member of another *genus*, however—like the last, breeds amid high, almost inaccessible rocks, in the mountainous solitudes of Scotland, and some of the northernmost British Islands. The nest resembles the Golden Eagle's, but is often more cushioned—one can hardly say lined, when there is scarcely any cavity or depression to receive the eggs — more cushioned with soft material, such as heather or seaweed. This Eagle seldom lays more than two eggs, which in ground-colour are like the Golden Eagle's but not often noticeably marked with red.

The White-tailed Eagle is much more frequently seen south of the Border than the Golden Eagle. In fact, a year rarely passes without some record of the occurrence of this fine bird in more than one county of England, and those by no means always the most northerly. On the rabbit warrens of Norfolk and Suffolk they used frequently to be met with, and it

not seldom happens that two are seen together—perhaps the young from the same nest driven forth by their stern parents to seek their own living in the wide world.

The male Eagle of this species is known, like the male of many other kinds of birds, to take his turn with his mate in incubating their eggs. It would seem difficult for the observer to be mistaken in this fact; for the male bird, as is the case in the other families of the Falconidæ generally, is very distinctly smaller than the female—to the actual extent indeed of not much less than one-third of the entire size.

We come next to a raptorial bird, whose food is procured mainly from the water,—namely, the

OSPREY—(*Pandion haliäetus*).

The Osprey, or Fishing Hawk, or Mullet Hawk, or Eagle Fisher,[1] builds its nest sometimes on a tree, sometimes on some part of an ancient and deserted building—always on the highest part, a turret or chimney, for instance—and sometimes on a rock or precipitous scar. But a very favourite and almost characteristic site—speaking of the bird only as a British bird—is on some low insular rock in a wild mountain loch in Scotland. I extract a very striking description from "St. John's Tour in Sutherland": "The nest was placed in a most curious situation. About a hundred and fifty yards from the shore, there rose from the deep water a solitary rock, about ten feet high, shaped like a broken sugar-loaf or trun-

[1] A translation of the Gaelic name of the bird.

cated cone. On the summit of this was the nest, a pile of sticks of very great depth, evidently the accumulation of many breeding seasons, as the Osprey returns year after year to the same nest. How this heap of sticks withstood the winter gales without being blown at once into the water, puzzled me. . . . The female Osprey allowed our boat to approach within two hundred yards or so, and then, leaving her nest, sailed upwards with a circling flight, till she joined her mate high above us.

"Having reached the rock, and with some difficulty ascended to the nest, our disappointment may be imagined when we found it empty. From the old bird having remained on so long, we had made sure of finding eggs in it. The nest itself, however, was interesting to me, perched as it was on the very summit of the rock, and composed of large sticks,[1] every one of which must have been a heavy burden for a bird of the size of the Osprey.

"In the centre of the pile of sticks was a cup-shaped hollow, the size of a boy's cap, lined with moss and dead grass, and apparently quite ready to receive eggs." "In another nest," says the same author, elsewhere, "we found two beautiful eggs, of a roundish shape: the colour white, with numerous spots and marks of a fine rich red brown."—*Fig.* 2, *plate I.*

The Osprey is met with from time to time in almost all parts of the kingdom, but more especially along the east coast; but it is known to breed nowhere in England now. In America, it is met with in

[1] Some of the sticks—or rather branches—employed, are said to have been 1½ inch in diameter.

considerable numbers, forming, as it were, a large colony during the breeding season; of course, in the vicinity of some ample and convenient fishing station.

We come next to the Falcons, distinguished from the rest of the Hawks by, among other things, their long and pointed wings, and their vehement and rapid flight and dash in pursuing and seizing their quarry. First we notice the

GREENLAND FALCON—(*Falco Candicans;* formerly, *Grœnlandicus*).

Also called Jer Falcon or Gyr Falcon.

ICELAND FALCON—(*Falco Islandicus*).

Neither of these birds breed in Britain, and they are only occasional and somewhat rare visitants. Whatever notice can be afforded to them, will be met with in the Appendix.

PEREGRINE FALCON—(*Falco peregrinus*).

There was a time at which this bird was abundant enough in our island. It still breeds in many parts of both England and Scotland, though much more commonly in the latter country. But in the feudal times there would have been no difficulty to the young egg-collector—if such beings existed then—in meeting with the nest of the Peregrine, in districts suitable to their breeding habits and requirements. Although some consideration, it is true, might have been advisable previously to appropriating the contents of the

said nest for cabinet purposes. The right hand of the fortunate collector would have been the penalty in those days of strict "game laws." So stringent, indeed, were the provisions for preserving the Peregrine, that the customary breeding haunt of a pair was placed under the especial care of the occupiers of the land in the immediate vicinity, and they were made responsible, by the terms of their tenure, for the safe keeping of the noble birds and their offspring. One such site is in Goathland, on the line of the Pickering and Whitby Railway; and it is an interesting fact in the nesting habits of the Peregrine, that until within a recent period (and it is believed at the present time also), Killing-nab Scar has always been a site of that Falcon's nidification.[1] Many of its breeding places, perhaps like others in the interior, known time out of mind by some name derived from the circumstance of their being thus appropriated, such as Falcon-scar, Hawk-scar, Eagle-cliff, are among the tallest and least accessible rocks both in the interior and on the sea coast. The nest itself is placed on some projection, possibly within some fissure, and is made of sticks, or seaweed from the coast, and is lined with some hair, on which, for the hollow is not deep, the eggs repose. These are from two to four in number, often vary a good deal in size (probably according to the age of the laying bird), and not less in the markings and mottlings which pervade the entire surface. A reference to the

[1] It has bred in this vicinity more than once within the last half score years. I have had the details of more than one or two instances (two in the parish of Fylingdales) sent me only three or four years ago.

engraving will give a better idea of the colour and appearance of this beautiful egg, than any description. Indeed, description of many—of most—eggs fails altogether in conveying an adequate idea of what they are like.

These birds were greatly prized in the middle ages on account of their fitness for the highly-esteemed pursuit of Falconry; and their power of wing and magnificent flight are in themselves matters of great interest, quite independently of the excitement of the chase. The female, from her much greater size and strength, was emphatically "the Falcon"; the male, called the Tercel or Tiercel, being more frequently flown at much smaller game, as Partridges. A Falcon flight—although the science is no longer systematically cultivated as it used to be at Didlington and elsewhere—may still, however, be seen, from time to time, by the fortunately-placed observer, both Hawk and quarry being *ferœ natura.* Some luckless Gull, or Guillemot, or Rock Dove is selected by the strong freebooter and carried off from amid the passing multitudes with a fierce, rushing dash; and if there are young to be sustained, the onset and sweep may possibly be seen once and again.—*Fig.* 3, *plate I.*

HOBBY—(*Falco subbuteo*).

This beautiful and active little Hawk—a sort of "miniature Peregrine," Mr. Yarrell calls it—is not a permanent inhabitant of our country. Visiting our shores in April, it leaves us again before winter. It usually selects a high tree to nest in, very often appropriating the old year's or deserted nest of some

other bird—Hawk, or Magpie, or Crow—to be its bridal home. It lays two or three (very rarely four) eggs, beautiful, as all the Falcons' eggs are, and leaving no doubt as to their Falcon origin to anyone who is able even to tell "a Hawk from a Heronsheugh." They are of a nearly uniform pale dull red in ground-colour, thickly spotted and mottled with shades of deeper red. Larks and other small birds are taken—often after lengthened chases—but, besides its feathered prey, the Hobby, doubtless, destroys large numbers of beetles and other insects of any considerable size.—*Fig.* 4, *plate I.*

RED-FOOTED FALCON—(*Falco vespertinus*; formerly, *rufipes*).

Also Orange-legged Hobby, Red-legged Falcon.—Only a rare visitant. Breeds in Eastern Europe and Western Siberia (Seebohm).

MERLIN—(*Falco æsalon*).

Also Stone Falcon, Blue Hawk.—This beautiful bird makes its nest, in moorland districts at least, almost invariably on the ground; though it is rather a piece of flattery to say that it makes a nest at all. A little hollow in the ground, and that usually not too conspicuous by the absence of ling in its vicinity, with scarcely any lining, receives the eggs, three to five in number, and characterised by the reddish hue and spottings which seem to garnish the eggs of almost all the true Falcons. The nest is said to be sometimes built in a tree, and then, from Mr. Double-

day's account, seems to be made of sticks, and lined with wool. The Merlin, or Blue Hawk, as it is usually called here, has no longer, as it used to have, its stated nesting-places on our Danby moors. Still, it is not extinct. It is a very bold and active Hawk. —*Fig* 5, *plate I.*

KESTREL—(*Falco tinnunculus*).

Also Windhover, Creshawk, Hoverhawk, Stannel or Stannelhawk;—query Stand-gale, as Montagu writes one of its provincial names Stone-gall. Windhover certainly suggests the meaning of Stand-gale, and that word would be easily shortened into Stannel.

Who has not heard the sharp, ringing, half-laughing cry of the Kestrel? What nest-hunter has not often been warned by that well-known sound, as he came near some scarp of rocks, wood-beset, well qualified to furnish some ledge or crevice to hold the loosely-compacted structure of sticks and wool which does duty for this dainty-looking Hawk's nest? Yes; and have not more than one or two of us taken the young, and reared them to be our pets, and taken no little pleasure in their beauty and personal pride and preening cares? Often, too, in a tree, may the nest be found, and not seldom will it prove to have been not built by the Kestrels themselves, but found—perhaps as many other things are often said to be that certainly were never "lost" before they were "found" —ready-made to their wants by some luckless Crow or Magpie. And what nesting school-boy, too, does not know the four or five eggs—one of them often so much less than the rest—which are to be found in the

nest? Sometimes red all over, closely spotted with deeper red; sometimes blotched rather than spotted, and with large blotches; sometimes with a lighter ground-colour, but always tinged with red, though otherwise not so unlike the Sparrow Hawk's as not to remind one of that bird's eggs. I like to see, and I like to hear the Kestrel, though it is no dainty song he sings. I like to see him fly so stately and steadily along, and then pause and hover—his wings this moment moving rapidly, then as he sails off, seeming to be as moveless as his body—and next he rounds to so beautifully, and, after a moment's balancing, drops to the ground with swift, but so evenly regulated an impulse, and securing his mouse, sails off to feed his expectant young ones. Mice seem to form a favourite, if not staple, article of their food; but they are not exclusive in their diet. An occasional small bird, hosts of coleoptera or beetle-kind, cock-chafers in their season, grubs, and even worms, are known to be readily eaten by them. As intimated above, the species is everywhere familiar, and is alike too beautiful and too useful to be so wantonly killed as it too often is.—*Fig.* 6, *plate I.*

GOSHAWK—(*Astur palumbarius*).

We do not often see the Goshawk in any part of the kingdom, and very rarely indeed, except in some parts of Scotland and in Orkney. It, like the Peregrine, was in much request for the sport of Hawking: only, as its manner of flight was different from that of the Falcon, it was used for the pursuit of different species of game from the latter. Probably

this really originated in the impulses of the Goshawk's own instinct, which leads it to attack Hares and Rabbits, or birds which, like the Partridge and Grouse, never voluntarily fly at any great height above the level of the ground. One curious habit of this bird is that of waiting patiently until some bird, which it has driven to covert, leaves its shelter, when the pursuit—after a pause of perhaps long duration—is immediately resumed, and probably carried to its purposed result. Most of the other Hawks, when baffled in the way noticed, very speedily relinquish all apparent thought or recollection of the escaped creature, and proceed to seek for a fresh quarry. It builds its nest on some high tree; only the tree selected is never found in the inner and deep parts of the wood and forest. Like many other birds, both predatory and other, it will often return to the same nest, adding whatever repairs may be required, for several successive years. It lays three or four eggs, of a pale faint blue, quite untinged with any other colour.

SPARROW HAWK—(*Accipiter nisus*).

Sometimes called Pigeon Hawk.—Another short-winged hawk, as the last named also was, but vastly more common and familiarly known. Some of the Falcons already named may be fitly called bold, or fearless; the Sparrow Hawk may be pronounced audacious, or impudent. If you hear some careful, Martha-like housewife of a hen skirling and fussing, in dire alarm, her terrified chicks the while seeking any possible shelter, you may be almost certain that

the gliding form you caught a glance of rounding the corner of the barn and making a rapid, but by no means noisy, stoop among the young poultry of various kinds in lively attendance on their mothers,—you may be tolerably sure that the intruder was a Sparrow Hawk, and that some hapless Dove or Chicken has lost the number of its mess. Not that he does not like wild game as well as tame poultry. Mr. Selby mentions one nest, containing five young ones, in or close to which was found a Peewit, two Blackbirds, a Thrush, and two Greenfinches, all fresh, and half plucked. The Sparrow Hawk is believed seldom to give itself the trouble of building a nest for itself. Some old or deserted nest of the Crow or Magpie, particularly the former, and whether in a fork of the tree or high among its top, usually serves its turn; and in this, very slightly repaired if at all, the mother bird lays four or five eggs, of a pale blueish white, abundantly and most variably blotched with dark red brown. In some few eggs this darker colour is more sparingly bestowed; but they are not frequent, and, usually, the red is more or less confluent about some part of the egg—either end or the middle—more rarely dispersed in very distinct spots.—*Fig.* 7, *plate I.*

KITE—*Milvus ictinus*; formerly, *M. vulgaris.*

Glead, Glade, Gled, Fork-tailed Kite or Glead, Puttock, Crotchet-tailed Puttock.

One very rarely sees a Kite nowadays in our customary field ramblings and observings, or, indeed, anywhere; though, to be sure, some one did write word

many years ago to the "Zoologist," that he had seen one sailing overhead as he walked the streets of London. Perhaps any but rather resolute nest-hunters might say, if they knew the reception sometimes accorded by a Kite to a would-be plunderer of its nest, "Well, the loss is not without its compensation." For the Kite fights fiercely for its eggs or young: and has been known to inflict damage of both dress and person on a boy attempting to plunder its nest. It is a noble-looking bird; but not distinguished, as the Falcons are, for any very remarkable degree of boldness or courage. A fussy old hen has been known to frighten one from his purposed foray on her chickens, and he used of old to be chased (for sport, of course) by a species of Falcon "to the manner" trained. The nest, usually found high up in a high tree in thick wood or forest, is made of sticks, and lined with any softer material found handy, and contains two or three eggs of a dirty white colour, with a few spots or blotchings of dull red. They cater liberally enough for their young, no less than twenty-two Moles having been found in one nest.—*Fig.* 1, *plate II.*

BLACK KITE—(*Milvus migrans;* otherwise, *ater*).
Accidental visitor.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE—(*Nauclerus furcatus*).
Very rare accidental visitor.

COMMON BUZZARD—(*Butco vulgaris*).
Puttock.—I well remember as a schoolboy in Essex

that the nests of the Puttock, as the Buzzard was invariably called in that district, were more frequently found by us than those of any other wood-building Hawk; and many a hatch of young Puttocks it fell to my lot to see brought within the old school gates. Whether the Buzzard is equally abundant there now I cannot tell. It seems to me that not only Hawks, but very many of the smaller birds as well, are much less numerous now than in the days of my boyhood; and I have heard other nest-lovers make the same remark.

In rocky countries the Buzzard sometimes builds her nest on precipices, or steep banks; but generally, in our own country, some fork in a tree supplies either the site for the intended nest, or possibly the nest itself; for, like several other of the Hawks already noticed, the Buzzard seems to think there is a deal of sound sense in the saying, "Foolish birds build fine nests for wise Hawks to live in them," and acts accordingly. The eggs are from two to four in number, of considerable size, and some of them approaching very nearly in general look and colour to the Kite's egg. It just as frequently seems to wait until its prey comes to it, as trouble itself to go far in search of it. It is rather a sluggard and a coward, to have so much the air of a fine-looking bird about it.—*Fig.* 2, *plate II.*

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD—(*Buteo lagopus*).

Not to say a rare bird, but still, by no means a common bird in any division of the kingdom.

HONEY BUZZARD—(*Pernis apivorus*).

This never was an abundant species in this country, and instances of its nesting with us are very rare. I well remember, however, when White's "Natural History of Selborne" first fell into my boyish hands, how his history of the lucky bird's-nesting boy, who climbed the "tall, slender Birch-tree," "on the steep and dizzy situation, near the middle of Selborne Hanger," and brought down the only egg in the nest, and that "hard set," impressed itself on my attention and memory. The nest was a shallow one, composed of sticks, and lined with dead leaves of the beech. The number of eggs—an illustration of which is given—seldom exceeds two.—*Fig.* 3, *plate II.*

MARSH HARRIER—(*Circus æruginosus*; formerly, *C. rufus*).

Moor Buzzard, Bald Buzzard, Marsh Hawk, Harpy, White-headed Harpy, Puttock, Duck Hawk.—One would hardly expect to find that a bird, with such a string of *aliases* to its name, could enjoy a very wholesome reputation. However, he's no worse than his fellows of the Hawk family, and not so bad as some of them. Probably the name of Harrier, given to this and one or two of the Hawks next named, is derived from their method of beating or quartering the ground, when in search of prey, putting one in mind of the evolutions of the hound similarly engaged. The Marsh Harrier or Moor Buzzard (or Bald Buzzard, as I used to hear it called in Essex) builds its nest of flags or rushes—sometimes sticks or twigs—on the

ground, amid the grass at the bottom of a furze or other bush; occasionally low in the bush itself; and again, in a tuft of reeds or rushes sufficient to serve the purposes of concealment. In it it deposits three or four eggs, white, or with only a tinge of milk-blue about them. It feeds itself and its young with young water-birds, if it can meet with them—and its name suggests the idea that young water-birds may be met with where itself is found—or young rabbits or birds; a few mice and small rats doubtless not coming in as altogether unworthy of notice to such hungry customers as four young "Harpies."

HEN-HARRIER—(*Circus cyaneus*).

I don't give a list of country or local names here, as usual, because I wish to draw my reader's attention to the fact, that the different names applied to the same species of Hawk are, in several cases, partly attributable to the differences in size, and especially in plumage, dependent on sex and age in the cases in question. This is quite the case with the Harriers generally, and particularly with the bird now under notice. There is a remarkable difference in colour between the male and female when adult, and a likeness when the former is immature and the latter an old bird. Thus, the old male is mainly blue, the female brown; so he is often called the Blue Hawk, or Dove Hawk, and she the Ringtail. Like those of the Marsh Harrier, the eggs of the Hen-Harrier are white, and are placed in a nest of small sticks and long, coarse grasses, built upon the ground, four or five in number, and not often varying from the

uniform tint of the ground colour by the addition of a few reddish-coloured spots or speckles. Its distinctive English name—*Hen*-Harrier, seems to be due to the fact, that, like the sick and repentant old Fox, it appears often to consider "a chicken might suit me too," and acts accordingly. But, from its habits of regularly working over stubbles and other haunts of the Partridge and other like birds, there is little doubt that it varies its diet with a little game occasionally.

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

Ash-coloured Harrier.—This bird, for which Yarrell proposed the name assigned, is by no means of frequent occurrence in this country, and is scarcely likely to be met with by many of our young readers. The nest, like those of the other two species of Circus just named, is usually on the ground, often not far from gorse or whin-bushes; and the eggs, four or five in number, are like those of its congeners in general colour and appearance. With this bird our list of Falconidæ closes.

FAMILY III.—STRIGIDÆ.

When I was a boy I remember—only those goings-back to school were a sad hindrance—trying or helping to make a collection not of birds' eggs exactly, but of birds' "merry-thoughts." Did our young readers ever see such a collection, or think of it? Perhaps the answer will be "No;—and if we had, what would it have to do with a book about birds' eggs?" I will try and show that I have a purpose

in mentioning birds' merry-thoughts, and that it may have something to do with such a book as this, and its subject.

We have already agreed that classification is a useful and necessary thing; that nature herself leads us to it, and shows us how to fashion and contrive it; nay, that the very eggs of birds are, speaking generally, such in their shape and markings as often to suggest the formation of a group out of such and such different species producing them. But the merry-thoughts and the bones they are immediately connected with, the keel-like breast-bone and the side and wing bones,[1] will be found to do the same thing, with respect to the collection of three or four (or more) such groups of birds, as I have just called them, into what is termed a Family. Thus, if our readers could get the opportunity of looking at the merry-thoughts and breast-bones of half-a-dozen different Hawks, they would find, with a degree of variation, according to the various species selected, a very obvious and striking correspondence or resemblance. The breast-bone, in every case, would show great depth of keel and strength of substance; and the merry-thoughts would be seen to be firm and strong, and of great or considerable substance. Next, if the corresponding bones of about the same number of birds of the Owl-kind (*Strigidæ*) were taken and compared with those

[1] I don't give the scientific names of these bones, for obvious reasons. A very excellent book on "The Structure and Life of Birds," by Mr. F. W. Headley, of Haileybury College, has lately been published, which cannot but be helpful to any student of birds. (Macmillan & Co.)

of the Falcon-kind just spoken about, while the mutual resemblance of the Owl-kind bones was seen to be quite as great and obvious as in the case of the Hawks, the difference between the said bones of the Owls and those of the Hawks would be altogether strange and half startling, from its greatness and suddenness. The deep keel and the strong substance of the breast-bone in the Hawk has given place to a shallow keel and weak walls in the Owl, while the curved, strong, broad, solid merry-thought has become a fork with thin, straight, weak, yielding shanks. So great and plain is the difference that any sharp intelligent boy could almost directly pick out for himself all the Hawk bones, and all the Owl bones, and put them in their several groups. And if he did, I think he would say to himself, and perhaps to some other person, as soon as he met with one likely to be able to answer him, What does this difference in these bones of these birds of different Families mean?—In plain words, it means difference in powers of flight. Any of our school-boy readers who wanted to prise his strong school-box open, because he had lost his key, would not take his pen-knife for the purpose; because he would think it foolish to use so weak an instrument for so strong an effort. A great strong chisel would be much more likely to serve his purpose. And so is the work of God's hand. If a long, strong wing has to be moved rapidly, and even vehemently, the motion, like all animal motion, must be given by muscles. But the muscles must be fixed to what they are intended to move, or they cannot act on it; and they must be fixed at some other point

also, or they would waste their power on nothing, instead of imparting motion. And, of course, the stronger they are, the stronger must what they are fixed to be, and the larger also to admit of more and more strength. Well, the muscles that move the bird's wing are affixed at their other extremities to the breast-bone and merry-thought, and hence the size and strength of these bones in the Falcon-kind with their vigorous, impetuous flight and sweep of wing; and the comparative insignificance and weakness of the same parts in the slow-flying, noiseless-winged Owlet. If our young friends are disposed to add, in their collection of birds' eggs, the so-called merry-thought of each separate bird to the eggs laid by that bird, they will be helped to learn an interesting and instructive lesson in elementary anatomy. And such a collection may be, to a great extent, made without much trouble, by almost every one who has the ordinary facilities of a residence in the country at his command.

Having said so much to show how even the most simple and obvious and familiar differences in the bone structure of birds suggests, or, if not, confirms the principle of classification of birds, and therefore of their eggs, let us now go on to notice our quaint "feathered friends," the Owls, and especially our more familiar acquaintance among them. There are other things belonging to the Owl family, which our intelligent young friend just named would have just as little trouble in picking out from a heap of similar objects, as in the case of the bones. I mean the eggs. The same character, however much they vary in size

—and they do vary vastly in size—is common to every one of the eggs. They are all white; they are all very slightly oval, or very nearly round, and you cannot tell which is meant to be the big end, and which the little. Of course, this being the case, it would be of very little use to take up the small space available for illustration in this book, with representations of Owls' eggs; and for the same reason, as little as possible will be said in the way of description. Any Owl's eggs which are likely to come under the notice of the school-boy nest-hunter will tell him a good deal about their origin, by their size and the place they are found in; and the best picture and description possible would not be able to teach him half as much.

Just as the bones, noticed a page or two back, would be found to show that there was a sort of approach to something like a noticeable connection between the Harriers and the Owls, so the eggs of the former seem to hint at something of the same kind. The merry-thought and breast-bone of the Harriers are vastly less strong and solid than those of the true Falcons; and, so to speak, intermediate in such respects between these and those of the truest Owl, while the eggs are colourless or nearly so, and so approach again to the Owl type.

TAWNY OWL—(*Strix aluco;* formerly, *Syrnium stridula*).

Brown Owl, Wood Owl, Hoot Owl, Ivy Owl, Jenny Howlet.—This is the bird whose well-known and, as I think, musical note, is so often heard at night in

wooded countries, in the genuine "tu-whit-to-who-o-o-o," or "hoot." The Barn Owl is the Screech Owl proper, though not, in my experience, very much addicted to indulge in her unpleasant song. I very seldom used to hear a downright good screech in those old days. The Brown Owl makes its nest—at least, lays its eggs—in some hollow tree, usually in a wood or near one. Sometimes a few feathers or a little moss may receive the eggs, often only the decayed wood. I have heard of the nest of this bird in other positions; *e.g.*, in a deserted Crow's nest, or a hole in a rocky bank. But the hollow tree is the rule. The eggs are three or four in number, and larger than the Barn Owl's, being about $1\frac{10}{12}$ inch long, by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad. The old birds have two or three notes besides the hoot; one being a short, rather sharp cluck, often repeated. The young ones, after they fly, depend a good deal on their parents' exertions for food, which consists of young Rabbits, Hares, now and then birds of sorts, Rats, Mice, etc. I once saw a young Brown Owl, apparently waiting for its food to be brought, and sitting very still on the topmost bough of a tall tree, almost knocked off his perch by the whizzing flight of a Wild Duck. The Owl ducked his head, or I thought the Duck would have actually struck him, so near was the encounter. Another, a young Brown Owl of my acquaintance was decorated by its young lady owner with a red knitted hood. This was not forthcoming one day. But the next it reappeared. The bird had swallowed it, and it was found among its castings.

TENGMALM'S OWL—(*Nyctala Tengmalmi*; formerly, *Noctua Tengmalmi*).

LONG-EARED OWL—(*Asio otus*; formerly, *Otus vulgaris*).

Met with, though not very abundantly, in most parts of England. Its haunt during the day-time is in ivy bushes, or other retreats affording security from the access of much light; its nest is most frequently an appropriated old nest of the Crow or Magpie; perhaps even what was once the breeding-home of the Squirrel; and in it are laid four or five eggs $1\frac{7}{24}$ inch long, by $1\frac{1}{24}$ inch broad. It seeks its prey after sunset; and as birds of various kinds are known to form part of its food, it seems almost certain that they must be taken as they sit at roost. What sad bug-a-boos Horned Owls must be made to offending juveniles in little-bird nurseries.

SHORT-EARED OWL—(*Asio accipitrinus*; formerly, *Otus brachyotus*).

Woodcock Owl, Short-horned Howlet, Mouse Hawk, Hawk Owl.—It breeds with us, and not uncommonly; and many seem to come over in the autumn, and they are then frequently seen in a stubble, or otherwise roused by the sportsman. Its nest is sometimes on the ground, and perhaps even in a rabbit-burrow. The eggs are three in number, and scarcely differ the least in size from those of the bird last named. Young Grouse and other birds breeding about the moors are abundantly supplied by the parent Owls to

their young when the nest chances to have been made in such a locality, and the old ones are very jealous of seeing their progeny too nearly approached, and expose themselves almost as fearlessly on such occasions as either Partridge or Grouse. Their local name of Hawk Owl is derived from the circumstance that they pursue their prey—regularly "hawking" for it—during the day-time, and even in the brightest sunshine. They are so bold during the breeding time on some moors in this northern part of Yorkshire that they attack and intimidate the shepherd's dogs; so much so that they are not very ready to go about their work. I have the following record of one shot off her nest in April, 1894, near Bolton Gill, Wensleydale. The nest was in the open, and made of dead grass. It contained eight eggs; besides which there were three more nearly ready for extrusion. Also there were fourteen or fifteen other miniature ova in the body.

EAGLE OWL—(*Bubo ignavus*; formerly, *B. maximus*).

This noble bird, the largest in our list of British Owls, is so occasionally and irregularly seen in Britain, that it can scarcely claim lengthened notice at our hands.

SCOPS EARED OWL—(*Scops Aldrovandi*).

Almost as rare as the preceding, and one of the smallest of its family. From notes in my possession it seems to have a kind of ventriloquial power, such that, although the bird is roosting quite quietly, its cry appears to come from different quarters, so as to

make the listener imagine that it is uttered in the course of a circling flight.

LITTLE OWL—(*Carine noctua*; formerly, *Noctua passerina*).

Little Night Owl, Sparrow Owl.—A very occasional visitant.

SNOWY OWL—(*Nyctea Scandiaca*; formerly, *Surnia nyctea*).

A beautiful bird, of very rare occurrence.

HAWK OWL—(*Surnia funerea*).

Canada Owl.—More rare than the last.

BARN OWL—(*Aluco flammeus*; formerly *Strix flammea*).

White Owl, Yellow Owl, Screech Owl, Gilly Howlet, Howlet, Madge Howlet, Church Owl, Hissing Owl.—This common and useful bird breeds by preference in some building or part of one; a church tower, dove-cot, ruined mansion, or castle, and the like. My most familiar boy-acquaintance, however, was with the nesting place and habits of a pair which nested for many consecutive years in a slight hollow in the crown of a large pollard elm tree in my father's church-yard at Great Wigborough, in Essex. There were usually three or four young ones year by year, often with perceptible differences of growth among them. Indeed it is well known that this Owl and the Short-eared Owl, and probably others as well, lay their

eggs in instalments, as it were, and when the first batch of two or three is about hatching or nearly so, others are deposited in addition, and thus hatched in their turn almost as much by their brothers and sisters as by their mother. Quainter, graver, odder, stranger, more irresistibly comic creatures than these young Owls I never saw; and the hissing and snoring, and peering looks at the spectator, and strange antic contortions I heard and saw, baffle all attempts at description. The entertainment, for such it was most truly, usually began some little time before sunset, about which time the old birds might be seen commencing their labours of purveying food for Masters and Misses Howlet. At intervals of from seven to ten minutes, one or other of them came to the nest with a prey, and I could always tell by the sounds and gestures of the young Owls when the old one was approaching. How they knew I could not tell; it was not by sight, and I could hear no sound myself; but know they did most certainly. Mice, slugs, sometimes a large insect apparently, or a small bird, very rarely a Mole, or Rat of no large dimensions, were brought in continuous succession, and in the claw, not with the bill. When the animal was of small dimensions, the old Owl flitted off again with scarcely any pause at the nest. If a large one, it seemed by the time which elapsed, and the sounds which became audible—most vehement snorings and hissings—that partition had to be made, and that the said partition was a matter of the greatest interest to the parties concerned. I cannot affirm positively that the old Owls prosecuted their most successful hunting all through the night; but I believe

they did, and I have seen them still at work in the morning long after sun-rise, once as late as between eight and nine in the morning in the height of summer. As the inmates of a dove-cot, they are on very excellent terms with the proper dwellers therein, although from the known habits of other Owls, the human owners of the dove-cot are apt to assume, most groundlessly and unjustly, that they are sure to destroy the young Pigeons. I don't believe, however, that if all the rejected pellets of bones, fur, feathers, etc., from all the Barn Owls in the kingdom could be examined, that any trace of Pigeon, old or young, would be discovered; and that farmer is a foolish farmer who either destroys a Barn Owl himself or suffers any one else, whom he could prevent, to destroy one. They are perfectly harmless, exceedingly useful, and strangely interesting to the observer. I may add that since I began to write these lines, I am told that the self-same tree is still occupied by a pair of the self-same Owls, and has continued to be from the days of my boyish recollections—a period of more than thirty years.[1] The young of this and the Tawny Owl are very bold, resolute little creatures, if taken when rather more than half-grown. They will throw themselves on their backs, and defend themselves pertinaciously with bill and claw against any foe, or supposed foe, human or other. The Barn Owl has been known to take fish by plunging upon it in the water. The eggs are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch long by $1\frac{1}{4}$ broad.

[1] And that is now more than 30 years ago.

We arrive now at the second Order.

ORDER.—PASSERES.

FAMILY I.—LANIADÆ.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE—(*Lanius excubitor*).

Greater Butcher Bird, Ash-coloured Shrike, Cinereous Shrike, Grey Shrike.—This bird is an occasional visitor only, and has very rarely been seen in the breeding season. No authentic instance of its nesting with us is known.

LESSER GREY SHRIKE—(*Lanius minor*).

A rare and accidental visitor to England. It breeds in Southern Europe and North Africa.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE—(*Lanius collurio*).

Lesser Butcher Bird, Flusher, Murdering-pie, Jack Baker, etc.—The male of this species is a beautiful bird, with his bright chesnut back and lively air. They spend only a part of the year with us, but that part involves the period of nesting. The nest is usually rather high up in a strong, thick bush, large-sized for the bird, cup-shaped, and made of coarse withered herbage externally, with rather finer materials within, and lined with hair or some such substance. The eggs are four or five in number, varying much in colour and marks. The ground-shade varies, and so do the markings; the latter, however, being usually found thicker and darker in a zone or band encircling some part of the egg.

Description is quite inadequate to convey any idea of these variations. The bird deserves its name, for it "slaughters" small birds, as well as other animals, and hangs up the carcases in regular shambles. It is wonderful how the frogs, beetles, caterpillars, cockchafers, birds, etc., which form its food, are fixed so very firmly and tenaciously upon the strong thorny point.—*Figs.* 4, 5, *plate II.*

WOODCHAT SHRIKE—(*Lanius rufus*).

Only a rare and occasional visitant. Breeds in Central and South Europe and North Africa.

FAMILY II.—MUSCICAPIDÆ.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER—(*Muscicapa grisola*).

Beam-bird, Bee-bird, Rafter-bird, Post-bird, Wall-bird, Cherry-chopper, Cherry-sucker, Cobweb-bird.—Many of these names are taken from the familiar site of its nest, or from some of its habits in taking food. It will return to the same post, after a short excursion to seize an insect, ten or a dozen times in succession; and it will build its nest on a wall, on the end of a rafter or beam, on a rake-head, in a trained wall-tree—in fact, in almost every conceivable place. The nest varies in material and structure, almost as much as in its site. Moss, old and new, bents, straws, twigs, hairs, feathers, all are used. It is an amusing little bird,[1] and pays many feeding visits to its young,

[1] "It is always pleasant to watch, and its nest is easy to find. One pair had the audacity to build in the wall of the village school.

as is the case with all insect-feeding birds. The eggs are four or five in number, of dull white, tinged with blue, and spotted with faint red. It only visits us to breed here.—*Fig.* 6, *plate II.*

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER—(*Muscicapa parva*).

Accidental winter visitor.

PIED FLYCATCHER—(*Muscicapa atricapilla*).

Coldfinch.—A rare bird in some localities, and not an abundant one in any. The nest is loosely made of small roots, bents, grass, moss, hair, or some such material, in a hole, usually in pollard trees, or such as have decayed from natural causes, but sometimes also in a hole in a wall or other building. In it may be found four to eight eggs of a uniform light blue colour.—*Fig.* 7, *plate II.*

FAMILY III.—ORIOLIDÆ.

GOLDEN ORIOLE—(*Oriolus galbula*).

Only an occasional summer visitor.

Another pair placed their nest on the sun-dial in a gentleman's garden, as late as mid-July." ("A Year with the Birds," p. 130.) A book which might well be in every bird-lover's bookcase. Mr. Warde Fowler is the author.

FAMILY IV.—CINCLIDÆ.

COMMON DIPPER—(*Cinclus aquaticus*).

Water Ousel, Brook Ousel, Water Crow, Water Piet, Bessy-ducker.—I may as well own that I am a little bit "fond" about the Dipper. I dearly love to see him and hear him in my rambles by our mountain becks. So lively, cheery, and jolly, even in the cold winter day, when the mere look of the chilly, shivering stream makes one feel goose-skinny. There he sits at the water edge, and sings like a Robin a little tipsy, and then in he tumbles, in a rollicking sort of way, as you become a little too inquisitive, and emerging a few yards farther down, takes wing, and darts off with his Kingfisher-like flight. One nest some lads belonging to my family found here, was a feather-bed sort of structure of moss and a few feathers, filling up a six-inch square hole in the masonry of a bridge in which one of the scaffold rafters of the workmen had been inserted, there being a small, round hole left in the exposed side for exit and ingress. Others may be seen in cavities in a rock by the water-side; and one I heard of, if my memory is correct, in Berwickshire, was built amid the stonework of a water-lead for conducting the waste water away from a mill, and in such a position that the water in its fall projected itself beyond the nest, and formed a kind of arch above it. The old birds in going into or leaving their nest had actually to pass in either from the side or through the interstices of the small cascade. The eggs are five or six in number, and perfectly, purely white. A sad enemy

to fish spawn my little white-breasted friend is said to be, but the fact is much questioned. I never yet cared to shoot one, I love them so well. When there are half-a-dozen small but very hungry Dipper-mouths to be fed, I fear much consumption of fishes' food, if not fishes' eggs, takes place. It is able to walk, though with much effort, under water, as well as dive and swim; and I have often seen them, on coming to the surface in a quiet pool, remain perfectly quiescent and floating for several seconds.—*Fig.* 8, *plate II.*

FAMILY V.—IXIDÆ.

GOLD-VENTED THRUSH—(*Pycnonotus capensis*).

Has occurred in Ireland.

FAMILY VI.—TURDIDÆ.

WHITE'S THRUSH—(*Turdus varius;* formerly, *T. whitei*).

Accidental winter visitor. I once saw one here, and had it under view for a space of many minutes, at a distance of only a few yards, and with a pair of excellent field-glasses at my eyes. It was on a Sunday, and so was not molested.

MISSEL OR MISTLE THRUSH—(*Turdus viscivorus*).

Misseltoe or Mistletoe Thrush, Missel-bird, Storm-

cock, Screech Thrush, Holm Thrush, Holm Screech.—A handsome bird and an early builder. The Missel Thrush seems to lay aside some of its wildness in the breeding season, and draws near the dwellings of men. Its nest may continually be found in a garden or orchard close to a house, and in the thick fork of an apple or other fruit tree, often only a few feet from the ground. Woe be to the Cat who comes near the nest! Such a storm of violent abuse and loud-tongued birds' Billingsgate as is poured on her devoted head! Nor does the human intruder escape quite without a telling of it, or what my Yorkshire friends term "a calling." If a Missel Thrush is very abusive with you, be sure his nest is not far off. It is a large structure, of much such materials and design as the Blackbird's, but often bound round and round with long rushes or roots, or other material sufficiently lengthy and pliable. I have seen tailor's listing, bast matting, and even discarded tape, used for the purpose. The eggs, four or five in general, often vary much in colouring and marks; but are in general of a whitish ground-colour, lightly tinged with green (or perhaps faint red), and well spotted with red-brown. —*Fig.* 9, *plate II.*

SONG THRUSH—(*Turdus musicus*).

Common Thrush, Throstle, Mavis. — Every one knows this sweet songster, and could point out its pet stone with its little accumulation of shattered snail shells, which, when whole, had been brought there by the knowing Thrush and hammered against the well-fixed anvil until they gave way. Everybody knows

his persevering song, begun at day-dawn in early February, and persevered in for months of the spring and early summer. Every one knows its trim, neatly-plastered nest, with its warm, solid coating of grass and bents and roots and such like materials. And every body, too, knows the four or five fair blue eggs with their tidy black spots, which now and then, however, can hardly be seen at all. Every body also knows how fussy the old mother Thrush is the day her brood quit their nest; and how, if you catch one of her awkward, ill-flying, soon-tired squad of young ones, she will follow you with much objurgation and no little plaintive entreaty that "a great fellow like you, who ought to be ashamed of yourself for frightening a poor little fluttering creature like that, will put it down again soon, and not hurt it, and be a dear, good man,—now do, won't you?" I have met with its nest twice within the last three years built in among the unmortared stones of the ordinary "dry-stone walls" of this country.—*Fig.* 10, *plate II.*

REDWING—(*Turdus iliacus*).

Like the Fieldfare, frequent in winter; but breeds in another country.

FIELDFARE—(*Turdus pilaris*).

Felfit, Felty-fare, Blue-back, Jack-bird.—A very common winter visitor, and staying sometimes as late as 20th May. But they do not breed with us; and as space is not too abundant, any notice which can be afforded of this bird's nesting habits must be put in the Appendix, if found possible.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH—(*Turdus atrigularis*).

It has only occurred three or four times as a casual visitor.

BLACKBIRD—(*Turdus merula*).

Black Ousel, Amzel, Ousel, also pronounced sometimes in North Yorkshire, so as to sound like Ussel or Oossel. Merle in Shakespeare.—The Blackbird's tawny bill and sable plumage and sweet mellow song —would one like it as well if he were as lavish of it as the Thrush? Who does not welcome and love him? And to a very youthful nest-hunter what a deserving bird the Blackbird is. Making his nest usually in such places and so that detection is not at all a matter of course, and yet not altogether beyond the discernment of inexperienced eyes. The discovery of our first Blackbird's nest is always felt to be a sort of achievement, and one to be spoken of with reasonable self-approbation too. In the hedge, at the bottom of the hedge, on the stump, behind the stump, below the stump, an excrescence on the side of the ragged old tree, in a wall tree, in an evergreen or other thick bush—how often have we found the nest in these and such like places. Once we found one which we set down as made by the untidiest Blackbird that ever lived. It was in a thorn hedge thick and high, and a great rough structure. But a lock of wool, a big one, had been unmanageable and had caught on the thorns, and the feathered architect could do nothing with it, and there it hung out of the

nest-wall a thick tangle, two or three inches long, and making the nest as conspicuous as if a flag had been stuck just above it. How the eggs vary in shade, markings, size, etc., I have already noticed at a former page, and I am fearful of absorbing too much of my space by adding more.—*Fig.* 11, *plate II.*

RING OUSEL—(*Turdus torquatus*).

Ring Thrush, Moor Blackbird, Mountain Blackbird, Tor Ousel, Rock Ousel, Ring Blackbird.—A bold abusive freebooter in our gardens in North Yorkshire, and other similar localities. He's a beautiful bird, and a wary, except when seduced by strawberries and red currants. His wild and not unmusical note, though it might sound harsh in a trim garden in Kent or Essex, and to an ear not attuned to moorland sounds, is always as welcome to me as the gentle twitter of the Swallow. I like to hear his attempts at song, reminding the listener of the Missel-bird's early spring music. And I like to hear his wilder, grating call-note, which is the usual warning the ornithologist has that the Moor Blackbird has returned for the season. His nest is very like the Blackbird's in design and general structure. An inner lining of bents and fine ling, a wall of clay, and an outer husk of moss, ling, and such like moorland matters. It is not strongly or compactly formed, and makes a great litter if kept a day or two and subject to be handled or moved, however carefully. It is always built on, or near the ground, on the wild moor; and I once trod the feathers out of the wing of a sitting hen, on whom and her nest I nearly jumped in leaping a gully. The

eggs are usually four or five in number, and remind you of the Blackbird's eggs in their general appearance; but the blotchings or markings are redder, and often much larger or more pronounced than in the case of the Blackbird. Their eggs, too, vary generally in size, even in the same nest. Out of the contents of two nests I had brought to me a year or two since, no two seemed to agree exactly in dimensions.—*Fig.* 12, *plate II.*

ROCK THRUSH—(*Monticula saxatilis*).

Of most rare occurrence.

FAMILY VII. SYLVIADÆ.

ALPINE ACCENTOR—(*Accentor collaris;* formerly, *Alpinus*).

Met with two or three times in Britain.

HEDGE SPARROW—(*Accentor modularis*).

Hedge Warbler, Shuffle-wing, Dunnock, Hempie.—I cannot call it Hedge Accentor, with all my respect for Mr. Yarrell. It was Hedge Sparrow in my childhood and youth, and Hedge Sparrow to me it will be called to the end of the chapter. I could no more wantonly kill a Hedge Sparrow, in my sparrow-killing days, than a Robin; and now, when I hear his low, sweet pipe, and see his wings quivered as he hops on the ground, or from spray to spray, not knowing I am noticing him, he seems as dear to me as ever. The mossy nest, with its intermixture of fine roots and

hair, may be found weeks before leaves are thought of, on the bank-side or low in the hedge, and little concealed; and the four or five beautiful blue eggs in it become familiar to every nest-seeker among his very earliest acquisitions.—*Fig.* 13, *plate II.*

ROBIN—(*Erythacus rubecula*).

Redbreast, Robin Redbreast, Ruddock, Robinet, Bob-Robin.—I remember throwing a stone at a Robin when a very little boy, and to my consternation and utter grief, no less than to my surprise, killing it. I "felt bad" about it—as our American friends say—and thought I was as wicked as the Sparrow of bow and arrow memory. It seems to be, or to have been, a common feeling among boys, and is embodied in the old lines:—

"The Robin and the Wren
Are God's Cock and Hen."

How beautiful the Robin's eggs are when just laid; and how they lose their peculiar pinky loveliness from being blown. A hundred different places, too, the little bird selects for the site of its nest; often being such, moreover, as to illustrate their confiding fearlessness, as much as the result in them of the pressure of winter cold and hunger. In the tilt of a wagon; in a steam boat; in a room of the cottage; near a blacksmith's forge; in the constantly-used garden-shed, as well as in the ivy or evergreen bush; or on the bank, or in the hedge; or in a hole in the old ruin or bank or house-wall: all places seem to suit it alike. The eggs are five or six, sometimes

seven; and the shell is white, more or less freckled with light red.—*Fig.* 14, *plate II.*

NIGHTINGALE—(*Daulias luscinia;* formerly, *Philomela luscinia*).

This sweetest of the English warblers has but a limited range. In Essex, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire, I used to hear it abundantly; but of late years, as a resident in Yorkshire, its note has become strange in my ears. Shy and vigilant in its habits, it does not willingly expose itself to observation, and its haunts are so thick that discovery of its nest is not always easy. It seems often an untidy structure, but according to my observation not usually built on the ground, as Mr. Yarrell states. I have found it in a thick thorn hedge or bush, and in shrubs in the garden, made of twigs, straw, grass, and especially old oak leaves, and with only a jagged margin. The eggs, four and sometimes five of them, are of "an uniform olive-brown colour," and from the time they are laid, the bird only sings occasionally. After they are hatched, never.—*Fig.* 5, *plate III.*

BLUE-THROAT—(*Ruticilla Suecica;* formerly, *Phœnicura Suecica*).

Blue-throated Robin, Blue-throated Redstart, Blue-breast.—Only of very rare occurrence.

REDSTART—(*Ruticilla phœnicurus;* formerly, *Phœnicura ruticilla*).

Firetail, Fireflirt, Brantail, Redtail.—The male is one of the most beautiful of our small birds, and I

wish I could think it as abundant with us as it used to be. The nest is loosely constructed of moss, with a few small straws or bents sometimes, and hair and feathers inside, and almost invariably is placed in a hole, it may be in a hollowish tree, or a wall, or even in a bank; and here, where dry-stone walls abound, its choice of nesting-places is inexhaustible. Very watchful are the old birds over the eggs, and very fussy and noisy when the eggs have yielded their living contents, and yet very careful too. I knew there was a nest the year before last (1860) not far from my garden gate; but it was not till I hid myself most carefully and patiently behind the door, that I made myself master of the vigilant little sentinel's secret. It lays four or five, and, occasionally, six eggs, of a pale uniform blue colour, perhaps tinged with a faint green shade. They are almost as pretty as the Hedge-Sparrow's.—*Fig.* 15, *plate II.*

BLACK REDSTART—(*Ruticilla Tithys;* formerly, *Phœnicura Tithys*).

Tithys Redstart, Black Redtail.—It has been met with in Britain perhaps half a dozen times, or indeed more.

STONE-CHAT—(*Saxicola rubicola*).

Stone-chatter, Stone-clink, Stone-smick, Stone-chack, Stone-smith, Moor-titling, Chickstone, Black-cap.—A very common bird in many districts, and from his habits much more familiarly and commonly known and noticed than other birds equally, or even more, abundant, but of less obtrusive, or quieter

habits. Flitting about from bush to bush, and seating himself pertly on the top spray, there he sits and "chats" or "clinks" till the passenger comes too near, and then off he flies, to perch again a few yards further and repeat the same performance. The nest, sometimes very neat and well-constructed, of moss and benty grass, and lined with hair, feathers, fine grass-stalks, etc., is often quite on the ground and with no bush near; sometimes at the foot of a low bush, or in the bush itself, but very near the ground. The eggs are five or six, of a pale blue ground, very sparingly freckled with dull reddish brown, and chiefly near the large end. The nest is often hard to find, and especially when built among longish herbage, or in or near a whin-bush.—*Fig.* 16, *plate II.*

WHIN-CHAT—(*Saxicola rubetra*).

Grass-chat, Furze-chat.—Many of the birds last-named pass the winter in England; but only a few of the Whin-chats. This is never so abundant a species as the last, and though with some similar habits, it has no urgent inclination to force us to notice it by the incessant repetition of its note. The nest strongly resembles that of the Stone-chat. It is also usually placed on the ground, and is fully as hard to find as that bird's. The eggs, five or six of them, are of a uniform bluish green, very slightly speckled or marked with dull red.—*Fig.* 17, *plate II.*

WHEAT-EAR—(*Saxicola œnanthe*).

Fallow-chat, White-rump, White-tail, Fallow-smick, Fallow-finch, Chacker, Chackbird, Clodhopper, with

some other quainter names still, which I have noted down, and yet another or two common to the Wheat-ear and the Stone-chat, such as Stone-chacker.—A common enough bird here, and with some of the more obvious habits of the Stone-chat. It perches on the stone walls as one approaches it, and flirts its tail and chacks, and then diving below the wall on the far side, re-appears again ten or twelve yards lower, and acts as before; and so on for a hundred yards or more. The stone walls in our district and the large heaps of stones, removed in reclaiming parts of the moor, and flung promiscuously together anywhere to be out of the way, afford them capital breeding places. In other countries old walls, or holes in the sides of pits or excavations, serve their purpose. The nest is not very artistic or well-finished, and is formed of many different materials—bents, feathers, dry roots, fur; in short, any waste matters which may have come in the way of the builders. The eggs are five or six in number, and of a pale blue colour, not so dark as those of the Hedge Sparrow. It is said that people accustomed to the habits of the Wheat-ear are able to find its nest without difficulty, from the occurrence of certain noticeable signs in its neighbourhood.—*Fig.* 1, *plate III.*

RUFOUS WARBLER—(*Ædon galactodes*).

Only two or three instances of its occurrence in this country.

ICTERINE WARBLER—(*Hypolais icterina*).

Only observed in Britain two or three times. Very

possibly associated with the Willow Wrens, and so overlooked.

GREAT REED WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus turdoides*).

An accidental visitor in this country.

REED WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus streperus*; formerly, *Salicaria arundinacea*).

Reed Wren, Night Warbler.—Almost as zealous a songster as the Sedge Warbler. There are few hours in the twenty-four when its voice may not be heard about its accustomed haunts; namely, willow and reed beds, and particularly the latter. The nest is, perhaps, the deepest made by any English bird, and quite a long inverted cone in shape. It is affixed to, or rather built so as to include three or four reeds, or more. So that, however the wind blows, it is quite fast, while its great depth prevents the eggs falling out, even if the reeds be blown almost level. The bird has been seen still sitting when the violent gusts forced the nest down almost to the water level. The nest is made of long grass and the seed-stalks of the reed, and lined with wool or the like. Four or five eggs of a greenish-white colour, marked in spots and dashes of green and pale brown, are usually laid.—*Fig.* 4, *plate III.*

SEDGE WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus schœnobœnus*; formerly, *Salicaria phragmitis*).

This everlasting little songster is more common than the bird last named, and almost every boy knows its

peculiar chiding note. Many a lad, too, knows that by shying a stone in near its haunt, its notes may be elicited almost any hour in the night or day. I think I have heard it singing on all through the night, and notwithstanding the absence of any pretence at daylight. Its nest is usually placed near the ground, in the vicinity of more or less water, and is supported, as well as concealed, by the coarse herbage. Made of coarse grass stalks externally, and lined with finer ones and hair, sometimes with a foundation of moss, five or six eggs are deposited in its cup-shaped hollow, of a pale brown colour, a little mottled with darker brown.—*Fig.* 3, *plate III.*

AQUATIC WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus aquaticus*).

Only recorded as visiting England two or three times.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus nævius;* formerly, *Salicaria locustella*).

A summer visitor, of shy and retired habits, and very vigilant. Its note, very shrill and constantly repeated, reminding one of the Cricket or Grasshopper's note, gains it its name. The nest is hard to find, and unless the bird be very closely watched, it may baffle a good observer. It is placed in spots matted and overhung with growth of grass or other herbage and bushes; is cup-shaped, made of coarse dry grass, with finer within; and contains sometimes as many as seven eggs, of a pale pinky-white colour, freckled with spots of a darker shade of red.—*Fig.* 2, *plate III.*

SAVI'S WARBLER—(*Acrocephalus luscinioides ;* formerly, *Salicaria luscinioides*).

Not of sufficiently common occurrence to demand lengthened notice here.

DARTFORD WARBLER—(*Melizophilus undatus ;* formerly, *M. provincialis*).

A bird which is scarcely known except on some of the furze-growing commons of the South, especially Kent and Surrey. The nest is of dry grass-stalks, loosely put together and tied with wool, and sparingly lined with other fine and dry vegetable substances. "The eggs," we read in Yarrell, "are somewhat similar to those of the White-throat, but rather less ; and like them, are tinged with green. They are speckled all over with olive-brown and cinereous on a greenish white ground ; the markings becoming more dense and forming a zone at the large end."—*Fig.* 13, *plate III.*

WHITE-THROAT[1]—(*Sylvia rufa ;* formerly, *Curruca cinerea*).

Nettle-creeper.—Another pleasant singer, but with occasional harsher notes, and a chiding one, not unlike the Sedgebird's, when uneasy or irritated. This is the usual Hay-chat of the country lads, and fully as often called the Nettle-creeper ; the former name being due to the fabric of its nest, the latter to its habits of twining in and out of the leaves and coarse herbage which abound among its haunts. Little de-

[1] Called "The Greater White-throat" in the last edition of Yarrell.

scription of the nest is needed, except that it seems slighter, and is thinner at the sides than those of the Blackcap and Garden Warbler, but still it is not less compact. The eggs vary a good deal in appearance, but there is still such a family likeness among them that they are easily recognisable by most egg-fanciers. Green, in different shades, is the predominating colour. —*Fig.* 8, *plate III.*

LESSER WHITE-THROAT—(*Sylvia curruca ;* formerly, *Curruca sylviella*).

Not so common a bird nearly, as the last, and rising higher in the bushes and shrubberies it frequents than it. It sings low and pleasantly when you are near enough to hear it, and very incessantly, but its more frequently heard notes are rather harsh. The nest, found among low bushes and brambles, is like the White-throat's, and the four or five eggs laid in it are white, speckled, most at the large end, with ash or light brown.—*Fig.* 9, *plate III.*

GARDEN WARBLER—(*Sylvia salicaria ;* formerly, *Curruca hortensis*).

Pettychaps, Greater Pettychaps.—Inferior to the Blackcap in song, as the Blackcap is inferior to the Nightingale, only not at so great a distance. Still it is a sweet songster. It comes to us to breed, and frequents thick hedges and the covert afforded by our shrubberies and pleasure-plantings in gardens. The nest, like the Blackcap's in materials and detail, of dry grass-stalks or bents loosely twined, but bound together with wool, etc., and lined with hair and

fibrous roots, may be found among rank growth of various herbage, or in a bush, or in a row of rodded peas. The usual four or five eggs are of muddled-white, stained and spotted with greenish brown, lighter or darker.—*Fig.* 7, *plate III.*

BLACKCAP—(*Sylvia atricapilla;* formerly, *Curruca atricapilla*).

Blackcap Warbler.—This bird, with several others, has a local or country name in common, derivable, I believe, from the structure of the nest. I mean Hay-jack or Hay-chat; but it is, I think, much less frequently distinguished by that name than the birds just referred to. The country-boy's name for one of these must always be distrusted, as is the case also with his designation of other common, but much more dissimilar birds. Thus, not to mention other instances, the Blackcap proper, the Greater Tom-tit and the Stone-chat are all called Blackcap. The Blackcap Warbler comes to us in spring and builds in our gardens and shrubberies as frequently as in wilder resorts, but always in places where there is thick foliage and plentiful means of concealment. It is a very shy bird, and very unwilling to be gazed at. If it sees you watching it, you soon lose sight of it as it hops and twists from spray to spray into the inner and shadiest recesses of its haunt. Its nest, too, is studiously concealed, and Mr. Yarrell says it will leave two or three just-commenced nests in succession on light grounds of suspicion that it has been noticed in its labours. The nest is a benty, and, saving for the ties of wool or cobweb, a slightly compacted

edifice, lined with hair and fine fibres, and contains four or five eggs of varying colour and mottlings—white, greenish, or tinged with a peculiar shade of faint red, being the ground-colour, with markings of a reddish brown.—*Fig.* 6, *plate III.*

ORPHEAN WARBLER—(*Sylvia Orphea*).

Very rarely noticed in this country.

WOOD WREN—(*Phylloscopus sibilatrix;* formerly, *Sylvia sibilatrix*).

Wood Warbler, Yellow Wren.—This bird was long confounded with the Willow Wren, to be named next It comes to us for the summer, the males (as is the case with so many of the Warblers) coming first by several days. It is abundant enough in some well-wooded parts of the kingdom, and its song is only called such by courtesy. It builds a domed nest; that is one covered in above, and with a side entrance; on the ground amid grass or weeds. It is made of grass, dead leaves, moss, and lined with hair and soft grass. The eggs are six in number, white, and very much speckled and spotted with dark red-purple.—*Fig.* 10, *plate III.*

WILLOW WREN—(*Phylloscopus trochilus;* formerly, *Sylvia trochilus*).

Willow Warbler, Yellow Wren, Scotch Wren, Hay-bird, Huckmuck, Ground Wren.—A well known little bird to the observant. It sings "a soft and pleasing"

song, and is a lively little fellow, in incessant motion. Very restless and uneasy too, when you are near its nest, and particularly if the young are hatched. The nest is domed externally like the one last named, but always lined with feathers, which the last never is. It is built on a bank or bankside, among grass or other herbage, and contains five to seven eggs, white, with many small speckles of red, not very dark. There is an instance on record, in which this bird did not leave its nest though it had been bodily removed from its site on the ground, and even before any eggs were laid or the nest itself completed—one of the most remarkable cases of the kind known.—*Fig.* 11, *plate III.*

CHIFFCHAFF—(*Phylloscopus collybita;* formerly, *Sylvia hippolais*).

Lesser Pettychaps, Least Willow Wren.—An "early bird" this is in coming to us in spring-time, and able and willing enough to take its substitute for the "early worm." The two syllables of its name, differently accented, form its song. Its nest is like that of the Willow Wren, with the addition of a few dead leaves outside, and abundance of feathers inside, and is also placed on (or very near) the ground on a hedgebank. The Chiffchaff lays six eggs, white, with specks of dark purplish-red.—*Fig.* 12, *plate III.*

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER—(*Phylloscopus superciliosus*).

Very rare and accidental as a visitor.

GOLD-CRESTED REGULUS—(*Regulus cristatus*).

Gold-crest, Gold-crested Wren, Golden-crested Warbler, Gold-crowned Kinglet.—One of the smallest of our native birds, and possessing a "soft and pleasing song." Its nest—one of the very most beautiful of all our English nests—is often built below the branch of a spruce fir-tree and near the end of the bough, being suspended to two or more of the spreading side-boughs. I have found it built below another and larger bird's nest. The side boughs just named are often woven in with the moss and wool of the nest, and then there is a lining of feathers; spiders' webs too are used to compact the structure. Seven or eight eggs are laid, which vary remarkably, in different nests, in both ground-shade and markings. Some remind one of the usual Robin's egg in both, though the spots are much finer. Others are pale white, with yellowish-brown (rather than red) speckles.—*Fig.* 14, *plate III.*

FIRE-CRESTED REGULUS—(*Regulus ignicapillus.*

Much less common than the last, though very likely often confounded with it from its great general resemblance. Its nest is like its gold-crowned relation's, and the eggs seem to resemble the variety first described in the above notice of that bird.

FAMILY VIII.—TROGLODYTIDÆ.

WREN—(*Troglodytes parvulus;* formerly, *T. vulgaris.*)

Jenny Wren, Kitty Wren, Titty Wren, Cutty

Wren.—A kind of natural pet with every one. I scarcely ever remember to have spoken of the Wren, or heard others speak of it, without some gentle, loving epithet applied to its name. The provincial names quoted are instances of what I mean, and how often the words "poor," "little," "tiny," and even "dear," are joined to the prefixes of Jenny, or Kitty, or Titty. Its little song, its seeming incapacity to bear the rude buffets of storm and cold, its quiet peculiar movements, all tend to commend it to our kindly notice. And then the beautiful nest it makes —such a great pile for such a tiny builder—and so compact and warm and wonderfully concealed by the use of the nicest adaptations of materials and design to the site selected,—this makes us almost respectfully admire, in addition to our love. I have found it on the moss-covered bank, on the moss-covered trunk of a tree, in thatch, in a haulm wall; but wherever it is found, the adjacent substances are made to help the concealment. One would think that when strength and ability, seemingly so inadequate, had been so heavily tasked as is implied in the construction of such a nest, the little birds would not be likely to leave it, especially with the building of another in immediate prospect. But I have not found it so in practice. A very trifling enlargement of the single orifice, or straining of the fabric in the effort to send the finger to the bottom of the nest, is quite sufficient to cause the nest to be deserted; especially if the Wrens owning it have once or more been disturbed when in it, or very near it. When the young ones are hatched, the case is altered. The eggs are often

from six to nine or ten in number, and I have heard of even more. They are white, with almost always a few pale red spots about them. The male is said to feed the female during the period of closest incubation. Many other birds certainly have the same habit, even when the mate has left the nest just to stretch her wings, as it were. I have seen the Common Linnet do this.—*Fig.* 17, *plate IV.*

FAMILY IX.—CERTHIADÆ.

CREEPER—(*Certhia familiaris*).

Tree-creeper, Tree-climber.—A shy, gentle-seeming little bird, shunning observation, and, with the rest of its neighbours in our catalogue, possessing a singular facility of quietly and rapidly shifting its place on the trunk or limb of a tree, so as always to interpose an efficient screen between its own minute body and the eye of any passer-by. Its claws, sharp and long and curved, aided by its long and pointed tail-feathers, are its chief machinery in these facile motions. It builds its nest, generally speaking, in a hole in a tree, with only a very minute aperture. Sometimes, though I think rarely, the nest is outside the tree, but screened from observation by some casual dislodgement of the bark, or in some similar way. It is made of dry grass, small twigs, shreds of moss, with a lining of feathers. It is very hard to distinguish between the eggs of the Creeper, which number from six to nine, and those of the Blue Titmouse and the

Willow Wren, not to mention one or two other small birds. The illustration will give a better idea of the egg than many lines of description.—*Fig* 16, *plate IV.*

FAMILY X.—SITTIDÆ.

NUT-HATCH—(*Sitta Europœa*).

Nut-jobber, Wood-cracker.—A very beautiful bird to my eye, with his bright slate-coloured back, and orange breast, and black bill; and a very great pet in former days. I had a pair which had never known a day of constraint, but which, by patient feeding, and care to make them fearless of me, became so tame as almost to take food from my hand; to take it readily when I jerked it a foot or two into the air. And they would always come to my signal for them—a few blows on the tree at which I fed them. But they never suffered their young to come to the feast I provided, and always absented themselves for about a month at the breeding time. The nest is, I believe, always made in the hole of a tree, and if the aperture to the hollow is too large, the bird is apt to lessen it by the application of a sort of mud-plaster to some portions of the edge. The nest is rather a contrast to that of the little Wren just now named, being little more than a loose heap of moss, small twigs, and chips of bark and wood. The eggs are five or six and sometimes, it is said, seven in number, white, with some pale red spots. Many of them are very like the Larger Titmouse's.—*Fig.* 18, *plate IV.*

FAMILY XI.—PARIDÆ.

GREAT TITMOUSE—(*Parus major*).

Great Tit, Oxeye, Blackcap, Great Blackheaded Tom-tit, Pick-cheese.—It might also be called, and I believe is in one district, the Saw-sharpener, for its note certainly puts one in mind of that agreeable musical operation. The Tom-tits are familiar to all of us, and "impudent" is one of the epithets we most usually apply to the whole tribe. Most of them breed in some hollow place or hole. The nest of the Great Tit is formed of moss, with a feather lining, and is sometimes placed in a hole in a wall; sometimes in some appropriate recess in a hollow tree. Like the other Tits, it lays many eggs, occasionally from six to nine. They are white, of fair size, and well spotted as well as speckled with a decided shade of red. There is an easily recognised resemblance between the eggs of all the Tom-tit family.—*Fig.* 15, *plate III.*

BLUE TITMOUSE—(*Parus cæruleus*).

Tom-tit, Blue Tom-tit, Nun, Bluecap, Blue-bonnet, Billy-biter, Hickwall, Blue Mope.—One of the most impudent of an impudent lot. A pair had built their nest in a crevice between the lintel and stone-work of my coach-house, and my children from their nursery window observed it. For their amusement I got a ladder and looked in. The bold little matron could not be induced to leave the hole, but spit and hissed like a regular vixen, and tried to make herself as big as two by ruffling up her feathers, so as to frighten

the owners of the ugly faces, as she would think, she saw at her door. Often, too, have I been bitten sharply by one I had laid hold of. Almost any hole in any object will do for the nest-site. Even a bottle, a wooden box, a pump-barrel, a queer-shaped cavity in an old tree only big enough to admit such a small creature, all are made available, and I knew of one in a private letter-box, into which letters and post-packets were daily dropped. The nest is voluminous, of moss, hair, and feathers; and the eggs are almost endless. From six up to twelve or thirteen is of common occurrence. Mr. Hewitson mentions one case of eighteen eggs! They are white, and spotted with pale red. The journeys of the old birds to and from the nest when supplying their large family with food are literally innumerable; and the number of small caterpillars, grubs, plant-lice, and the like, destroyed by these indefatigable caterers, must be simply astonishing. I think the pair just now referred to made at least one visit to the nest every two minutes throughout the day. The climbing, clinging habits of this and other Tom-tits are very amusing; and in former days I made them dance on the slack-rope for my amusement and my friends'. I strung a nut or two on a piece of strong thread, and tied the two extremities to a tree and a nail in a wall near the window, respectively. This plan gave me many lengthened opportunities for watching their ways. I have also seen them stripping off the loose bark from pine-planks and picking out the fine fat grubs which eat their way between the wood and the bark.—*Fig.* 16, *plate III.*

COLE TITMOUSE—(*Parus ater*).

Colemouse, Coal-head, Cole Titmouse.—A hardy little bird, of no rare occurrence in any part of the kingdom. Incessantly active, and frequently associating with other small birds, it prosecutes a restless search for the small insects and seeds which form its food. Its nest, of moss and wool and hair, is placed in a hole in a tree, sometimes very near the ground; sometimes even in a hole in the ground which has been made by some small quadruped. Like the other Tits, if necessary it will enlarge a hole in a tree which it finds already such as nearly to suit its requirements. Six to eight eggs are laid, white, and spotted with faint red.

MARSH TITMOUSE—(*Parus palustris*).

Coal-head, Blackcap, Willow-biter.—A plentiful species in places; but as its name intimates, with a preference for districts with the peculiar low growth of bush and willow found in low fenny countries. It makes its nest in old willows and the low stunted trunks of pollard trees, and will labour hard to make a nearly suitable hole quite serviceable. It is said to carry the chips it makes quite away to some distance. The nest is better built than those of the Tits hitherto named, of moss and wool; and the number of eggs varies from five or six to eight or even ten. They are of the usual Tom-tit type, white, spotted with red.

CRESTED TITMOUSE—(*Parus cristatus*).

As rare with us as the last two Titmice are common.

LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE—(*Acredula caudata*; formerly, *Parus caudatus*).

Long-tailed Mag, Mum-ruffin, Bottle-tit, Bottle-Tom, Long-tailed Capon, Long-tail Pie, Caper Long-tail, Oven-builder, Poke-pudding, Mufflin, etc. etc.—The beautiful, even wonderful nest of this little bird must be well known to almost all nest-fanciers—oval, of great size compared with the tiny architect; built, too, entirely by the female, wondrously compacted with moss and wool, and "sparkling with lichens" affixed to the outside, it affords access by one hole only, on the upper part of one side, to the inside, most warmly lined with feathers. So thoroughly is it secured to the sticks which support it, that it is scarcely possible to obtain an entire one without cutting the sticks for removal also. The eggs are often ten in number, and sometimes one or two more, white, and very slightly specked with red, if at all. What the little bird does with her long tail when sitting, is a marvel.[1] The young, when able to fly, keep much together and with their parents; and often, when at rest, sit very close together on one branch, so as to present a doubtful-looking feathery lump to the observer's eye.—*Fig.* 17, *plate III.*

[1] It is said that the hen's long tail is cocked forward over her back as she sits, and that it projects through the hole in the nest above her bill.

FAMILY XII.—PANURIDÆ.

BEARDED TITMOUSE—(*Panurus biarmicus*; formerly, *Parus biarmicus*).

The male of this species is, indeed, a beautiful bird. They are met with in sufficient abundance in many districts in England, *e.g.*, about the Norfolk Broads, the Meres in adjacent counties, as well as in Surrey and Middlesex. Until lately, from the fenny nature of the soil of their habitat, they have been less observed than any other birds; but now their habits are much better known. Their nest is often made of various finer sedges and the dead flag-like leaves of the reed with a little grass, and lined with the seed-down of the reed. Sometimes almost on the ground, sometimes raised a little above it in a tuft of grass or reeds, on the margin of a ditch or other water, it contains four to six eggs, not so large as those of the Greater Titmouse, and of usual Titmouse colour and markings.—*Fig.* 18, *plate III.*

FAMILY XIII.—AMPELIDÆ.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING—(*Ampelis garrulus*; formerly, *Bombycilla garrula.*)

Waxen Chatterer, Chatterer, Bohemian Chatterer. —Less rare as a visitor than some other British birds; but still only a visitor.

FAMILY XIV.—MOTACILLIDÆ.

PIED WAGTAIL—(*Motacilla lugubris;* formerly, *M. alba*).

White Wagtail, Black and White Wagtail, Dish-washer, Washtail, Nanny Washtail.—I think we, all of us, know this familiar and very graceful bird, and like to see its active run and short flight taken for the purpose of capturing an insect. We have often been amused, too, at seeing perhaps a whole family of young ones running among the legs of the cows near the water, and taking a fly now from the belly or flank of the great animal, and then from its leg or the ground. The nest is made of grass, bents, dead roots, moss, and is sometimes found in a hole in the rude wall of an old shed or the side of a haulm wall or pile of furze, or in a hole in a bank; sometimes on the outside of a heap of sticks, or in thatch, or upon the end of a haystack, and other analogous places. Mr. Warde Fowler mentions nests as made in stacks of coal piled up near a railway siding, and in creepers high up on the walls of college buildings in Oxford. Four or five eggs are customarily found in it, white, and speckled with cinereous spots and lines, being often such as to resemble one variety of the varying eggs of the House Sparrow.—*Fig.* 19, *plate III.*

WHITE WAGTAIL—(*Motacilla alba*).

"A rare straggler in the South of England, and in Ireland." ("Ibis" List of British Birds.)

GREY WAGTAIL—(*Motacilla sulphurea;* formerly, *M. boarula*).

Less plentiful than the Pied Wagtail, equally elegant and more beautiful, this little bird resembles the other in its ways and habits. Its nest is placed on the ground at no great distance from water, which has many attractions for it, as well as for the common "Nanny Washtail." The materials and general structure are, in the main, the same as in the last case; feathers and wool being introduced as a lining. There are often five or six eggs in it, of a faint white ground-colour, mottled and streaked with very light brown, a few streaks being sometimes of a darker tint.—*Fig.* 20, *plate III.*

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL—(*Motacilla flava;* formerly, *M. neglecta*).

Called Grey-headed Wagtail in the earlier editions of Yarrell. Met with but a few times in all in Britain.

YELLOW WAGTAIL—(*Motacilla Raï;* formerly, *M. flava*).

Ray's Wagtail, Cow-bird.—A summer visitor, and, of course, making its nest with us. It builds on the ground, in cornfields or fallows; sometimes on a stump of a tree level with the ground, or on a bank of earth overhanging water, or in a hole in a wall in the same vicinity. The said nest is made of moss, roots, dry grass, and lined with the same, only finer, and a little hair. Four to six eggs are laid, which, Mr. Yarrell says, "are not unlike those of the Sedge Warbler,

only rather larger, whitish in colour, mottled nearly all over with yellow-brown and ash-brown."

TREE PIPIT—(*Anthus trivialis;* formerly, *A. arboreus.*)

Pipit Lark, Field Titling, Field Lark, Tree Lark, Grasshopper Lark.—No long time elapses after the spring arrival of the Tree Pipit before he makes his presence observable by indulging in his peculiar mode of recommending his song, not unpleasant in itself, to our notice. Seated on the topmost twig of a tree or high bush, he sings a while, and then up he goes with fluttering wing, singing all the while, and also while descending from his greatest height on outstretched wing to the twig he started from. The nest is always on the ground, and not far from a hedge, or under a low bush, and is found also in woods or nurseries not far from the edge of a drive or glade. It is made of moss and fibres and grass, lined with finer grass and a little hair. The eggs vary inconceivably in tint and marks, and entirely baffle description. Some are purple-red, others yellowish-white in ground, clouded and spotted almost all over with different shades of greyish-brown.—*Figs.* 22, 23, *plate III.*

MEADOW PIPIT—(*Anthus pratensis*).

Titlark, Pipit Lark, Meadow Titling, Moor Tit or Titling, Heather Lintie, Moss-Cheeper, Ling bird, Meadow Lark.—A very common bird here, both in the enclosed lands and especially on the moors. It is amusing to observe how they sometimes wind their way among the ling or heather, instead of flying from

the place at which they have alighted. Its nest is always on the ground, sometimes in the middle of a grass or corn field, sometimes nearer the hedge, but always so placed as to be very well if not very closely concealed. One I found accidentally on the moor was in the side of a cavity left by the extraction of a huge surface block of stone, in a kind of small hollow or recess, and completely covered in by earth and ling. In addition to its five proper eggs, this nest contained a Cuckoo's egg. The nest is made of bents, lined with the same and some hairs. The eggs are from four to six, and vary in colour. Mr. Yarrell's description is, "Of a reddish-brown colour, mottled over with darker brown." The red is hardly discoverable, if at all, in some I have, and I should have said "dusky brown."—*Fig.* 21, *plate III.*

WATER PIPIT—(*Anthus spipoletta*).

"A very rare straggler in Great Britain." ("Ibis" List.)

ROCK PIPIT—(*Anthus obscurus*; formerly, *A. petrosus*).

Dusky Lark, Rock Lark, Field Lark, Sea Titling, Sea Lintie. This bird, it seems, was long confounded with the others named a little above. It is seldom met far inland, and is not always found near rocks, notwithstanding its name. It is a ground-builder, and where there are rocks handy, the nest is very likely to be on their ledges, if only a little grass or the like grows there. It is composed of various dry

grasses, and contains four or five eggs of a greenish cast, and mottled with dusky brown or dark cinereous markings.

TAWNY PIPIT—(*Anthus campestris*).

An occasional straggler to our coasts.

RICHARD'S PIPIT—(*Anthus Ricardi*).

An occasional visitor to our shores; a good many instances in all having been met with.

FAMILY XV.—ALAUDIDÆ.

SHORE LARK—(*Otocorys alpestris;* formerly, *Alauda alpestris*).

Only a very few of these birds have been met with in Britain.

SKY LARK—(*Alauda arvensis*).

Lark, Field Lark, Laverock.—Very few words of description are requisite in the case of this everywhere familiar and favourite songster. Up in the sky, and soaring still, he pours out his joyous strains, suggesting to us much more forcibly than any other bird does in its song the thought that it is offering praise and thanks to the Lord of Creation: so that the thought in the old Shakespearian song,

"Hark! Hark! the Lark at Heaven's gate sings,"

seems by no means fanciful to us. Once, many years

ago, I was speaking the solemn words, "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," over a dead parishioner, followed, as they soon are, by the telling of our "sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection," when a Sky Lark, right over our heads, broke out into his sweet, simple, thankful, hopeful, joyous melody, and by it spoke to more sad hearts than one in that silent company. Up, up, to the sky was his pathway, and the song and the soaring both said that a "joyful resurrection" was no "cunningly devised fable."

The Sky Lark's nest is always on the ground, often near the edge of a furrow, sometimes near a little grassy unevenness of the surface, sometimes, even, cunningly concealed in a dry grassy grip by the side of a field at the foot of a low hedge-bank. It is but a slight and inartificial structure of bents, lined with finer grasses and a few fibrous roots. The eggs, which I never knew to exceed five in number, vary as much in general colour and markings as the Tree Pipit's, and quite baffle verbal description. I once found three in a nest, altogether dusky in general hue, and so dark that I can hardly use the word brown in describing the shade; while generally "dark grey" and "ash brown" will succeed in conveying an idea of the mottlings characterising the egg. Besides which, by no means a small proportion of a large collection of Sky Lark's eggs will always be found to show a prevailing tinge of green in the surface colouring. The Lark is a very faithful mother, and will not easily be induced to leave her nest; and even when the nest has become quite untenable any longer, from any cause, the parent birds have been known to

move both eggs and young to a safer place, by grasping them with the long prehensile claws of their feet.—*Fig.* 24, *plate III.*

WOOD LARK—(*Alauda arborea*).

The Sky Lark is seen everywhere; on the moors here in small parties, on the Saltings in Essex and other southern counties, in our meadows and cornfields all over the kingdom. The Wood Lark, on the other hand, is strictly local, though sufficiently abundant where it does occur. I knew in one case, where a shot was fired at a lot of Larks in the snow, that out of five or six which were killed, all but one proved to be Wood Larks. So local is it, that though I have been a resident in Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, Berwickshire, and Yorkshire, as well as a visitor in other counties, I have never lived among or near its haunts, saving only in the westernmost county named. The nest is formed on the ground, usually well concealed by grass or a neighbouring scrubby bush, and is composed of dry grass and moss, and lined with fibres and a few hairs. The eggs are four or five in number, of a lighter ground-colour (but scarcely less in size) than those of the Sky Lark, vary very little comparatively in their general appearance, and often in addition to the ash-brown or greenish hue of the superficial frecklings and mottlings, are marked by the presence of a few wine-red blotches. The young are much sought for to keep in cages, as they soon begin to sing very freely. The song of the Wood Lark in a state of nature is one of the sweetest

in some respects, with which I am acquainted.—*Fig.* 25, *plate III.*

SHORT-TOED LARK—(*Calandrella brachydactyla*; formerly, *Alauda brachydactyla*).

A bird much resembling the Wood Lark in appearance, but of very casual occurrence.

WHITE-WINGED LARK—(*Melanocorypha Sibirica*).

Hardly seen more than once or twice in Britain.

FAMILY XVI.—EMBERIZIDÆ.

LAPLAND BUNTING—(*Plectrophanes Lapponica*).

Has been met with in Britain, but on very few occasions.

SNOW BUNTING—(*Plectrophanes nivalis*).

Tawny Bunting, Mountain Bunting, Snow-flake or -fleck.—Only a winter visitor in this country, though often coming in not very scanty numbers. I have frequently seen them on our North Yorkshire moors, and have heard of them as seen in flocks of large dimensions. One informant told me he had seen as many as two hundred together. It breeds in countries very far to the North, and, like other *indigénes* of the North, is subject to considerable variations in colour according to season. So much so, that the bird, which used to be called Tawny Bunting in its summer

plumage, was re-christened by the name of Snow Bunting, to suit its winter dress, while the young bird was called by the name of Mountain Bunting.

REED BUNTING—(*Emberiza schæniclus*).

Reed Sparrow, Water Sparrow, Mountain Sparrow, Black-headed Bunting, Black-bonnet.—Not a rare bird anywhere in England, I believe, where water is not rare; and very conspicuous from the dark head and bright plumage of the male. On the Essex marshes it is common enough, and so it is in the marshy or ill-drained meadows of other counties. Mr. Yarrell says the "nest is generally placed on the ground, among coarse long grass or rushes, at the foot of a thorn, or on the side of a canal bank." The last I found was among, and supported by, the sedges growing at the side of a marsh-ditch in Essex, and not less than ten or twelve inches from the bank—a site which I believe is not an unusual one. It is made of grasses, fragments of rushes, stalks of different plants, and lined sometimes with reed-down, or finer grasses and a little moss. I dislodged the male bird from the nest just named, and the eggs were perfectly warm to the touch. They would have been hatched in a few days. It was thus proved that the male Reed Bunting takes his share in sitting, and the position of the nest among green and growing sedges adds one more fact to what is known of its nidification. The eggs are four or five in number, of a pale reddish-brown colour, streaked and spotted with dark brown of a rich purple shade.—*Fig.* 2, *plate IV.*

RUSTIC BUNTING—(*Emberiza pustica*).
Has occurred in England too or three times only.

LITTLE BUNTING—(*Emberiza pusilla*).
Equally rare and accidental with its predecessor

BUNTING, COMMON BUNTING—(*Emberiza miliaria*).

Corn Bunting, Ebb.—The name of this bird shows that it is not by any means rare in perhaps most of our country districts. It often utters its not very musical cry seated on a tall spray in a hedge, and sometimes while flying along. The nest is always made very near the ground, if not actually on it, usually among stunted bushes or coarse herbage. It is made of roots, bents or coarser materials yet, and lined with hair. The Bunting lays four or five eggs, of a kind of stained-white ground, suggesting the idea that a vinous-red stain has been imperfectly washed off, and blotched and streaked and speckled, in the characteristic Bunting style, with shades of purplish brown, some of them rather dark. Though called Corn Bunting, it may be found where corn-fields are not abundant. I once met with a nest at the foot of St. Abb's Head.—*Fig.* 1, *plate IV.*

YELLOW HAMMER—(*Emberiza citrinella*).

Yellow Bunting, Yellow Yowley, Gold-spink, Yellow Yeldring, Yellow Yoldring, or Yeörling, Yeldrock, Yellow Yite, Yoit, etc.—I used to hear in Berwickshire, that

> "The Brock, the Toad, and the Yellow Yeōrling,
> Get a drap o' the Deil's bluid ilka May morning."

I wonder what they all do with it, and how the plentiful bleeding affects the patient. For there is certainly no lack of Yellow Hammers all over the country; and if one looks at the long strings of blown birds' eggs festooned at cottage doors, or hung over the cottage or farm-house mantelpiece, the trophies of some young nest-taking hopeful dwelling there, after the Blackbirds' and Thrushes' eggs, the most abundant are almost always those of the Yellow Hammer. We all know his rich plumage and somewhat plaintive song, which, in my school-boy days, used to be Englished into "A very, very little bit of bread and n-o-o c-h-e-e-e-s-e!" It does not spare materials when engaged in building its nest. Dead grass, small sticks and moss, a few feathers and plentiful hair to form the lining, are ready enough in our fields for its use, and the structure compacted with them is placed usually in a low, thick bush on a hedge-bank, well concealed, and but little raised above the soil. Sometimes I have found it in a rough grass-field, amid tufts of rushes and other such-like growth. Sometimes even in a wall-tree, as in my own garden last year; or in an evergreen shrub, also in my garden a year or two since. But the hedge-side is the rule. The eggs, three to five in number, and often very round in shape, vary considerably in individual cases, but never so much as to leave the accustomed eye in a moment's doubt as to what bird the egg belongs to. Of a white ground-colour, scarcely tinged at all with vinous red, or perhaps much suffused, all of them are streaked and veined and spotted with dark brown with a shade of red in it. They are beautiful eggs to my eye.—*Fig.* 3, *plate IV.*

CIRL BUNTING—(*Emberiza cirlus*).

French Yellow Hammer, Black-throated Yellow Hammer.—A bird long overlooked by our native ornithologists, and perhaps more frequently occurring than is even yet suspected. Still it is by no means a common bird,—though identified as occurring in, perhaps, most of the southern counties. The Rev. Orpen Morris, from whose work on British Birds and Eggs I have taken the two provincial names given above, says, "the nest is placed in furze or low bushes, and is usually made of dry stalks of grass and a little moss, lined with hair and small roots. Some are wholly without moss or hair . . . the small roots constituting the lining. The eggs are four or five in number, of a dull, bluish white, streaked and speckled with dark brown. They vary much in colour and markings."—*Fig.* 4, *plate IV.*

ORTOLAN BUNTING—(*Emberiza hortulana*).

Ortolan, Green-headed Bunting.—Merely an occasional visitor nesting in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Lapland.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING—(*Euspiza melanocephala*).

Its occurrence reported once only in England.

FAMILY XVII.—FRINGILLIDÆ.

CHAFFINCH—(*Fringilla cœlebs*).

Spink, Pink, Twink, Skelly, Shelly, Shell-apple, Scobby, Shilfa, Buckfinch, Horsefinch, Copperfinch, Whitefinch, Beechfinch, Wet-bird.—One of our most beautiful birds is the male of this species—one of quite the most beautiful of our English nests is its nest. It would be a shame if he, with his gay dress and handsome appearance, were the bachelor he is called in his Latin name. It is, however, only at one period of the year that the sexes in the Chaffinch tribe (as in many other kinds of birds) separate. The song of the Chaffinch, though not of great compass or variety, is very cheery and sweet, and very different from his melancholy cry of "Weet, weet," which many country people take as a prognostication of rain;—whence his local name of Wet-bird. The nest, always in a tree-fork or bush or hedge, always firmly and securely built in, always contrived and fashioned with a wonderful compactness, neatness and beauty, is formed of mosses, with various-shaded lichens on the surface, and lined with wool and hair and feathers, the last two being the finishing substances. I never knew more than five eggs to be laid, oftener four, of a peculiar winey-red dun, spotted and streaked—and most near the large end—with a rich, dark Sienna brown. I once found a nest in which all the eggs were of nearly a uniform creamy white, a little suffused with vinous red. The eggs in their comeliness befit the nest, and the nest is worthy of the bird. The female is, however, the

principal, if not the sole, architect and builder.—*Fig.* 5, *plate IV.*

BRAMBLING OR MOUNTAIN FINCH—(*Fringilla montifringilla*).

Brambling, Bramble Finch, Lulean Finch.—Only a winter visitor to our shores, but still pretty generally diffused throughout the kingdom at that season, though never perhaps, strictly speaking, anything like a common bird anywhere. It has been known to breed in Scotland.

TREE SPARROW—(*Passer montanus*).

Mountain Sparrow.—This species has undoubtedly been long and continually confounded with the Common or House Sparrow. And even yet it has not been satisfactorily proved to have occurred in very many counties in England. Further observation may do more yet in identifying the Tree Sparrow and defining its localities. It nests in holes in pollard or other trees, or in thatch, in company with other Sparrows of the common species, but in this case always in holes entered from the outside, not from the inside of the roof of the building. Sometimes it has been ascertained to breed in nests made within deserted nests of a Magpie, or some such bird. The nest, like that of the Common Sparrow, is formed of dry grass or hay, or fine straw, and abundantly lined with feathers of all sorts. The eggs, four or five in general, are distinctly less than those of the House Sparrow, and with more decided brown in the markings on the ground-colour of soiled white.—*Fig.* 6, *plate IV.*

HOUSE SPARROW—(*Passer domesticus*).

Sparrow, Common Sparrow.—He may well be called the Common Sparrow, for we find him alike in the town and the country, in the field and in the garden, by the road-side hovel or in the neighbourhood of the great mansion. And whether he be sooty and black with the smoke of mid-London, or with his colours pure and unsmirched and bright as in the clear breezy village, he is still always the same pert, forward creature, whose name has passed almost into a proverb for bold familiarity. Ubiquitous as he is by habit and system, his nest is found in sites almost as various and as numerous as the places of his residence. Under the tiles or eaves of buildings, in the thatch-edges of a barn, in holes in the interior of a thatch-roof, in water-pipes and receivers for eaves-gutters, in holes in walls or old buildings, in ivy clothing either a wall or a tree, in fir trees, in wall-trees, especially if large and high, below Rooks' nests, in deserted nests of large birds,—frequent in all these sites, it seems difficult to say where it may not be found. Often, too, it becomes a mass of straw and dry grass and lavish feather-lining, big enough to fill a man's hat of large size. The eggs are very various in the intensity of their surface markings. They are white, speckled and spotted and streaked with ash colour and dusky brown, some so slightly as to be pale grey, others so profusely as to be very dark "pepper and salt." They vary in number from four to six. Whenever the nest is built in a situation naturally open at top, it is domed over by the little constructor.—*Fig.* 7, *plate IV.*

HAWFINCH—(*Coccothraustes vulgaris*).

Common Grosbeak, Haw Grosbeak.—A bird which seems to occur less sparingly in our island than was supposed. For long it was taken to be merely a winter visitor. It is not uncommon about Epping Forest, and has been found nearer London, and in many of the Southern counties. It has bred frequently of late years in this county (York). Mr. Doubleday has given a good account of its habits generally, as well as of its nest and eggs. It seems to have no peculiar situation for its nest preferred to all others, but builds indiscriminately in trees or bushes, and at various heights from the ground. The nest is said to be made of twigs, "with fibrous roots and grey lichens laid flat on them;" the whole structure being such as to remind one of the Ring Dove's flat platform of a nest. The eggs "vary from four to six, and are of a pale olive-green, spotted with black, and streaked with dusky grey." Mr. Doubleday adds, that some are much less marked than others. A few, indeed, with no marks at all on the green ground-colour.—*Fig.* 9, *plate IV.*

GREENFINCH—(*Coccothraustes chloris*).

Green Grosbeak, Green Linnet, Green Bird.—A sufficiently common species, and often seen in winter, on stubbles which afford a sufficiency of the seed-constituents of its food, in large flocks. Neither does it yield an insignificant portion of the egg spoils of the country-boy. The nest is usually built in a hedge, and it dearly loves a thick massive thorn hedge for the purpose. In one such, bordering an orchard in

Essex, of perhaps seventy or eighty yards long, I found one day a dozen or more of Greenfinches' nests, almost all with eggs in. The nest is, however, not seldom to be met with in an evergreen or other bush in the garden; sometimes in a fir tree, and again in a fruit or ornamental tree. The materials employed are roots, moss, grass, with a lining of the same, only finer, and plentiful hair. I have often noticed the presence of a kind of scrubby scales about the interior of one of their nests. The eggs are four, five, or six in number, and vary much in size and but little in general appearance. They are white, suffused with a bluish tinge, and with reddish or purple spots and streaks, intermingled with some of a darker shade.—*Fig.* 8, *plate IV.*

SERIN—(*Serinus hortulanus*).

This is a rare bird, having occurred in only a very few localities.

GOLDFINCH—(*Carduelis elegans*).

Thistle-Finch, Gold-spink, Grey Kate, or Pate (the young), Proud Tailor, Goldie, King Harry Redcap.—This beautiful little bird is, I fear, one of those which are much less common in many districts than used to be the case in my younger days. It is much sought after for keeping in cages, and is caught for that purpose in numbers by the professional bird-catchers. It builds a beautifully neat and pretty nest; sometimes in a bush or evergreen, often in the fork of an apple or other fruit-tree, and more rarely in a hedge. It is formed of moss, fir-needles, green bents, wool,

thistle-down, willow-down, feathers, hairs, etc., according to the choice afforded by the locality of the nest. The eggs are four or five in number, are bluish white or pale grey, spotted with greyish purple and red brown, and sometimes a little streaked with the same.—*Fig.* 10, *plate IV.*

SISKIN—(*Carduelis spinus*).

Aberdevine.—Only a winter visitor; and though not very uncommon at that season in many parts of Britain, yet it has been known to nest with us so very rarely that it seems scarcely requisite to give any account of either nest or eggs in this place.

MEALY REDPOLL—(*Linota linaria;* formerly, *L. canescens*).

Only a winter visitor to this country, and in varying numbers in different years. Many were obtained in one or two of the counties adjoining the Metropolis many years since; but no instance, I believe, is known of its remaining with us to breed.

LESSER REDPOLL—(*Linota linaria*).

Common Redpoll, Lesser Red-headed Finch, Rose Linnet.—This is a winter visitor to the southern counties of England; but remains all the year round in Scotland and some parts of north England. The nest seems to be built in some situation not too high above the ground; for instance, in a bush or stunted tree; and is made of moss and bents, and like some of those of the Common Linnet, with willow-down and the like. There are usually four or five eggs deposited in

it, their colour "pale bluish green, spotted with orange-brown, and principally at the larger end." The ground-colour seems to vary to greenish-grey, and the spots to become more of a reddish tinge. (See Mr. Warde Fowler's "Year with the Birds," pp. 23, 24, for very interesting notes on these birds.)—*Fig.* 12, *plate IV.*

LINNET—(*Linota cannabina*).

Common Linnet, Grey Linnet, Red Linnet, Brown Linnet, Whin Linnet, Linnet Finch, Red-headed Finch, Greater Redpoll, Rose Linnet, Lint-white, Lintie.—No wonder school-boys and country boys had, and have, three or four different names for this one bird (according to the differences of plumage due to age, sex, or season), when even naturalists made two species of it. The male in his full plumage, with red poll and rose breast and bright brown plumage, is a handsome bird, and, compared with the female or the young, a very "fine bird" indeed. It is common enough in most districts, and pretty sure to be met with where there is much furze. The nest is frequently to be found in the midst of thick furze covers; but like Mr. Hewitson, I have found it commonly in thickish thorn-hedges, and very often in small and single furze bushes. It is made of small twigs and bents and moss, and often lined with a copious cushion of wool merely; at other times, with some hair and vegetable down. The eggs vary greatly in size, as well as in colour and markings, but usually they are of a pale bluish-white ground, speckled with red of different

shades, brown to purple. They are four, five, and sometimes six in number.—*Fig.* 11, *plate IV.*

TWITE—(*Linota flavirostra*; formerly, *L. montium*).

Mountain Linnet, Twite Finch, Heather Lintie.—A bird seldom, if ever, seen much south of the Humber. It is known to breed in Yorkshire and the northern English counties as well as in Scotland, the Hebrides, etc. As its occasional name leads one to infer, it is usually found in the neighbourhood of hill or fell. The nest is built on the ground, among the short benty grass of the hill-side, or the dwarf ling of similar localities, or even among longer heather, and is made of the materials afforded by such herbage, and moss, and lined with fibrous roots, wool and hair. The eggs vary from four to six in number, are almost white, with the faintest blue or green tinge, spotted with red, brown or dark purple, with sometimes a few streaks of a lighter red tinge—*Fig.* 13, *plate IV.*

BULLFINCH—(*Pyrrhula Europæa*; formerly, *P. vulgaris*).

Olph, Alp, Hoop, Red Hoop, Nope.—One of our really handsome birds, and as familiar to many of us as other and even commoner birds, by his frequent occupancy of a cage. "Piping Bullfinches" are not very unusual even in this country. The Bullfinch is also one of those birds who have long been laid under proscription, for the mischief he is assumed to do to the buds of fruit trees. Like as rewards used to be customarily paid in hosts of places out of the Parish

funds for the heads of Sparrows, Tom-tits, etc., so has it been, on a lesser scale, with our present birds, and I cannot help thinking sometimes unjustly. No doubt the "Olph" commits sad apparent havock on the blossom-buds; but I suspect the blossom-buds damaged by him (as it seems) would, many of them, never have come to anything if no Bullfinch had ever been near them. There was a grub in each of them, and that grub would have destroyed the bud quite as effectually, if not quite as summarily, as the bird which extracted it from what was alike its hiding-place and scene of active ravage and consumption.[1] Unlike the Ring Dove and Missel Thrush, and a few other birds, which are usually very wild and shy, but at breeding time lay aside their wildness and distrust, and come to the close neighbourhood of human habitations to nest, the Bullfinch, in spring, leaves our gardens and orchards, and resorts to the woods and wilds. The nest is made of twigs and roots and moss, rather loosely constructed, and lined with wool and hair, and is most commonly placed in a good thick bush of considerable height and size; sometimes on a fir or other tree. The hen-bird lays four or five eggs of a pale greenish blue, streaked and spotted with purple-red, chiefly at the larger end.—*Fig.* 14, *plate IV.*

SCARLET GROSBEAK—(*Pyrrhula erythrina*).

Quite a casual or accidental visitor.

[1] But see the remarks on this topic in the second volume of the latest edition of Yarrell, pp. 167, 168.

PINE GROSBEAK—(*Pyrrhula enucleator*).

Pine Bullfinch, Common Hawfinch.—Only a very rare visitor in our islands.

CROSSBILL—(*Loxia curvirostra*).

This is a bird which deserves a little notice at our hands on two or three grounds. In its plumage it varies more, according to sex or age, than perhaps any other English bird in a state of nature. It is indeed subject to almost startling dissimilarity. The peculiar shape and action of the bill is also noteworthy, and the strength of the muscles which move the mandibles may be judged of by the powerful effect produced in starting the scales of the strongest fir-cones. Again, it has been repeatedly met with in this country in large numbers; and not only so, but at such seasons as to render it almost positive that it must have nested, or be nesting here: nay even females which were obtained, showed, by the state of their plumage, that they must have been so engaged: and yet until comparatively recently, no authentic observation has been recorded of the actual occurrence of its nest and eggs. It is now well known to have bred in eight or nine different English counties. The nest is made of twigs below, with grassy bents upon such foundation, bound together with wool and lined with hair. The eggs seem to vary much in colour, showing a sensible degree of resemblance to those of the Greenfinch, but with a generally warmer tint, and spots of a much more decided or dark red shade.—*Fig.* 15, *plate IV.*

PARROT CROSSBILL—(*Loxia pityopsittacus*).

It has occurred in a few instances, but is much too rare to be noticed by us at length; and, indeed, the same may be said of the two birds next named.

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL—(*Loxia bifasciata*).

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL—(*Loxia leucoptera;* formerly, *L. falcirostra*).

FAMILY XVIII.—ICTERIDÆ.

RED-WINGED STARLING—(*Agelæus phœniceus*)

Several specimens, questionably wild, have been met with.

FAMILY XIX.—STURNIDÆ.

STARLING—(*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Common Starling, Stare, Sheep-stare, Solitary Thrush, Brown Starling.—The two last of these names used to be applied to the young of the Starling. Few cases of more brilliant plumage are met with in our English birds than in the instance of the male of the Common Starling. The metallic glow and play of colours in the feathers of his head, neck, and back is very beautiful. It is a very abundant bird, and it is supposed by some that there are some peculiarities in its breeding habits. I mean that I have heard it asserted that the male is a polygamist, or rather perhaps a bigamist. I never saw anything within

my own scope of observation which led me to suspect it, but rather to hold the received belief that the Starling pairs exactly as most other birds do. They are exceedingly pertinacious in adhering to their choice of a place for nesting in. I knew one case in which, from the inconvenient nature of the nest-site selected, one of the birds was shot. In a very short space the survivor had paired again, and the gun again dissolved the union. The whole process was repeated five or six times, and the Starlings bred at last in the place chosen by the original pair. The nest is found in a great variety of situations,—in the bowl of a water pipe from the eaves of a house, in a dove-cot, in holes in trees, below the nests in a rookery, in holes in old buildings or more recent masonry, between the slates and underdrawing of a roof, in holes in steep high rocks, in chimneys of houses, and the like. It is made, without stint of materials, of straw, roots, grass, and a plentiful lining of feathers. The eggs, four to six in number, vary strangely in size but not in colour, which is of a uniform pale blue. In some districts where the Starling abounds, they collect in huge flocks, the young with the parents, and may be seen, when on the wing, like a cloud, from a great distance.—*Fig.* 1, *plate V.*

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

Rose-coloured Ouzel or Pastor.—Merely an accidental visitor to our shores.

FAMILY XX.—CORVIDÆ.

CHOUGH—(*Pyrrhocorax graculus ;* formerly, *Fregilus graculus.*)

Cornish Chough, Red-legged Crow, Cornish Daw, Cornwall Kae, Market-jew Crow, Chauk Daw, Hermit Crow, Cliff Daw, etc.—A bird which occurs more sparingly than it used to do. Its abiding and building place is among the steep rocks which line so many parts of the British coasts. In the Isle of Wight, in Man, on the Cornish shores, at Flamborough, in Berwickshire near St. Abb's Head, it is still (or was till lately, 1860,) known to breed. "This bird," says Mr. Yarrell, "makes a nest of sticks lined with wool and hair, in the cavities of high cliffs, or in old castles, or church towers near the sea; laying four or five eggs of a yellowish-white colour, spotted with ash-grey and light brown."—*Fig* 2, *plate V.*

RAVEN—(*Corvus corax*).

Corbie, Corbie Crow, Great Corbie Crow.—I dare say the acquaintance of many of us with this fine bird is limited to an introduction to some tame or pet Raven. In this district, where, I believe, these birds abounded a little more than half a century since—the rocky cliffs of our moorland solitudes being so well suited to their habits,—I do not know that I have seen or heard one for the last thirty-five or forty years. Persecuted by the gamekeeper, sought after for domestication, or their eggs taken for sale to the collector, they are becoming very rare in many a part of the country where not long since they were fre-

quently seen. They build sometimes on old ruins or craggy precipices, but oftener in a tree, piling nest after nest in successive years upon the same bough, whence the chosen tree soon comes to be called the "Raven-tree." One such accumulation of nests I knew, as a boy, in Essex, and after a stiff climb succeeded in reaching it. I did it in jeopardy, however, for the Ravens were very bold, and every moment I expected they would assail me, in spite of the short bludgeon I had suspended to my wrist. The appearance below the nest of the farmer in whose fields the Raven-tree grew, decided the question—perhaps he frightened the Ravens as well as threatened me; perhaps they knew he came as their protector—anyhow I did not get my egg, although I had actually had it in my hand. The nest is a great pile of sticks, lined with wool and roots and felts of hair, and often has four or five eggs laid in it, of a light green ground-shade, blotched and spotted with browns of varying depth of colour, but some of them very dark.—*Fig.* 3, *plate V.*

BLACK CROW—(*Corvus corone*).

Carrion Crow, Corbie Crow, Flesh Crow, Gor Crow, Midden Crow, Black-neb, Hoodie.—Another bird not nearly so common as it used to be, even within my own recollection—and no wonder; for he is a strong, fierce bird (Mr. Waterton calls him his "Warrior bird"), and a young and weakly lamb, a young Hare or Rabbit, a wounded or frightened Partridge has little or no chance with him. I knew a case many years since of a Crow attacking a Partridge and driving it to cover in a hedge, where it lay so terrified and

exhausted as to suffer itself to be picked up by a spectator. I knew another instance, also many years ago, in which the Crow attacked a young Rabbit. The old doe came to the assistance of her young one, and the battle was well contested, but the Crow was the victor, and carried off the spoil. Paired once, these birds, as in the case of the Raven, are paired for good. The nest is placed in a main fork of a large tree, and is made of sticks and twigs, with abundant cushioning of wool and hair. It is believed not to build a new nest every year. It lays four or five eggs, varying much in the depth of the tint of the greenish ground-colour, and generally well mottled and blotched and spotted with greenish ash colour and bright brown. The parents seem to expel their young from the immediate precincts of their own abode very soon after they are able to provide for themselves; as is the case with the Raven also.—*Fig.* 4, *plate V.*

GREY CROW—(*Corvus cornix*).

Royston Crow, Dun Crow, Norway Crow, Kentish Crow, Hooded Crow, Grey-backed Crow, Bunting Crow, Scare-crow, Hoodie.—Even a fiercer and more mischievous bird than the Carrion Crow. It has been very seldom known to breed in England,[1] though coming in great abundance from its more northern haunts before the access of winter. In north and

[1] Both of these statements must be taken with the qualification that it is by no means an ascertained fact that the Carrion Crow and the Grey Crow form two distinct species. It is held by many ornithologists that they do not. Certainly they interbreed with one another.

west Scotland, the Hebrides and Orkneys, it breeds in large numbers, and rewards for its destruction have been customarily paid to within a recent period; if, indeed, they have altogether ceased yet. They place their nests among rocks, in the rifts or on ledges. These are built of ling, sticks, roots, stalks of plants, seaweed, and lined with wool and hair. There are usually four or five eggs, not differing very materially in colouring from those of the Common Crow.—*Fig.* 5, *plate V.*

ROOK—(*Corvus frugilegus*).

Crow.—Everyone must be acquainted with the Rook and its nesting manners and habits. Even the dwellers in great cities have sometimes had this bird domiciled among them for the breeding season, and many places in London are signalised by the presence of a Rook's nest, or several, in very unlikely situations. In the country some of the most familiar sights and sounds are those afforded by the Rookery, or by the huge assemblages of Rooks about the fields or winging their morning or evening flight in quest of food, or in return to their domiciles. Most of us too have heard of Rook courts of justice, and the sentences awarded against the wrongful spoilers of a neighbour's nest, as well as the battles to resist such an invasion. It is certainly a remarkable instinct which, to so great a degree, forbids birds building in communities to plunder the building materials placed on the adjoining bough or ledge, and no wonder that instinct has provided a remedy for what must be looked upon, when it occurs to any extent, as a somewhat un-

natural offence. The Rook resorts to the same nest year after year, merely making such repairs as a year's wear and tear from wind and rain and accident have rendered necessary. When the nest is ready, four or five eggs are deposited, of a greenish ground-colour more or less intense in shade, plentifully mottled and blotched with darker and varying shades of brownish green. Many of the eggs strongly resemble those of the Crow, while others are much more like those of the Jackdaw. As in the case of the Bullfinch, the Rook is often blamed for doing mischief which was really done by the creature which formed the real object of search to the supposed offender. The wireworm and the grub of the cockchafer do infinite damage in grass or corn-fields by eating off the roots of the plants in question. The Rook pulls up these ruined plants and eats the offending larvæ. The farmer or superficial observer only sees the dead grass or corn plant, and foolishly accuses the Rook, and persecutes him, though in reality a friend and benefactor, to the death. Not but what the Rook does mischief at times; for I have often seen newly sown corn-fields black with them, and have been continually a witness to the very extensive damage done to the potato crop just when the young tubers were in most active growth and most susceptible of harm. Still, a few precautions will suffice to protect both corn-field and potato-crop during the brief space while protection is necessary, and the balance of good done is so greatly on the predominating side, that the Rook may well continue to be protected. Rook shooting has charms for many. For myself I seem to see cruelty

so conspicuous about the whole process, that I cannot conceive in what the pleasure consists.—*Fig.* 6, *plate V.*

JACKDAW[1]—(*Corvus monedula*).

Daw, Kae, Jack.—The chattering Jackdaw is as familiar as a "household word" to us, and when one visits an extensive colony of Jackdaws in the nesting season, he is apt to be enabled to form a good estimate of the amount of chatter a few score Jackdaws can contribute. They breed in many places in the immediate neighbourhood of my residence in very considerable numbers, in the holes and crevices which abound among craggy rocks and precipices that rise high above steep wooded banks. Besides, they build in ruinous buildings, in church towers or pigeon-houses, in little-used chimneys, in holes in modern masonry, even in deserted chambers. The pile of materials amassed is simply wonderful, and really they are sometimes so laid together as if intended to serve no other purpose but to lengthen out the nest-pile for a builder's amusement. Sticks and wool are the substances usually employed, and the eggs laid vary, as to number, between three and six. They are of a pale bluish-white, well spotted with ash colour, light brown and dark brown.—*Fig.* 7, *plate V.*

[1] In the last edition of Yarrell's Birds this bird is called the "Daw," and the following one the "Pie." I have known the two birds all my life long as the "Jackdaw" and the "Magpie," and for me, as for most field naturalists, so they will remain.

MAGPIE—(*Pica rustica*; formerly, *P. caudata.*)

Pyet, Pianet, Madge, Mag.—A very wary, crafty, shy bird the wild Magpie is. A very bold, impudent, thievish rascal the domesticated Mag as certainly proves himself. Shy and wary as these birds are in a state of nature, no bird whatever seems to affect concealment less in the fashion and structure and position of its nest. Placed high up among the smaller branches of a tallish tree, or perhaps in the upper part of a strong, thick, high bush in a hedge or standing lonely in a field or park, nothing can well be more conspicuous than the massy Magpie's nest, with its large though light dome of thorny sticks and twigs. I used to be assured as a schoolboy that there were two sorts or varieties of Magpies, distinguished by the comparative length of their tails and the site of their nests:—the alleged short-tailed one was called the Bush Magpie; the other the Tree Magpie. It is almost idle to say no such variety or distinction really exists. The materials of the nest are chiefly sticks, plastered with earth inside, and lined with roots and hair. There are often as many as six or seven eggs laid in it, pale bluish-white in colour, spotted all over, and abundantly so in general, with grey and greenish brown of more than one shade.—*Fig.* 8, *plate V.*

JAY—(*Garrulus glandarius*).

Jay-pie, Jay-piet.—The Jay's peculiar screeching note is perhaps more familiar to many ears than the

bird itself to the eyes corresponding to the said ears. It is a shy bird, seldom seen far from its haunts in woods and copses, though when seen, it is noticeable enough from a certain peculiarity in its flight, due to a sort of fluttering use or motion of its wings. It is easily domesticated, and becomes a tame and amusing pet. The nest is very often extremely rude and inartificial, almost as much so as the Ring Dove's. It is placed in the upper part of a lofty bush in a wood, or on some one of the lateral branches of a tree where the height from the ground is considerable; is made of sticks and lined with roots; the cavity containing the eggs often seeming to be not very considerable. Now and then a nest is met with carefully and strongly compacted, and sufficiently cup-shaped. The Jay lays five or six eggs of a faint shade of dusky green for ground colour, closely and thickly freckled all over with light brown.—*Fig.* 9, *plate V.*

NUT-CRACKER—(*Nucifraga caryocatactes*).

A bird which has probably been met with less than a score of times in all in this country.

FAMILY XXI.—HIRUNDINIDÆ.

SWALLOW—(*Hirundo rustica*).

Common Swallow, House Swallow, Chimney Swallow, Barn Swallow.—One of the most welcome of all our

spring visitors; and so frequently coming back, the self-same pair of birds apparently, to the self-same nest, that they seem to be almost like members of the family returning from a temporary absence. The common name, Chimney Swallow, is, however, rather a misnomer. No doubt they build in chimneys freely and frequently, but in many districts the chimney is quite untenanted by any Swallows, while the open roofs of sheds and barns, the under side of bridges sufficiently flat and uneven to afford the necessary support, disused shafts of mines, and the like, and even parts of unused rooms, or articles of furniture in such rooms, are resorted to. These nests are very considerably different from those of the Martin (to be noticed next), inasmuch as they are always completely open above, being so built that there is a sensible space between the greater portion of the edge of the plaster-work of the nest, and the roof or other surface above; while in the case of the Martin's nest, it is always built so as to be closed above by the eaves or other ledge to which it is affixed, requiring a gap or lip—so to speak—to be left in the wall to afford ingress and egress to the owners. The nest, in either case, is built with many pellets of soft tenacious earth, wrought into form with bits of straw or grass, and afterwards lined with feathers. It is observable that no more work at the nest is done in a day than will readily harden enough to bear the requisite additions of materials above when the time comes for making them. There are usually four, five, or six eggs laid; white, speckled and spotted with deep red, and a lighter duller shade.—*Fig.* 20, *plate IV.*

MARTIN—(*Chelidon urbica*; formerly, *Hirundo urbica*).

Martlet, Martin Swallow, House Martin, Window Martin, Eaves Swallow, Window Swallow.—This familiar little bird, whose cheeping note in the nests above our chamber windows is one of the sounds we should sorely miss, frequents the dwellings of men quite as much as, I think more than, the Swallow. Every one knows where to look for the Martin's nest, and many a house can we all call to mind which seems, from some peculiarity in its site or external fashion, to be particularly affected by these birds—and certainly, in most cases, the inmates of the house take much care to save their confiding feathered friends from disturbance. In many places, however, the Martin forms large nesting colonies, which take possession of a series of overhanging ledges on some steep rocky face, and there build their nests in great numbers. In Berwickshire, on the banks of the Whiteadder, I knew of such a colony, and others elsewhere: the principal ones, however, being on the rock-bound coast between St. Abb's Head and Burnmouth. Hundreds of these birds nested in several different places upon those lofty precipices.[1] No description of the nest itself—beyond what was said in the notice of the Swallow—seems requisite. The number of eggs, which are perfectly white, seems seldom to exceed six.

[1] Of course Martins and Swallows were in being long before man, and necessarily, therefore, before man's buildings. These birds, then, must have had their building-site when neither chimney, barn, nor eaves were in existence. In the face of this fact "Chimney Swallow," "Eaves Swallow," and the like are, as names, only partially justifiable.

SAND MARTIN—(*Cotile riparia;* formerly, *Hirundo riparia*).

Bank Martin, Pit Martin, Sand Swallow, Bank Swallow, River Swallow.—This delicate little visitor comes to us in the spring, often very early, from Africa, as do also the two others of the *genus* just named. Where it does occur—and it is generally diffused—it is often seen in very large numbers. A ballast pit at Fingringhoe, in Essex, used to be occupied by the most numerous colony I was acquainted with; and a site afforded by the surface beds of sand and soil above a steep scarp of rock on Tweed-bank, nearly opposite Norham Castle, used to accommodate another colony. Some of the holes are bored to a very great depth. I have enlarged the orifice of many till it would admit my whole shoulder, and have then been unable to reach the termination of the gallery. Others are much shorter, and admitting of more easy access to the nest. The female will, notwithstanding the noise and violence attending the enlargement of the aperture of her nest-hole, sit resolutely on, and allow herself to be taken in hand with scarcely a struggle or sign of resistance—even of life, sometimes. One I took thus many years since lay in my open hand for a minute or more, and then at last flew only leisurely away. A little loose, soft straw, with some feathers, serves to receive the eggs, which are four to six in number, often much elongated in shape, of the most delicate white, and beautifully pink from the thinness of the shell, before they are blown.

PURPLE MARTIN—(*Progne purpurea*; formerly, *Hirundo purpurea*).

American Purple Martin.—Only a very casual visitor

ORDER.—PICARIÆ.

FAMILY I.—CYPSELIDÆ.

SWIFT—(*Cypselus apus*).

Deviling, Black Martin, Screech, Screech Martin, Shriek Owl, Screamer, Squeaker, Skeer- or Skir-devil, Cran.—I should think no one who has once seen this bird on the wing, and noticed its rapid, peculiar, powerful, long-winged, whirling flight, or heard its remarkable scream, would ever be likely to mistake when he saw it again. It is most frequently seen at no great distance from some old tower of castle or church, or such like building, although at times it seems to range far in search of food. It makes its nest of pieces of soft straw, bents or grass or hay and feathers, and usually in holes in the buildings aforesaid, or between the tiles and under-roof of houses; and the nest once made is supposed to be used for many years in succession by the same pair of birds. It sometimes seems as if it had been cemented together in some way. The Swift often lays only two eggs, but has been known to produce three, and even four. They are quite white, and rather large for the size of the bird.

ALPINE SWIFT—(*Cypselus melba;* formerly, *C. Alpinus*).

White-bellied Swift.—A bird which is known to have visited us on some half dozen occasions or so.

FAMILY II.—CAPRIMULGIDÆ.

NIGHT-JAR—(*Caprimulgus Europæus*).

Night Hawk, Goat-sucker, Dor Hawk, Fern Owl, Night Crow, Jar Owl, Churn Owl, Wheel-bird, Eve-churr, Night-churr, Puckeridge.—Far more familiar to many of the comparatively few among country dwellers who notice such matters, is the Night-jar by sound than by sight. Coming from its retirement but very little and very reluctantly by day, and only pursuing its prey towards and during twilight, it is not by any means an obtrusive bird; as little so, indeed, as any one of the Owls. But its loud churring or jarring note, as it wheels round a tree or clump of trees, is, often enough, heard by many a one to whom its form and size and plumage are nearly or utterly strange. It is perhaps most frequently met with where patches of furze and fern on open commons, not too far from the neighbourhood of plantations, occur. The Night-jar can hardly be said to make a nest; but lays two eggs in any slight natural depression of the ground which she can find sufficiently near a bush or clump of whins to be at least partly concealed by it. The eggs are very oval in shape, and very beautifully mottled and clouded and veined with varying tints of bluish

lead-colour and brown, on a whitish ground.—*Fig.* 1, *plate VI.*

FAMILY III.—CUCULIDÆ.

CUCKOO—(*Cuculus canorus*).

Gowk.—"Have you heard the Cuckoo yet?" How often that question is asked by one's friends or neighbours in the country. Hearing the first Cuckoo and seeing the first Swallow are always events to true lovers of country scenes and objects and sounds. But what a strange instinct it is which forbids our Cuckoo to build a nest, and instructs it to lay its egg—at least to place it—in some other bird's nest, and that bird usually not one-fifth its own size! A Blackbird's nest is sometimes selected to receive the deposit, but very rarely compared with the Hedge Sparrow's, the Lark's, the Meadow Pipit's, the Water Wagtail's, or the Chaffinch's. How many eggs are laid by a single Cuckoo in a season, is, I think, not ascertained. It is, however, a very rare circumstance to find more than one Cuckoo's egg in any given nest, and then open to great doubt if both were placed there by the same Cuckoo. It has been a matter of dispute how the egg is actually deposited in the nest selected; whether "laid" in, or placed in—after being dropped on the ground, suppose—by the bill or claws. I found one in the Meadow Pipit's nest mentioned above (p. 101), where the position and site of the nest were such as to leave no doubt whatever in my mind that the egg

could not possibly have been "laid" in the nest; and must almost certainly have been inserted by the aid of the bill. How the Cuckoo found such a nest at all was a marvel to me. As is more than suspected by some enquirers and observers, the Cuckoo must watch for its opportunities. The eggs are very small compared with the size of the bird which produces them, and strongly resemble some of the darker and more closely freckled specimens of the House Sparrow's egg, but are rather larger in size; while Mr. Doubleday says some of them resemble those of the Pied Wagtail.—*Fig.* 19, *plate IV.*

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO—(*Coccystes glandarius*).

Of the rarest occurrence.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO—(*Coccyzus Americanus*).

A rare visitor only.

FAMILY IV.—UPUPIDÆ.

HOOPOE—(*Upupa epops*).

A casual visitor only, but still not so rare that specimens are not obtained almost every year. In fact, the whole appearance of the bird is so very striking, that it is scarcely possible such a visitor should pass without notice. It breeds in several European countries.

FAMILY V.—CORACIDÆ.

ROLLER—(*Coracias garrula*).

Garrulous Roller.—Very rarely met with in England.

FAMILY VI.—MEROPIDÆ.

BEE-EATER—(*Merops apiaster*).

An African bird, which strays occasionally so far to the North as to reach Britain, and be claimed as a British bird.

FAMILY VII.—ALCEDINIDÆ.

KINGFISHER—(*Alcedo ispida*).

Beyond doubt, as far as exceeding brilliancy of plumage goes, the most beautiful of our indigenous birds. I have never seen it in any part of the kingdom a numerous bird, though in my fishing and other excursions in Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk, and Herefordshire, I used to see many pairs; each, however, domiciled at some distance from its nearest neighbours. In the district of North Yorkshire I am best acquainted with I have rarely seen it. Its straight, arrow-like, speeding flight is sure to be remembered, when once seen, and so is the odour inseparable from its nest hole or other stated haunt. A hole, sloping upwards, in the bank of the water it most frequents, whether pond, stream, marsh, ditch, or large river, is

usually chosen to receive the nest, which is often a foot and a half, or two feet from the entrance; but sometimes the bird has been known to resort to a hole at some distance from any water. The nest, so called, seems to be constituted of small fish-bones, ejected from the Kingfisher's stomach, and the dry soil of the hole; while the eggs deposited in it are five or six in number, very round in form, beautifully white when blown, though, from the thinness of the shell, seeming to have a pink hue before the removal of the yolk.

BELTED KINGFISHER—(*Ceryle Alcyon*).

Two occurrences only recorded.

FAMILY VIII.—PICIDÆ.

GREEN WOODPECKER—(*Gecinus viridis;* formerly, *Picus viridis*).

Wood-spite, Rain-fowl, Rain-bird, Hew-hole, Yaffle, Whet-ile, Woodwall, Witwall, Popinjay, Awl-bird, Eaqual, Pick-a-tree, Yappingale, etc.—I observe Mr. Morris spells the name I have written Eaqual in the form Ecle.[1] I have no idea of the origin or etymology of either form, but I have given these names generally in the thought that they may be helpful to some, and interesting to other young egg-collectors. The Green Woodpecker is the most common, and much the best known of all our English Woodpeckers. Besides being a very handsome bird, its organisation (as is

[1] It is probably a phonetic variant of Hickwall, and equivalent to Woodwall, Witwall, Whetile, etc.

indeed the case with all the tribe) is so beautifully adapted to its mode of life, as to merit a brief notice at our hands. Its strong prehensile feet and claws, two toes being directed forward and two backwards, fit it not only for moving in all directions, and with wonderful readiness and ease in any direction whatever, about the trunk or limbs of a tree, but also for grasping the surface with great tenacity when necessity arises for applying its strong bill to penetrating or dislodging either bark or portions of the wood itself. When thus occupied, the tail comes into use, and the bones at the lower extremity of the skeleton are so formed as to enable the stiff, pointed tail-feathers to be applied to the tree in such a way as to strengthen the purchase already obtained by the firm foot-hold. Add to all this the length of the tongue, its great extensibility, specially provided for by a peculiar arrangement of muscles, together with the structure of the tongue itself—remarkable for its sharp, horny tip and barb-like bristles on either side near the point—and we have one of Nature's most beautiful accommodations of means to the intended end which can well be offered to our notice. The undulating flight and laugh-like cry of the Green Woodpecker used to be more common than they seem to be now, and the great multiplicity of provincial names seems to show that once it must have been an exceedingly common bird. I have rarely seen or heard it here: and no wonder. For where once there were miles of forest, now we have scarcely 100 acres of wood in the whole district. This Woodpecker's cry is loudly and frequently uttered before impending

rain; whence one of its common or by-names. It breeds in holes in trees, which it often excavates in part or enlarges to suit its wants. It makes no nest, but deposits its eggs, four to seven in number, and perfectly white, on a bed of the soft decayed wood of the tree. The eggs average rather over $1\frac{1}{6}$ inch in length, by about $\frac{5}{6}$ inch broad. No illustration being possible, in our space, of purely white eggs, I think it better to append their measurements.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER—(*Dendrocopus major*; formerly, *Picus major*).

Pied Woodpecker, French-pie, Wood-pie, Whitwall, Great Black and White Woodpecker, Wood-nacker.—A not very uncommon bird in some localities, and very rare in others nowadays. It is less likely, too, to betray its presence by its note than the Green Woodpecker, and is so shy and so capable of concealing itself, or keeping the trunk of a tree always between itself and any prying observer, that doubtless it is deemed to be more rare than it really is. It seems to prefer the vicinity of woods, but may be seen occasionally where woods do not abound, and sometimes even it resorts to places where abundance of old posts or decaying tree-trunks lead it to expect a plentiful repast. It breeds in holes in trees, making no nest, and laying its four or five eggs on just such a bed as its green namesake. The female is very averse to leaving her eggs, and shows almost as much pertinacity as a Tom-tit in abiding by them. They are 1 inch long by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER—(*Dendrocopus minor;* formerly, *Picus minor*).

Barred Woodpecker, Hick-wall, Little Black and White Woodpecker, Crank-bird.—A pretty little bird, very shy, very active, very able to keep itself out of sight, and so, hardly noticed by one in a hundred of those whom Miss Edgeworth would class as more or less nearly connected with the widely-spread family of "No-eyes." It is said to prefer large woods of beech; and like the other Woodpeckers, makes no nest, but places its eggs in a hollow tree, accessible by only a small hole, the means of access being often at a considerable distance from the eggs laid below. The eggs of this little bird are four or five in number, purely white, though seeming to be suffused with a delicate pink hue before they are blown, which arises from the transparency of the shell. They are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long by rather more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad.

WRYNECK—(*Iunx torquilla*).

Cuckoo's-mate, Emmet-hunter, Snake-bird, Long-tongue.—A dear little bird is the Wryneck, with his cheery spring-announcing cry. We willingly pardon its want of melody for its associations. The marvellous rapidity with which its tongue is darted out and retracted, enabling it by the aid of the glutinous secretion with which its end is furnished to secure an Ant at every action, is highly interesting as illustrating another of the wonderful and beautiful adaptations provided by the Author of Creation. The Wryneck makes scarcely any nest (if any), but lays its eggs on

the fragments of decayed wood which line a hole in a tree. They are from six to ten in number, and white and glossy, and about the same size as those of the Barred Woodpecker. The old bird is singularly unwilling to leave her eggs under any intrusion, and tries by such means as hissing sharply, elevating her crest and contorting her neck, to intimidate or deter the intruder.

ORDER.—COLUMBÆ.

FAMILY.—COLUMBIDÆ.

RING DOVE—(*Columba palumbus*).

Wood Pigeon, Ring Pigeon, Cushat, Cushie Doo, Queest.—This, the first bird in the new Order of Columbæ, is tolerably well known to every one the least acquainted with ordinary country scenes and objects. A fine, handsome bird, met with everywhere throughout the country, and, in many parts of it, seen in very large flocks in the winter-time; sure to attract attention, also, as we walk through the wood, by the loud ringing clap of his wings as he takes flight; and all this independently of his plaintive murmur in the breeding season, sounding very sweet and mellow as heard from a little distance—the Wood Pigeon, or Queest, or Cushat, as he is named in different districts, is as prominent among wild birds as the parson of the parish among his parishioners. The young birds are frequently taken from the nest and reared by hand; and the bold, fearless, confiding

familiarity of such pets, considering their extreme native shyness and wildness, is remarkable. The Ring Dove makes its rude platform nest of sticks, with a cushion of roots to receive the eggs, in bushes standing singly or in hedges or woods, in pollard trees, in holly or other thick trees, in evergreens in gardens and the like; and nothing is more common than to see the parent birds frequenting the garden and close vicinity of a country house, almost as tamely as if they were a pair of common or house Pigeons. The eggs seem to be invariably very oval in shape, and purely white. They are $1\frac{4}{5}$ inch long, by $\frac{1}{6}$ inch broad.

STOCK DOVE—(*Columba œnas*).

Stock Pigeon, Wood Pigeon, Wood Dove.—This Dove is not only, generally speaking, much less abundant throughout the country than the Ring Dove, but very often, it would seem, confounded with it by casual observers, who only notice the several birds from a distance, or on the wing. They frequent the same roosting-places, and often feed in the same field, though probably on different species of food. I have shot birds of both species at the same discharge of the gun, and have noticed the different matters which had supplied their meals of the day,—Holly-berries, in the case of the Ring Dove; wild mustard-seed, in the other. The Stock Dove is, however, immediately and easily distinguishable from the Ring Dove, by its lesser size, a slight difference in colour, and the entire absence of the "ring" of white feathers on the neck. Its nest is placed sometimes on pollard

trees, sometimes in open holes or hollows in old trees; and very commonly, in some districts, either on the ground below thick furze-bushes, or in deserted rabbit-burrows, two or three feet distant from the entrance. The nest is very slight, consisting merely of a few twigs or roots. The eggs are two in number, pure white, about or rather exceeding $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length, by $1\frac{1}{6}$ inch in breadth.

ROCK DOVE—(*Columba livia*).

Wild Pigeon, Rock Pigeon, Wild Dove, Doo, Rockier.—This pigeon has usually, until not long since, been confused with the Stock Dove. But their plumage is unlike, their voice unlike, and especially their habits and living and breeding haunts[1] unlike. It is believed with some certainty that the Rock Dove is the real origin of the Domestic Pigeon, and certainly any one who has seen the large flights of Domestic Pigeons turned wild, which frequent the caverns in the rock-bound coast near St. Abb's Head and similar localities, living with, flying with, feeding with, and nesting with the undoubted wild Rockier, can entertain but very small doubts on the subject. The Rock Dove makes a loose nest of twigs and plant-stems and

[1] This is subject to some qualifications. Both species breed in this neighbourhood, and both nest in holes or rifts among the sandstone cliffs of the country. I have again and again seen the Rock Dove leave such nesting-sites, and again and again recognised the Stock Dove in the same locality. Twice within the last two or three years I have come upon birds of one or the other species (which I could not positively identify, but believe to have been the Rock Dove) feeding on the bilberry fruit, and in close company with numerous Ring Ousels.

dry grass; very often far back in holes and crevices of the rock; and lays two white eggs, with a much better defined "big end" and "little end" than in the case of the two Pigeons last named.

TURTLE DOVE—(*Turtur communis;* formerly, *Columba turtur*).

Turtle, Common Turtle, Ring-necked Turtle, Wrekin Dove.—Only a summer visitor and not a regular inhabitant, like its three predecessors. It is long since, living where I do, I have heard its sweet, plaintive note. No one but one who loves birds and their ways can tell how real a deprivation it is to live for years out of sound of the sweet and familiar voices of such as are only local: the Nightingale for instance, the Turtle, and many others. The male Turtle Dove is a very handsome bird, but much shier and more retiring at breeding-time than the Ring Dove. The nest is a light platform of sticks, easily permitting the sky to be seen through it from below, and usually placed high up in a holly, a thick bush in a wood, in the branches of a fir, or the lesser fork of some limb of an oak or other forest tree. As with the other Doves, the eggs are two in number, quite white, about $1\frac{1}{6}$ inch long, by $\frac{5}{6}$ broad.

PASSENGER PIGEON—(*Ectopistes migratorius*).

Every bird-loving boy, beyond doubt, has heard of this Pigeon and the inconceivable vastness of the flocks in which they pass from one distant district to another in America. Here it is only a casual visitor, and can lawfully lay claim to none of our limited space.

ORDER.—PTEROCLETES.

FAMILY.—PTEROCLIDÆ.

SAND GROUSE—(*Surrhaptes paradoxus*).

It has appeared in large numbers on two or three occasions.

ORDER.—GALLINÆ.

FAMILY I.—TETRAONIDÆ.

CAPERCAILLIE—(*Tetrao urogallus*).

Cock of the Woods, Wood Grouse, Cock of the Mountain, Great Grouse, Capercailzie, Capercally.—An indigenous inhabitant of this country, but one which had become, or was becoming, extinct, a few years ago. Now it is becoming comparatively abundant again on the estates of several large and noble owners, principally in Scotland. It is indeed a very noble bird, and well worthy the care and attention and expense which have been devoted to the attempt to re-establish it. The female makes her nest on the ground, and lays from six to ten or twelve eggs. These are of a pale reddish-yellow brown, spotted all over with two shades of darker orange brown.—*Fig.* 3, *plate VI.*

BLACK GROUSE—(*Tetrao tetrix*).

Black Cock, Black Game, Heath Cock, Heath Poult,

and the female, Grey Hen, sometimes Brown Hen.—Still found in some districts out of the north of England, where wild and hilly forest still remains, but of much more frequent occurrence in more northerly localities. In fact, the gradual and very complete demolition of the last remains of what were once very extensive forests has completely banished the Black Grouse from places where it used to be common within the memory of living men. It is a very handsome bird, and like the Capercailly and the Pheasant, does not pair. The hen makes a very slight nest on the ground, and lays in it seven to nine or ten eggs, of a somewhat less warm ground-shade than those last named, but with larger and brighter-coloured spots and blotches.—*Fig.* 4, *plate VI.*

RED GROUSE—(*Lagopus Scoticus*).

Red Ptarmigan, Red Game, Moor Game, Muir-fowl, Moor-bird.—A beautiful bird indeed, and peculiar to the British Islands. The Grouse moors, however, are mainly confined to the northern counties of England and Scotland. In the district in which this is written the Grouse may be truly said to abound, and I hear them continually from my garden or open window.[1] These birds *do* pair, and pair very early indeed moreover. I have frequently seen them in pairs before the season for killing them—which expires on December 10—is fully out. If the weather becomes severe this union often *seems* to be annulled; but I don't think it is in reality. In the earlier spring, when the pairing

[1] For a detailed series of observations on the habits, etc., of the Grouse, see "Sketches in Natural History," Routledge & Co.

is becoming general, many fierce battles among the males may be seen going on, and very resolute and lengthened and circuitous flights of one in pursuit of another occur. The nest is very slight, of ling and bents chiefly, and usually well concealed in a tuft of heather. From six or seven up to twelve or fifteen eggs are said to be laid, but I should say that the highest average, judging from the number of young birds in a brood, very rarely much exceeds eight or nine. The eggs are very beautiful and richly coloured, but vary exceedingly in both ground-colour and markings, even those found in the same nest. Some are of a yellowish shade, and others of a blood-stain red, mottled and blotched with rich umber brown, and the paler ones with shades of light brown.—*Fig.* 5, *plate VI.*

PTARMIGAN—(*Lagopus mutus;* formerly, *L. vulgaris*).

White Grouse, Rock Grouse, White Game.—Only found now among the rocky tops of the highest hills and mountains in the centre and north of Scotland. It is the smallest species of Grouse in Britain, and its plumage varies greatly with the season, becoming nearly pure white in winter. It lays seven to ten eggs; frequentl yon the bare stones. They are of a yellowish ground-colour, blotched and spotted (slightly so as compared with the eggs of the Red Grouse) with rich dark brown.

FAMILY II.—PHASIANIDÆ.

PHEASANT—(*Phasianus Colchicus*).

I dare say "a good few" of our readers if they were asked "Do you know the Pheasant?" might answer, "Yes, very well. We had some for dinner, such and such a day." And I have no doubt the acquaintance was satisfactory enough—at least to one of the parties. The Pheasant does not pair, and on the preserved estates in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire I have frequently seen in the spring large groups of Cock Pheasants collected and consorting together without the intermixture of a single hen. In a vast many places now an artificial system of Pheasant-breeding is adopted, three or four hens with one male being turned into a large paled "apartment," well netted in, the whole establishment comprising many such apartments. Each hen lays double or treble the number of eggs she would if suffered to run wild, and these are collected daily and placed under hens ready to sit as soon as a sufficient number is got together. In this way twice or three times the number of young ones is secured from one hen as compared with her own greatest success in bringing off a brood in the woods. In her wild state, the Pheasant makes scarcely any nest, on the ground, and lays ten or twelve eggs, of a uniform pale olive-brown shade. Not only are cases in which two Pheasants lay in the same nest of by no means unfrequent occurrence, but others even, in which Pheasants' eggs have been found in Partridges' nests. Many instances are on record of the Pheasant interbreeding with other birds, such as the Guinea Fowl,

the Black Grouse, and the Common Fowl. The cross last named is by no means uncommon, and a remarkably fine male specimen of the produce of a Cock Pheasant and Speckled Hen occurred here (one of four birds which were hatched) a few years since. The Pheasant's tail and head and general shape as well as fashion of feathers (with access of size) were united to the shades and markings of the plumage of the mother. The bird in question was so inveterate in his visits to the neighbouring farm-yards in order to challenge the cocks who dwelt there, and so sure to kill them outright, or maim or maul them so severely that they had to be killed, that it became necessary to put him out of the way himself, and his present (1860) memorial is his remarkably well-stuffed skin. —*Fig.* 2, *plate VI.*

COMMON PARTRIDGE—(*Perdix cinerea*).

Much too familiar a bird by appearance, voice and flavour to require any very lengthened notice from us. The Partridge pairs pretty early—by the end of January often—and once paired they never separate again throughout the season. At pairing time the cocks fight fiercely, and I have sometimes seen, and even in my garden here, three or four engaged in the conflict, with another, probably the female "apple of discord," sitting quietly by the while. I have seen the male, too, in the evening, when summoning his newly-married wife, stand on the top of one of our stone walls and call repeatedly. The nest is made on the ground in a field of grass or corn, or on a dry hedge bank, or at the foot of a wall among the long

grass, and consists of little but a slight depression in the ground, with a few dead leaves and bents. The number of eggs varies between eight or ten, and twenty. But it is no uncommon thing for two Partridges to lay in the same nest, and an instance came to my knowledge a good many years since, in which a Red-legged Partridge had laid several eggs in a Common Partridge's nest. When two birds lay together thus, the covey sometimes amounts to thirty or thirty-five birds. I knew one instance of forty, about thirty years since. The male Partridge is known to help his mate, when the hatch is drawing on, by sitting at her side and covering some of the eggs. When there are two layings in the same nest, it is an interesting question whether the two hens sit together, or the original owner of the nest is simply assisted by her mate. The young birds are able to run and "fend for themselves" almost as soon as they are hatched. The eggs are of a uniform pale olive-brown hue.—*Fig.* 6, *plate VI.*

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE—(*Caccablis rufa*; formerly, *Perdix rufa*).

French Partridge, Guernsey Partridge.—A much more striking bird in appearance than the Common Partridge, and said also to be a powerful enemy to it. Certainly, in districts where it has been encouraged and preserved, it seems to have prevailed to the comparative exclusion of the indigenous species. It is supposed to have been first introduced about the time of Charles II. For long it seems to have increased and spread but very slowly, but now there are many

districts of the south where it is exceedingly abundant. These birds form a slight nest of dry bents and leaves upon the ground, amid some growing crop of grass or corn. Instances, however, have been asserted in which the nest was a good deal elevated above the ground, as on the top of a stack. The eggs, very hard-shelled, are from ten to fifteen or sixteen in number, of a cream colour, well spotted with small speckles of reddish or cinnamon brown.—*Fig. 7, plate VI.*

QUAIL—(*Coturnix communis*; formerly, *C. vulgaris*).

The Quail is believed, in some rare instances, to stay with us all the year, but is usually only a summer visitant, not coming in any great numbers. In some countries its migratory hosts are so great that one hundred thousand are said to have been taken in a day. In its appearance, the Quail strongly reminds one of the Partridge, and suggests the idea that itself is only a diminutive bird of that species. It has been said that they do not pair, still they have been repeatedly seen in apparent pairs. And one couple which haunted my garden and the neighbouring fields for many days could only have been regarded as having "paired," and their nests are met with in many parts of the kingdom. Two years since it was believed that at least two broods were reared on certain lands in Moorsholm, in North Yorkshire. A small depression in the ground is made, or found, and loosely lined with bits of grass and dry stalks. Seven to ten, or possibly yet more eggs, are laid, presenting much variety of appearance, but usually of a faint cream-coloured

ground, mottled and clouded in some cases with red brown, and in others spotted with dark brown spots, some of considerable size.—*Fig.* 8, *plate VI*

ORDER.—HEMIPODII.

FAMILY.—TURNICIDÆ.

ANDALUSIAN HEMIPODE—(*Turnix sylvatica ;* formerly, *Hemipodius tachydromus*).

Some three or four examples have been met with in Britain.

ORDER.—FULICARIÆ.

FAMILY.—RALLIDÆ.

LAND-RAIL—(*Crex pratensis*).

Corn Crake, Meadow Crake, Dakerhen.—This bird is found in most parts of the kingdom, though for the most part in no great abundance anywhere, in the earlier months of the autumn. In most of the northern parts it breeds annually, but I do not remember ever hearing its breeding note while I was a dweller in the district embracing what are usually called the eastern counties. Nor yet in Herefordshire. But the note in question has been sufficiently familiar to me for the last fifty years, and here in North Yorkshire I hear

it on all sides of me, at all hours, I may say, of both day and night. For two or three years in succession a pair took possession of a small plantation of young fir trees bordering my garden lawn on the north, and only separated from it by a deep ditch with a run of water at the bottom. Long after the union seemed to have been formed the peculiar note was kept up, and I used to see both birds within a few feet of each other during its continuance. Scarcely a day passed during their sojourn of eight or ten days in and about the plantation but excursions were taken into the garden, frequently extending to the terrace beneath my dining-room window, where sundry very inquiring and interested glances—not to say stares—were exchanged between the visitors and myself and divers members of my family. The visitors seemed very little disturbed at our notice as long as we remained quite still and silent, but any movement on our part led to immediate retreat on the Corn Crakes. Its movements were desultory or in jerks, so to speak. The bird would run ten or twelve paces in an attitude and with a speed which left one in doubt for a moment whether it were not some small quadruped. Then it would skulk amid taller herbage, or under the shrubs of a raised bed, in beneath a rhododendron bush. A minute after it would be seen with its head and whole body erect, and the neck so out-stretched that if the bird had been hung up by its head it could not have been much more elongated. This was the invariable position or attitude assumed when interchanging looks with the occupants of the window. My own impression was that these journeys or excursions

(which I knew extended into the grass-field beyond the garden, and into a field over the road at the back of the plantation) were simply made for the purpose of inspection, and with a view to the selection of a place for nesting—and that, pending this interesting investigation, the fir trees and herbage beneath afforded an ample covert. As far as I could ascertain, the place actually selected by them for the purpose was in the field—a corn-field—just beyond that which lay adjacent to the garden. The Corn Crake makes a loose nest of dry herbage and stalks and grass; and I think almost always among growing herbage—grass, clover, or corn. The hen lays seven or eight eggs, sometimes even ten, and sits very close upon them. They are whitish in ground, suffused with a reddish tinge, and spotted and speckled with brownish-red and purplish-grey.—*Fig.* 4, *plate IX.*

SPOTTED CRAKE—(*Porzana maruetta;* formerly, *Crex porzana*).

A summer visitor, as the Land-Rail is, to our shores. It is rare, however, compared with the Land-Rail, and with more predilection for the vicinity of water. Like all the other Rails it conceals itself very closely, and from the form of its body and power of leg runs with great speed and equal facility, even among what seems to be and is very thick covert. It is known to breed in Norfolk and in Cambridgeshire, in Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland; and it may do also in other localities as well. The nest, made on the ground in wet marshes, is "formed on the outside," says Mr. Yarrell, "with coarse aquatic plants, lined

with finer materials within." From seven to ten eggs appears to be the number laid, and they vary very much in their ground-colour, between a pale brownish-dun and a slightly yellow-white, the spots or blotches being of a reddish brown of some intensity.—*Fig.* 5, *plate IX.*

LITTLE CRAKE—(*Porzana parva;* formerly, *Crex pusilla*).

Olivaceous Gallinule, Little Gallinule. — Strictly speaking, still a rare bird in this country.

BAILLON'S CRAKE—(*Porzana Baillonii;* formerly, *Crex Baillonii*).

More rare than the last, and, perhaps, occasionally confused with it.

WATER-RAIL—(*Rallus aquaticus*).

Bilcock, Skiddycock, Runner, Brook-runner, Velvet-runner.—One of the very shiest of our British birds, and thus seeming to be much more rare than it really is. I have seen it at all seasons of the year, though it is, I am well aware, less tolerant of cold than many others of our winter-staying birds. Its motions on the bank of a stream, when suddenly disturbed, are much more like those of a Water Rat than a bird. It breeds with some degree of commonness in several of the southern counties. I obtained two nests from the estate in Norfolk elsewhere mentioned in these pages, at the same time with the Woodcock's eggs, and was informed that it bred regularly there. I had

reason also to know that it bred at Tolleshunt D'Arcy, in Essex. The nest is made often in an osier ground or among thick water plants, and composed of different kinds of aquatic herbage. The eggs are from six to nine or ten in number, and seldom quite white in hue; usually they are much more like pale or faded specimens of the Land-Rail's eggs, the spots being both fewer and fainter—*Fig.* 6, *plate IX.*

MOOR HEN—(*Gallinula chloropus*).

Water Hen, Gallinule, Moat Hen, Marsh Hen.—Few nest hunters, however young, but know the nest and eggs of this very common bird. I have in many cases seen it almost domesticated, and constantly taking its food among domestic fowls, and sometimes even almost from the hands of human creatures. Its nest is made in somewhat various places. I have seen it amid the sedges growing in the water near the edge of a marsh-ditch or the like, on dry tussocky tumps near a sheet of water, among the herbage and willow stubs not far from the same mere, built upon masses of fallen but not decayed bulrushes and flags, at the edge of a pond, on a bough projecting several feet horizontally from the bank over and resting upon (or partly in) the water of a running stream, nay, even in a branch or top of a thick tree, or among the ivy which mantled its trunk and wreathed its branches. In it are laid six, seven, or eight eggs, of a reddish-white colour, sparingly speckled and spotted with reddish-brown. The eggs have been known to be removed by the parent birds under circumstances of peril awaiting them—from a flood, for instance—

and hatched in some new locality. Instances also have been recorded in which a supplementary nest has been constructed by the female parent to receive a part of her brood, when they were too numerous and had grown too large to be accommodated by their original nest-home at night.—*Fig.* 7, *plate IX.*

COOT—(*Fulica atra*).

Bald Coot.—A common bird enough in many parts of the kingdom, and in former days, I have sometimes seen them in straggling flocks of several hundreds or thousands along the tide-way on the Essex coasts. With its white oval spot on the forehead, and perfectly black plumage, it is a sufficiently noticeable bird. It seems to be much more at home on the water than on land; but, like the Moor Hen, can and does move with very considerable ease and speed on the latter. The Coot makes a large and very strong and compact nest, making or finding a firm foundation for it below the surface of the water, and heaping up and twisting in dry flags and bulrushes and pieces of reed, until some of the nests are sufficiently firm and stable to support a considerable weight. The eggs laid are usually seven or eight, and up to ten; though even twelve or fourteen have been mentioned as sometimes found. They are of a dingy stone-colour, speckled and spotted with dark brown.—*Fig.* 8, *plate IX.*

ORDER.—ALECTORIDES.

FAMILY I.—GRUIDÆ.

CRANE—(*Grus cinerea*).

A couple of centuries since it is not improbable the Crane may have—at least, occasionally—bred in this country; but now it is become a very rare and casual visitor.

FAMILY II.—OTIDIDÆ.

GREAT BUSTARD—(*Otis tarda*).

This noble bird, once abundant enough on our wide plains and wolds in England, is now, I fear, almost extinct among us, as so far as I am aware no very recent[1] capture of it has been announced. It used, before the gun became so common and so fatal to birds of much interest to the ornithologist or others, to be customarily pursued with greyhounds. These birds do not pair, and their nest is said to be a mere natural saucer-shaped hole in the bare ground. The eggs are seldom more than two, or at most three, in number, and are of an olive-green ground, blotched and spotted with two or three shades of brown, lighter and darker.

LITTLE BUSTARD—(*Otis tetrax*).

Only a casual and not a summer visitor.

[1] Since this was written, several instances have occurred, detailed notices of which are given in the last edition of Yarrell (iii., p. 207).

MACQUEEN'S BUSTARD—(*Otis Macqueeni*).

Only one occurrence as far as I know. Accidental even in Europe.

ORDER.—LIMICOLÆ.

FAMILY I.—ŒDICNEMIDÆ.

STONE CURLEW—(*Œdicnemus crepitans*).

Great Plover, Norfolk Plover, Whistling Plover, Stone Plover, Thick-knee.—The Stone Curlew is a summer visitor, and strictly a local one. The Nightingale, for instance, is very much more extensively diffused than the bird just named. It was found abundantly enough on the wide sandy plains of Norfolk, and I used (1840) to hear it very commonly in the fields a few miles to the north-west of Bury St. Edmunds. Besides the counties just named, it is met with in parts of Essex and Kent, in Hampshire, and Cambridgeshire, and two or three others. Its peculiar shrill cry or whistle, once heard, is not likely to be forgotten. The female lays two eggs on the bare ground, among white-coated flints and stones. An idea of their ground-colour may be given by the mention of what the painters call stone-colour, in pale shades, and this is streaked and spotted, or marbled with dark brown.—*Fig.* 1, *plate VII.*

FAMILY II.—GLAREOLIDÆ.

PRATINCOLE—(*G. pratincola ;* formerly, *Glareola torquala.*)

Collared Pratincole, Austrian Pratincole.—A bird of sufficiently rare occurrence in this country, and remarkable as having caused some degree of perplexity and dispute among naturalists as to the position it should occupy in the general system or classification of the bird family. Mr. Yarrell (in whose first edition it appears at the head of the Rail family) says—"The Pratincole has been arranged by some authors with the Swallows, by others near the Rails; but I believe, with Mr. Selby, that it ought to be included in the family of the Plovers, and had I known its Plover-like habits and eggs sooner, I should have arranged it between Cursorius and Charadrius." To this Mr. Hewitson adds—"Besides the similarity of their habits, the fact of this species laying four eggs is a further link to connect it with the Charadriidæ." It is, however, much too rare—besides being known not to breed in Britain—to have any claim on our limited space for description of its nest or eggs.

FAMILY III.—CHARADRIIDÆ.

CREAM-COLOURED COURSER—(*Cursorius Isabellinus*).

A very rare bird indeed.

DOTTEREL—(*Eudromius morinellus;* formerly, *Charadrius morinellus*).

Dottrel or Dotterel Plover, Foolish Dottrel.—This is a summer visitor to our country, and in many localities where it used to be abundant, or at least common, it is now rare or almost unknown. This is the case on parts, at least, of the Yorkshire Wolds, as well as in the Lake district. They are sought after by the fly-fisher and by the ornithologist and by the epicure, and from their exceedingly simple and unsuspicious habits they fall easy victims before the fowling-piece of modern days. The female makes no nest, but lays her customary three eggs in a slight cavity on the ground near high mountain tops, where some tall-growing moss or other mountain herbage facilitates concealment. The eggs are of an olivaceous hue, spotted plentifully with very dark brown or brownish-black.

RINGED PLOVER—(*Ægialitis hiaticula;* formerly, *Charadrius hiaticula*).

Ringed or Ring Dottrel.—A very pretty shore-bird, of interesting habits, and not infrequent, especially in winter, on many parts of the British coast. In quiet parts, where large expanses of sand or shingle, or even mud, are left by the receding tide, it may be seen in numbers. It seems to make no nest:—the eggs are laid on the sand, and often at a very considerable distance from the sea; as, for instance, on the warrens in Norfolk and Suffolk. They are four in number, very large in proportion to the size of the bird,

possessing the peculiar pointed shape of the eggs of the entire class of birds we are now among, and of a warm cream-colour, spotted and streaked with black. The parent birds try hard to lead the casual intruder away from the vicinity of their young.—*Fig.* 3, *plate VII.*

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER—(*Ægialitis curonica*; formerly, *Charadrius minor*).

A very rare British bird.

KENTISH PLOVER—(*Ægialitis Cantiana*; formerly, *Charadrius Cantianus*).

Seldom obtained very far from the southern coasts of England, and not appearing to be a very plentiful bird even there. In habits it strongly resembles the Ring Plover just named. The female makes no nest, but lays her four eggs in a slight hollow on sand or shingle; which strongly resemble some of the lighter-coloured examples of the eggs of the last-named species.—*Fig.* 4, *plate VII.*

GOLDEN PLOVER—(*Charadrius pluvialis*).

Yellow Plover, Green Plover, Whistling Plover.—It has sometimes been an object to me to obtain specimens of this bird in its breeding-plumage, and it is scarcely possible to imagine a stronger contrast than that presented by the male in his May dress and six or eight months later. All the glossy black of neck and breast has entirely disappeared long before the latter period. I have occasionally seen a single pair

or two, very early in the year, separating themselves from the great flock of some scores; and in the female of one such pair which I shot some few years since (the next shot killing five out of a very large flock, at no great distance), I found an egg quite ready for extrusion, and which, from the depth of its colouring, would probably have been laid in the course of a few hours at most. The hen-bird makes a very slight nest, and lays just four eggs in it, seldom either more or less. They are of a large size for the bird, of a fair stone-colour, well blotched and spotted with very dark or blackish brown. After sitting eight or ten days the bird becomes very reluctant to leave her nest, and will suffer herself to be almost trodden on rather. The young ones, awkward-looking, mottled yellow and brown puff-balls on stilts, run fast and well soon after they are hatched, and do not speedily acquire the use of those wings which, after a time, are to be so strong and swift. Very jealous, too, are the parents as long as their young are only runners, and very plaintive is their incessant piping if you or your dog approach too near their place of concealment.—*Fig.* 2, *plate VII.*

GREY PLOVER—(*Squatarola Helvetica;* formerly, *S. cinerea*).

A bird which has never been ascertained to breed in England, although specimens in the dark-breasted May plumage have been seen in the London markets, and observed by Mr. Selby in the Farne Islands in June. It is not uncommon as a winter visitor, though even then nothing like so numerous as the Golden

Plover in its winter visits to districts in which it does not breed. The eggs are said to be in colour "oil green, spotted with different shades of umber brown, the spots crowded and confluent round the obtuse end."

LAPWING—(*Vanellus vulgaris;* formerly, *V. cristatus*).

Pewit or Peewit, Te-wit, Teu-fit, Green Plover, Bastard Plover, Green Lapwing, Crested Lapwing.—Another of those birds which are familiar to almost everyone who is not a mere casual visitor to the country, or quite deaf and blind to its commonest sounds and sights. It is a very universally diffused bird, even in those districts where it does not statedly breed. It nests not only on commons and heaths and the wide moor, but in the fields and inclosures; and round my present residence I have many yearly evidences that there are half-a-dozen nests within the limits of a short half-mile which intervenes between me and the moors. The female constructs scarcely any nest, properly so called, but makes, or more likely avails herself of a ready-made, slight cavity on the surface of the ground, with a sufficiency of some kind of herbage to serve as covert. The female's habits in connection with the nest and eggs are different from the male's. She slips off on the approach of a visitor, and runs very silently and quietly away to some distance before taking wing; *he* hastens up on rapid, sounding, whirling wing, and cries and dashes and wheels above and around the cause of alarm in a very remarkable manner. The Peewit lays four eggs, of large size and acutely pointed at the lesser end, and

like so many others of the class, often arranged so as to occupy the least possible space, by having their points all turned inward. They are of a darkish olive-dun ground, abundantly blotched and spotted with brown and black. These eggs are much sought after as delicacies for the table. They are boiled hard and served cold, and when the shell is removed they have quite a jelly-like appearance. But few of the eggs, however, sold in the market as "plovers' eggs," are sometimes recognised by the oologist as having been laid by the Lapwing.—*Fig.* 5, *plate VII.*

TURNSTONE—(*Strepsilas interpres*).

Hebridal Sandpiper.—Found on many parts of our coast either in small parties, or one or two together, from September all through the winter. In the spring it leaves us to go to the north for breeding objects, but it has never yet been fully proved to have nested within the limits of the British Islands. We cannot therefore notice its nest and eggs in this place.

OYSTER-CATCHER—(*Hæmatopus ostralegus*).

Pied Oyster-catcher, Shelder, Sea-Pie, Olive.—A very beautiful and well-known dweller on our sea-coasts, and wonderfully provided by nature, too, with a suitable instrument for purveying its destined food. The bill of the Oyster-catcher is one of those natural objects which form each a study in themselves. Woe be to the oyster or mussel, however powerful its mechanism for closing its valves, if once the Oyster-catcher has found means to insert that natural weapon

of his. Flattened sideways, and hard and strong as so much bone, its efficacy is so great that there can be scarcely a struggle for life on the part of the shell-fish. This bird runs well, and is even said to dive and swim with facility. I never saw this, though I have had them under my observation for hours together in former days. But I knew their shrill, rattling whistle, and their short uneasy flights, and restless paddlings up and down upon the ooze, when I have been among their haunts, well;—and many a nest it used to be my lot to discover on some parts of some of the Essex Saltings. The eggs, usually three or four in number, are laid on the bare ground, sometimes in slight holes amid the Salting herbage above high-water mark; or where there is shingle, in some cavity among its higher and coarser layers. They are cream-coloured, of varying shades of warmth, and blotched and spotted, or spotted and strongly streaked with very dark brown and some few touches of a lighter hue.—*Fig.* 6, *plate VII.*

FAMILY IV.—SCOLOPACIDÆ.

AVOCET—(*Recurvirostra avocetta*).

Butterflip, Scooper, Yelper, Cobbler's Awl, Crooked-bill, Cobbler's-Awl Duck.—Fast verging on extinction. In Sir Thomas Browne's time, it was not at all uncommon; but of late years seldom recorded as having been "obtained" or met with. If only people weren't so fond of "obtaining" our rare birds. But nowadays, when every third person has a gun, the

appearance of a "rare bird" is enough to set half a village off in pursuit, and the great object of hundreds throughout the country seems just to be to destroy the casual feathered visitor, however interesting it may be, or whatever claims it might seem to possess on our hospitality. The Avocet's bill and plumage are enough to point it out for slaughter, and so, slaughtered it has been. It used to breed in Sussex and Norfolk. "The nest is said to be a small hole in the drier parts of extensive marshes. The eggs are said to be only two in number, of a clay-coloured brown, spotted and speckled with black."

BLACK-WINGED STILT—(*Himantopus candidus*; formerly, *H. melanopterus*).

Long-legged Plover, Long-Legs, Long-Shanks, Stilt Plover.—Not so very uncommon as a visitor; but still, strictly speaking, only accidental in its appearance here.

GREY PHALAROPE—(*Phalaropus fulicarius*; formerly, *P. lobatus*).

Red Phalarope.—Supposed, some half century since, to be exceedingly rare in this country, but now known to visit our shores in small numbers, perhaps annually, on their way to their winter place of sojourning. Like the Coot, they are lobe-footed, and very capable swimmers.

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

Red Phalarope.—More rare than the last-named in

England, though occurring, occasionally, somewhat more abundantly in some of the northern Scotch Islands.

WOODCOCK—(*Scolopax rusticola*).

One of our most universally recognised "birds of passage," coming to us sometimes in the autumn (always, at least, beginning to arrive in October), and leaving us again in the spring. Still no season passes in which many pairs do not remain to breed, and that, too, in many different parts of the kingdom. It was an object to me some fifty years ago to obtain eggs of the Woodcock, and I applied to a person in Norfolk, who had not any difficulty in procuring for me eggs from the gamekeeper of a neighbouring estate out of two different nests which had been deserted by their owners. My friend added the information, that scarcely a year passed in which one nest or more of Woodcocks was not known of on the estate in question. Their nests are not uncommon in some parts of Galloway. The nest, a very loose one, is made of dead leaves and the like, bracken leaves appearing to be commonly used for the purpose. The eggs are usually about four in number, and want the peculiar pointed shape common to almost all the other birds of the Order. They are of a dirty yellowish-white, a good deal blotched and spotted with two or three shades of pale brown and purplish-grey. The old bird is known to transport her young, if occasion demands, from one place to another. She has been seen doing so repeatedly, and by good observers, generally making use of both feet for the purpose,

sometimes one only; and, it is said, using her beak sometimes for the same purpose.—*Fig.* 1, *plate IX.*

GREAT SNIPE—(*Gallinago major*; formerly, *Scolopax major*).

Solitary Snipe, Double Snipe.—Often taken, no doubt, by many a sportsman in former days to be a very large specimen of the Common Snipe, than which no bird with which I am well acquainted seems to vary more in size. On the wing it does not look much larger than the Common Snipe, and is seldom seen except alone, or at most two in company. It breeds in high northern localities, and never with us, and no notice, therefore, of its nesting habits is permissible in this place.

COMMON SNIPE—(*Gallinago Cœlestis*; formerly, *Scolopax gallinago*).

Whole Snipe, Snite, Heather-bleater.—Although this snipe, like the Woodcock, retires to northern latitudes to breed, yet there are few districts in Britain suitable to its habits in which it is not known to breed in greater or less numbers. And it is a bird, moreover, which is quite sure to make it very distinctly known that it has a nest and eggs somewhere near, if only any human visitor appears on the scene. I refer to the very peculiar note or sound emitted by the male, always while he is on the wing high in the air, and always accompanied with a very remarkable action of his wings and curving descent in his flight. This sound or note—for it is not absolutely certain, I

think, how it is produced—is variously called humming, bleating, drumming, buzzing. To me, the first time I heard it, and before I knew to what origin to assign it, the impression produced was precisely that of the sound made by a large Bee, entangled in some particular place and unable to extricate itself; and I remember spending some minutes in trying to discover the supposed insect. The eggs are usually four, placed in a very slight and inartificial nest on the ground near some tuft of rushes or other water-herbage. They are of a greenish-olive hue, blotched and spotted with two or three shades of brown, the deepest being very dark. The old ones are said to be very jealous and careful of their young. Many couples are often killed on the moors in this district on or just after the 12th of August.—*Fig.* 2, *plate IX.*

JACK SNIPE.—(*Gallinago gallinula;* formerly, *Scolopax gallinula*).

Judcock, Half Snipe—A little bird, very often seen quite late in the spring, but no specimen of whose egg undoubtedly laid in Britain has, as far as I know, ever yet been produced. It *may* breed here, in some few instances, but none such are yet ascertained. No notice of its eggs can consequently be inserted here.

RED-BREASTED SNIPE—(*Macroramphus griseus*).

"A very rare straggler."

BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER—(*Limicola platyrhynca;* formerly, *Tringa platyrhynca*).

Of very rare occurrence.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER—(*Tringa maculata;* formerly, *T. pectoralis*).

Not so rare as the last.

BONAPARTE'S SANDPIPER—(*Tringa fuscicollis;* formerly, *T. Schinzii*).

Very rarely met with.

DUNLIN—(*Tringa Alpina;* formerly, *T. variabilis*).

Dunlin Sandpiper, Purre, Churr, Stint, Oxbird, Sea Snipe, Least Snipe, Sea Lark. — Perhaps the very commonest and best known, as well as incomparably the most abundant of all our small shore birds, and yet the one about which heaps of scientific mistakes have been made. The male has a conspicuous wedding-dress, which he duly puts on in the spring, and once it was on he was christened *Tringa Alpina*, the Dunlin. Then in the autumn and winter, having divested himself alike of his summer dress and all property or concern in wife and children, he was named anew *Tringa Cinclus*, the Purre. On its being satisfactorily ascertained that the only real difference between Dunlin and Purre was that of a few feathers, and those chiefly on the breast, and dependent simply on season, the new name at the head of this notice was suggested and willingly adopted as altogether a fit one. The Dunlin, always called Oxbird where my boyhood was spent, and often seen there in flocks of not simply hundreds, but thousands, and many thousands, in the autumn and winter, goes to the far north to breed, though some of their hosts stay in the

north of Scotland, the Hebrides, Orkneys and other islands near. Their nests are placed on the ground, among long grass and ling, and always contain four eggs. Mr. Hewitson says:—"In beauty of colouring and elegance of form the eggs of the Dunlin are unrivalled. The ground-colour is sometimes of a clear light green, richly spotted with light brown; sometimes the ground-colour is of a bluish-white." The hen will suffer herself to be removed from her nest by the hand rather than leave her eggs.—*Fig.* 3, *plate IX.*

LITTLE STINT—(*Tringa minuta*).

Not to be described altogether as a rare little bird, for it seems to be met with sometimes in autumn on the southern and eastern coasts in some numbers, and even in flocks of twenty or thirty together. They are often seen in company with the Dunlin or other small shore-birds. Much more is known about their breeding places or habits than used to be the case. It breeds in Siberia, and other northern localities.

AMERICAN STINT—(*Tringa minutella*).

Twice met with in England.

TEMMINCK'S STINT—(*Tringa Temminckii*).

Less even than the Little Stint, and much more rare; besides which it frequents fresh waters rather than the sea-shore. No very great number of them, however, has been met with in England.

CURLEW SANDPIPER—(*Tringa subarquata*).

This little bird was till lately considered to be a very rare and occasional visitor. But it is very likely to have been confused with the Dunlin, or other small shore-birds, and is now supposed even to breed occasionally in our country. During autumn it is sometimes seen in small groups or flocks. "M. Temminck says this bird breeds occasionally in Holland, and that the eggs are yellowish-white, spotted with dark brown."

PURPLE SANDPIPER—(*Tringa striata;* formerly, *T. maritima*).

Selninger Sandpiper, Black Sandpiper.—Not a very numerous species, but by no means infrequent on the British coasts. Very few, however, are seen except in winter and early spring, the far greater part resorting to some place far in the north to nest. Still it seems almost certain that a few breed with us in North England and Scotland. It lays four eggs of "a yellowish-grey colour, varied with small irregular spots of pale brown, thick at the obtuse end, rarer at the other."

KNOT—(*Tringa Canutus*).

Camden says this bird derived its name from the Danish King Knut or Cnut (generally written Canute, but not properly pronounced so), probably because he was very fond of eating them. A very poor piece of etymology I should almost think. It is not uncommonly met with in autumn on several parts of our

coasts, and as far as I have seen is by no means difficult to approach. But its breeding-place is very much more to the north than any portion of the British Islands extends. The male in his nuptial dress is a very much gayer gentleman than after his annual honeymoon is over.

SANDERLING—(*Calidris arenaria*).

Common Sanderling, Sanderling Plover.—A by no means unusual visitant to most parts of our coasts, and sometimes met with also at the edge of large pieces of fresh water, but never known hitherto to have bred with us. It is found associating most commonly, though in small parties for the most part, with the Dunlin, and other similar shore-haunting birds.

RUFF—(*Machetes pugnax*).

Female, Reeve.—Time was, and not nearly a century ago either, when one fenman could take six dozen of these birds in a single day. Now, I fear, he would scarcely get that number in several years. The Ruff is, however, still known to breed annually in some parts of Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The variety of plumage, no less than the very remarkable ruff or feathery appendage about the neck of the male in the breeding season, is quite sufficient to make this a very conspicuous bird among our truly native birds. Scarcely any two males in an assemblage of some dozens can, in some cases, be picked out as possessing exactly the same plumage. The breeding habits, or some of them, observed in this bird are also very

characteristic. His Latin name, as given above, simply means "pugnacious warrior," and verily he is as thorough a lover of battle as any knight-errant of the Middle Ages, or fierce Northern sea-rover of four or five centuries earlier. They do not pair, and therefore fight for the possession of the females, and they used to have spots, known to the fenmen by the name of *Hills*, which were as much the scenes of universal challenge and battle as ever the stated "lists" of the old days of tournament or playing at battle. This habit of theirs facilitated the process of capture very materially, and by means of a peculiar kind of net, duly arranged before the day began to dawn, the fowler was enabled to capture all, or almost all, who had been attracted by their peculiar instincts to the vicinity of any given "hill." The Reeves lay each her four eggs, which vary in colour from olive-green to a yellowish stone-colour, and are spotted and blotched with "liver-colour" and rich brown.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER—(*Tryngites rufescens;* formerly, *Tringa rufescens*).

It has occurred perhaps some half-dozen times.

BARTRAM'S SANDPIPER—(*Bartramia longicauda;* formerly, *Totanus Bartramia*).

A rare straggler to our coasts.

COMMON SANDPIPER—(*Totanus hypoleuca*).

Summer Snipe, Willy Wicket, Sand Lark.—A pretty little bird enough, and seeming to be pretty

extensively diffused, though not a numerous species anywhere. It is commonly seen running briskly along by the water edge of streams or lakes, or perhaps flitting along as disturbed by your sudden invasion of its haunt. Unlike the Dipper, which may constantly be seen sitting quite still near the edge of the stream, the Summer Snipe is always in motion. It makes a very rude nest of dry grass in some hole in a bank not far from water, where the shelter and concealment of sufficient herbage is available, and lays in it four eggs, which vary often in colour and spots, but are usually of a yellowish-white, with blotches and spots of deep brown or ordinary brown. The eggs are sometimes laid on the bare ground among shingle or collections of small pebbles.—*Fig.* 5, *plate VIII.*

SPOTTED SANDPIPER—(*Totanus macularius*).

A visitor, but one of the rarest and most casual of all our feathered visitors.

GREEN SANDPIPER—(*Totanus ochropus*).

It is supposed that a few of these birds may remain with us to breed; but far the greater part of those which are customarily seen about the sides of our smaller streams and ditches and canals, are known to return far to the north to produce their eggs and young. I believe no authenticated instances of its nesting with us are known, but a few very young birds have been met with under circumstances which seemed to leave no doubt that they must have been

hatched in the neighbourhood. The nest is said to be placed "on a bank, or among grass, on the side of a stream," and the eggs, four in number, to be of a greenish ground-colour, spotted with different shades of brown, light and dark, and with gray.

WOOD SANDPIPER—(*Totanus glarcola*).

This Sandpiper resembles the last in some degree, and the two have been sometimes looked upon as varieties of the same species. It is not by any means a frequently occurring visitor, though it seems to be admitted that it is more than probable it sometimes breeds in this country. Mr. Hoy's account of its habits and nesting peculiarities, as observed by himself in Dutch Brabant, is quoted at length by both Mr. Yarrell and Mr. Hewitson. He says, "The nest is generally placed at a short distance from the water, among stunted heath, or scrubby plants of the Bog Myrtle, or among coarse grass and rushes. It is placed in a hollow, and formed of dry grass and other plants. The eggs are four in number. They are pointed in shape, of a pale greenish white, spotted and speckled, particularly over the broad end, with dark reddish brown."

COMMON REDSHANK—(*Totanus calidris*).

Redshank Sandpiper, Teuke, Pool Snipe, Sand Cock, Red-legged Horseman, Red-legged Sandpiper. —One of the most familiar of all our birds to me in my youth. Many long days have I spent amid their haunts on the Essex Saltings. Their nests are very

slightly constructed of a few bits of grass amidst a tuft of herbage, or in a small hole or cavity which is sheltered by some of the taller-growing marine plants. The eggs are usually four in number, occasionally but two or three, of a cream-colour (sometimes dashed with a somewhat warmer hue) spotted and speckled with dark brown. The spots are less and more numerous than in the case of the Peewit's egg. In the case of the last nest I found, now many years since, the old bird suffered me to walk within a yard of her before taking flight. When the young are newly hatched the parent birds betray excessive jealousy and anxiety at the approach of either man or dog to their resort. They have sometimes come and settled on the ground within two or three paces of me, and, at others, flown so directly towards me, as to suggest the possible intention of attacking me, piping most plaintively and incessantly the while. This conduct is designated by the term "mobbing," on the Essex marshes.—*Fig.* 4, *plate VIII.*

SPOTTED REDSHANK—(*Totanus fuscus*).

Spotted Snipe, Dusky Sandpiper, Black-headed Snipe.—A bird which varies much in plumage according to season, being almost black in the summer—but only an occasional visitor, and scarcely anything known certainly of its nest or breeding habits.

YELLOW-SHANKED SANDPIPER—(*Totanus flavipes*).

Exceedingly rare.

GREENSHANK—(*Totanus glottis*).

Cinereous Godwit, Green-legged Horseman.—I used to meet with it occasionally in the early autumn on the Essex Saltings, and remember thinking I had got a prize the first time I shot one, and noticed its slightly upturned bill. It is only rare as a species, and not known positively to breed anywhere much south of the Hebrides. The nest is said to be like that of the Golden Plover or Lapwing, consisting only of a few blades of grass or sprigs of ling, placed in a hollow in the soil. The eggs—like so very many of those characterised by the pyriform shape peculiar to the Grallatores—are placed with their pointed ends together in the middle, and are of a pale yellowish-green colour, spotted all over irregularly with dark brown with intermingled blotches of light purplish-grey; the spots and blotches being more numerous at the larger end.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT—(*Limosa ægocephala*; formerly, *L. melanura*).

Red-Godwit Snipe, Jadreka Snipe, Red Godwit, Yarwhelp, Yarwhip, Shrieker.—Another of those birds which two or three generations back were exceedingly more abundant than now; proportionately esteemed, too, as an article of delicate fare in the days of its frequency, now little heard of, or perhaps thought of. But our forefathers thought many things of the eatable sort good, which their descendants of 1896 had rather not sit down to. I rather think my young readers might not eat Porpoise or

Heron either, with any great relish, not to speak of other matters about equally, or more questionably, "good eating." Both this species of Godwit and the one to be mentioned next are subject, like the Golden Plover, the Gray Plover, the Spotted Redshank, and many others yet to be named, to very great and striking changes of plumage in the breeding season. At all times they are handsome birds. The Black-tailed Godwit is hardly believed to breed still in England. The nest is found in marshy places, made of dry grass and the like, and more or less concealed by the coarse growths peculiar to such places. The eggs vary in both size and colours, but are usually of a greenish olive-brown, marbled and blotched with darker brown; and, as usual in this class of birds, are generally four in number.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT—(*Limosa Lapponica*; formerly, *L. rufa*).

Common Godwit, Grey Godwit, Red Godwit, Godwit Snipe, Red-breasted Snipe.—Of much the same habits as the last, and not remaining in this country to breed, and consequently occurring much more frequently in winter than in spring: not at all in summer. As not nesting with us, no space can be conceded here for a notice of its eggs and nest.

CURLEW—(*Numenius arquata*).

Whaup.—As common a bird as almost any along the whole of the British coasts. Sometimes singly and sometimes in groups of eight or ten, it may be

seen along the line of oozy shores or the sandy flats which are laid bare by the receding tide. When the water is sufficiently high to cover all its feeding grounds, it betakes itself to some higher ground in the vicinity, to rest during those hours of inactivity in food-search. When removing from one place, or one part of the coast to another, it usually flies in long lines, which, however, scarcely maintain the same degree of accuracy as in the case of Wild Geese or other line-flying wild fowl. On the arrival of spring the Curlews leave the coast and retire to their breeding haunts in the hills of the extreme north of England, the highest moorlands of Scotland, and other similar places in more northerly latitudes yet. It is very abundant on the North Yorkshire moors. Near Aysgarth and Bolton I have often seen from ten to twenty flying and settling quite near an intruder on their breeding haunts. Its note once heard is sufficiently noticeable to be easily recognised on any future occasion. It makes a very careless or rude nest, and lays four eggs, which vary a good deal in the depth of the ground-colour and the amount of their spots. It is pale greenish dun, varying to olive-green, and spotted with darker shades of green and dark brown.—*Fig.* 3, *plate VIII.*

WHIMBREL—(*Numenius phæopus*).

Whimbrel Curlew, Curlew Jack, Curlew Knot, Half Curlew, Jack Curlew, Stone Curlew, Tang Whaap.—No wonder it has the name of Half Curlew, for it does most strongly resemble a diminutive Curlew in its plumage, shape, fashion of bill, haunts, and many

of its habits. It is seen, in no great numbers, on many of our coasts in winter; but I have met with it in former years on the Essex Saltings only in the early spring and previous to its retirement to the north to breed. It is difficult to assert positively that it frequents any part of the main British Island for that purpose; but it is known to nest in both Orkney and Shetland. The nest is said by Dr. Fleming to be placed in exposed parts of a moor. The eggs are four in number, and, though very much less in size, still very much like the darker varieties of the Curlew's eggs. The Whimbrel is probably a fast decreasing species.

ESQUIMAUX CURLEW—(*Numenius borealis*).

"A rare straggler in the British Islands." ("Ibis" List.)

ORDER.—GAVIÆ.

FAMILY.—LARIDÆ.

BLACK TERN—(*Hydrochelidon nigra*; formerly, *Sterna nigra*).

Blue Darr.—These birds show considerable varieties in plumage, according to sex and age. They used to be very much more numerous than they now are, many of their favourite haunts having been drained or otherwise broken up. Still it is not uncommon, even yet, in some parts of the fenny districts—although other Terns build in the close vicinity of the

sea, and in dry sites. The Black Tern, however, selects marshy places and often builds in very wet spots, making a nest of flags and grass. The eggs are sometimes four in number, this being the only Tern which lays more than three. They vary much in colour and markings, some being of a palish green, others of a brownish yellow, or dull buff, but all spotted and blotched with deep brown.—*Fig.* 6, *plate XI.*

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN—(*Hydrochelidon leucoptera;* formerly, *Sterna leucoptera*).

"A rare straggler."

WHISKERED TERN—(*Hydrochelidon hybrida;* formerly, *Sterna leucopareia*).

Like the last.

GULL-BILLED TERN—(*Sterna Anglica*).

Of more frequent occurrence than either of the two last; and especially in Norfolk.

CASPIAN TERN—(*Sterna Caspia*).

It may be remarked in connection with the birds we are now among, that the Grebes, Divers, Cormorants are all gifted with wonderful powers of diving; the Gulls and Terns are incapable of diving an inch. The latter, buoyant and sitting as lightly on the water as a cork; the former deep-sunken in the water, and seeming to require almost an effort to support themselves on the surface at all. The contrast is certainly

sufficiently striking, without taking into account that the one group has immense power of flight, and exercises it; and the others seem to have little inclination to use their wings at all more than is absolutely necessary. The handsome and large Tern specially under notice does not breed in this country, but is known to inhabit the coast of some parts of the European continent, at no great distance from our own shores.

SANDWICH TERN—(*Sterna Cantiaca*).

This bird has been noticed as breeding in several different localities on our southern coasts, and it is known to frequent both Coquet Island and one or more of the Farne Islands for the same purpose; as also several parts of Scotland. It lays three or four eggs in a hole, or rather cavity, either scratched or found ready-made in the neighbourhood of plants or herbage sufficient to afford some covert. The colour of the eggs varies from yellowish white to a buffy stone-colour, and they are thickly spotted with neutral tint, chestnut, and deep rich brown. There is, indeed, considerable variation in the colouring of the eggs, but all are very beautiful.—*Figs.* 1, 2, *plate XI.*

ROSEATE TERN—(*Sterna Dougallii*).

This bird is known to be a regular but not abundant summer visitor. Unlike many of our recognised British Birds, it seems rather to increase in numbers than to diminish. They associate with other and infinitely more common species, and closer

observation only has distinguished between them and their eggs and those of their more numerous associates. The eggs of the Roseate Tern are two or three in number, and vary among themselves to some small extent. They are usually of a light yellowish stone-colour, spotted and speckled with dark-grey and dark-brown.

COMMON TERN—(*Sterna fluviatilis;* formerly, *S. hirundo*).

Sea Swallow, Tarney or Pictarney, Tarrock, Pirr, Gull-teazer, etc.—Although distinguished by the epithet of Common, this Tern is really not much more numerous, and in that sense common, than one or two other species with which it customarily consorts. It is very generally diffused, however, and in that sense *is* common. It usually builds on the ground in marshy localities near large sheets of water, or on islands low and flat not far from the sea. Sometimes, though more rarely, it builds upon low rocks or slightly elevated sand-banks. They lay two or three eggs, and are exceedingly and noisily restless and uneasy when they, or especially their young, are too nearly approached. Their eggs vary a good deal, but most of them are of a medium stone-colour, blotched and spotted with ash-grey and dark red-brown. The buoyancy and power of flight exhibited by these birds is very observable.—*Fig.* 3, *plate XI.*

ARCTIC TERN—(*Sterna macrura;* formerly, *S. arctica*).

This Tern, until a comparatively recent period, was

confounded with the Common Tern, but a clear specific difference was pointed out by M. Temminck, and it is now acknowledged that, in many of the more northerly localities especially, it is a much more numerous species than the Common Tern. It breeds plentifully in Shetland, Orkney, and some parts of the Hebrides, and in great numbers on Coquet Island and one or more of the Farnes. It lays two or three eggs, which are exceedingly like those of the Common Tern, and vary in the same proportion. Some have a greenish shade, and others rather a pronounced buff, spotted and blotched as in the case of those of the last-named species.—*Fig.* 4, *plate XI.*

LESSER TERN—(*Sterna minuta*).

Lesser Sea Swallow, Little Tern.—A pretty—almost a delicate—little bird, and not infrequent on such parts of our coasts as are adapted to its habits. It seems to prefer sand or shingle-banks or surfaces, and lays its two or three eggs in any small cavity which it may be lucky enough to find in the selected place. It is perfectly surprising in many cases how closely the eggs laid resemble the stones and gravel among which they are laid. They are palish stone-colour, speckled and spotted with ash-grey and dark brown. —*Fig.* 5, *plate XI.*

SOOTY TERN—(*Sterna fuliginosa*).

It has been met with two or three times.

NODDY TERN—(*Anous stolidus*; formerly, *Sterna stolida*).

A bird of only rare and casual occurrence.

SABINE'S GULL—(*Zema Sabinii*; formerly, *Larus Sabini*).

This, the first of the Gulls which falls under our notice. is only a rare visitor.

CUNEATE-TAILED GULL—(*Rhodostethia rosea*).

A very rare bird.

BONAPARTEAN GULL—(*Larus Philadelphia*).

Like the last.

LITTLE GULL—(*Larus minutus*).

Not only the least English Gull, but the least of all the Gulls, and a very pretty-looking little bird. It is, however, only a visitor, though known, of late years, as putting in a more frequent appearance than had been before noticed.

BLACK-HEADED GULL—(*Larus ridibundus*).

Brown-headed Gull, Red-legged Gull, Laughing Gull, Pewit Gull, Black-cap, Sea Crow, Hooded Mew. —This is a very numerous, and, at least at some periods of the year, a very generally diffused species. At the breeding time, although a few pairs may be met with in an infinite number of localities, the great bulk of the species seems to collect at a few chosen places. One such place, in which they used to breed

in thousands, is on Scoulton Mere, in Norfolk; another at Pallinsburn, in Northumberland; and a third, in Lincolnshire, not far from Brigg. They have, within the last few years, bred in some numbers at Lockerdam, near Bolton Castle, in Wensleydale. The nests are made of sedges, grass, and the flowering part of the reed, and are not very deeply cup-shaped. The bird lays three eggs, and there is a very great degree of variation between them in respect of colour and markings; the ground colour being sometimes of a light blue or yellow, and sometimes green, or red, or brown. Some, too, are thickly covered with spots, and others scarcely marked with a single speckle or spot. In more than one of their great breeding-places the right of gathering the eggs was rented, and sometimes upwards of a thousand eggs collected in a single day. When the first laying of eggs is taken, a second batch, and even a third, is produced; but in each successive instance, the eggs become less. They are used as the Pewit's eggs are, and also for culinary purposes.—*Fig.* 7, *plate XI.*

THE GREAT BLACK-HEADED GULL—(*Larus ichthyætus*).

One or two specimens only.

COMMON GULL—(*Larus canus*).

Winter Mew, Sea Mew, Sea Mall or Maw, Sea Gull, Sea Cob, Cob.—This Gull is, on the whole, sufficiently general and well known on all parts of our coast to merit the prefix of Common, which is usually applied to it. For though it is essentially a sea-bird, yet

during some weeks in the spring, it may frequently be seen in the new-ploughed or sowed fields at some miles' distance from the salt water. Its nest may sometimes be found on marshes or low flat islands, such as are not rare in some of our southern estuaries, while in other districts it breeds on high rocks. In either case, the nest is a structure of considerable size, formed of sea-weed and grass, and the female deposits two or three eggs in it, which are a good deal varied in appearance: "Some," says Mr. Hewitson, "with a ground colour of light blue, or straw colour, others green or brown; some a good deal like eggs of the Oyster-catcher, others covered all over with minute spots." Some, moreover, are sufficiently well blotched and spotted with ash colour and dark brown; others well streaked with the brown, but with only a few spots of the grey colour.—*Fig. 2, plate XII.*

HERRING GULL—(*Larus argentatus*).

A very numerous species in many different parts of the kingdom, where rocky coasts sufficiently high and precipitous are met with. I have seen it abundantly at Flamborough Head and St. Abb's Head, and in smaller numbers on many parts of the Yorkshire coast north of Flamborough, as well as in others not distant from St. Abb's. Here we see it on the ploughed lands very abundantly in early spring. The earliest date for their appearance this year (1896) was February 21st. I heard them also on February 26th; and I have heard them again as late as three days ago, or May 26th. It usually selects for the site of its nest a flat ledge or other rock-surface towards the upper part

of the cliff, but will sometimes build on a low rock or grassy island. The nest is like that of the last species, but even larger, and usually contains three eggs. These so strongly resemble those of the Lesser Black-back as to make it very difficult to distinguish between the one and the other. Mr. Hewitson says the only means of distinction available even to an experienced eye seems to depend on the somewhat greater size of the Herring Gull's egg, and the larger and more confluent character of the blotches of surface colour.—*Fig. 4, plate XII.*

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL—(*Larus fuscus*).

Yellow-legged Gull.—This Gull is seen in sufficient numbers, and all the year round, on many parts of the British coasts, and in the south as well as the north. It almost exclusively prefers localities to breed in which are characterised by the presence of rocky cliffs, but yet makes a nest of some considerable thickness—even when placed on the grassy summit of some rocky island—"of grass loosely bundled together in large pieces, and placed in some slight depression or hollow of the rock." Its nests are intermingled, in several places, with those of the Herring Gull; in many places greatly exceeding those of the latter, in others as greatly inferior, in number. The eggs (two or three in number) vary greatly in colouring,—from a warm stone-colour, through shades of brown, to pale green or light olive-green. The spots and blotches vary too, and vary greatly, in number, size, position, and intensity; neutral-tint, chestnut brown, and dark brown being all met with,

and sometimes in the same specimen.—*Fig.* 3, *plate XII.*

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL—(*Larus marinus*).

Black-back, Cob, Great Black-and-white Gull.—By no means a numerous species, and not affecting society as so many of the other Gulls do. It breeds, in some cases, on the Marsh or Salting-spaces met with so abundantly on some of the southern and eastern shores; but more commonly on rocky parts of the coast. Thus, it breeds very abundantly on the Orkney and Shetland Islands. The nest is made of a large quantity of dry grass simply thrown together. The eggs are three in number, often bearing a great resemblance to those of the two species last named, but usually distinguishable by the larger masses of surface colouring, and by some superiority in size. The Black-back's eggs are much esteemed as articles of food, or for cooking purposes generally. The yolk is very deep and rich-coloured, and the white colourless or transparent. Each female will lay three sets of eggs; the first two sets being, in some cases, customarily taken, and the last left for her to hatch.

GLAUCOUS GULL—(*Larus glaucus*).

Large White-winged Gull, Burgomaster.—A Gull equally large with the last (one of which, shot by myself, exceeded six feet from the tip of one wing to that of the other); but one of merely casual occurrence as a British bird.

ICELAND GULL—(*Larus leucopterus ;* formerly, *L. Islandicus*).

Lesser White-winged Gull.—A bird which has been obtained in this country from time to time, but in cases of no great frequency.

KITTIWAKE—(*Rissa tridactyla ;* formerly, *Larus tridactylus*).

Tarrock, Annet.—A very common rock-breeding Gull, met with on almost all parts of our coasts, and nesting in great numbers in many different localities. Flamborough Head, St. Abb's Head, the Bass, more than one of the Farne Islands, are such places. It places its nest of sea-weed high up on the face of some rocky steep on a narrow ledge, and deposits therein, for the most part, three eggs. These differ much in colour and in the amount and position of the spots; some are stone-coloured, some tinged with an olive shade, and some with a bluish cast. The spots and blotches are of ash-grey and two or three shades of brown, chestnut to umber.—*Fig.* 1, *plate XII.*

IVORY GULL—(*Pagophela eburnea ;* formerly *Larus eburneus*).

Snow-bird.—A bird of very rare occurrence.

GREAT OR COMMON SKUA—(*Stercorarius catarrhactes ;* formerly, *Lestris catarrhactes*).

Skua Gull, Brown Gull, Bonxie.—We pass here into a somewhat different class of birds. The Skua is as bold and insolent as most of the Gulls are timid and retiring. In many instances these birds do not

take the trouble to fish for themselves, but, watching the fishing operations of the Gull, seize their opportunity of assailing a successful fisher, and compel him to disgorge his prey. The Common Skua has only a very limited breeding-range in Britain, not being known to nest out of Shetland, and to have but three places for nidification there. So resolute and daring are they when they have young to defend, they do not scruple to attack the eagle, and a pair have been known to beat the strong, proud marauder effectually off. The Skua makes a large nest of moor-growing moss, and takes some pains in its construction. It is placed among the heath and moss of a hilly island. The eggs are two in number, and vary much in colour; according to locality, it would almost seem. Some are dusky olive-brown, others with a much greener hue, and they are blotched with darker brown, and a few spots of rust colour.

POMARINE SKUA—(*Stercorarius pomatorhinus;* formerly, *Lestris pomarinus*).

Merely a casual visitor, although more frequently noticed of late years than before ornithology became so favourite a study.

RICHARDSON'S OR ARCTIC SKUA—(*Stercorarius crepidatus;* formerly, *Lestris Richardsonii*).

Arctic Gull, Black-toed Gull.—This species is the most numerous of all those who visit this country. It breeds in the Hebrides, in the Orkneys and in Shetland, and numerously enough in the two localities last named. The female has been observed to make use

of the same artifices as the Partridge and the Grouse to decoy an intrusive dog or man away from its nest or young. The nest is built of moss or ling, on some elevated knoll amid marshy ground, or on the moor, and contains two eggs. These are of a greenish olive-brown colour, spotted with dark brown. This Skua not only restlessly and pitilessly persecutes the Kittiwake and other Gulls in order to obtain its own food from them at second-hand, but also makes free with their eggs for the same purpose in a very marauder-like fashion.—*Fig.* 5, *plate XII.*

LONG-TAILED OR BUFFON'S SKUA—(*Stercorarius parasiticus*; formerly, *Lestris Buffonii*).

Mr. Yarrell distinguishes between this bird and the true *L. parasiticus*, and consequently adopts the scientific name I have now given. This Skua can only be considered a rare and accidental visitor.

ORDER.—TUBINARES.

FAMILY.—PROCELLARIIDÆ.

FULMAR PETREL—(*Fulmarus glacialis*; formerly, *Procellaria glacialis*).

Fulmar, Northern Fulmar.—The Fulmar breeds in incredible numbers at St. Kilda, but is rarely met with, even in winter, about the southern coasts of England. Both old birds and their young on being touched eject a considerable quantity of clear oil, which, however, is by no means of an agreeable

odour; and probably from this cause the nest, young birds, and even the rock on which they are placed, stink almost intolerably. The nest is very slight, if any, and the bird lays her single white egg in little excavations, and lightly lined, on such shelves on the face of high precipitous rocks as are surfaced with a little grass or sward. The egg varies in length from a little over $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 3 inches.

CAPPED PETREL—(*Œstrelata hæsitata*).

Of almost unique occurrence.

GREAT SHEARWATER—(*Puffinus major*).

Cinereous Shearwater, Dusky Shearwater.—A bird which has not been very frequently recorded as met with on the British seas, but still one of occasional occurrence.

SOOTY SHEARWATER—(*Puffinus griseus*).

MANX SHEARWATER—(*Puffinus Anglorum*).

Shearwater Petrel, Manx Puffin.—This is a regular seafaring little bird, and perhaps would hardly ever care to come to land if it were not for the need of something solid for its eggs to repose upon. It usually frequents islands well-washed by the sea and not much frequented by men. It used to be very abundant on the Calf of Man, but is never seen there now. In one of the Scilly Islands it breeds in some numbers still, and on St. Kilda, the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. The nest is made deep down

in a hole in some wild and half inaccessible part of the islands frequented, and in it one egg of exceeding whiteness is laid, and remarkable for the fine texture of the shell and the musky scent of the entire egg. It is about 2½ inches long by 1¾ broad.

DUSKY SHEARWATER—(*Puffinus obscurus*).

A rare straggler.

BULWER'S PETREL—(*Bulweria columbina*; formerly, *Thalassidroma Bulwerii*).

A Petrel of sufficiently rare occurrence.

FORK-TAILED PETREL—(*Cymochorea leucorrhoa*; formerly, *Thalassidroma Leachii*).

Breeds at St. Kilda, and an occasional straggler on the British coasts.

STORM PETREL—(*Procellaria pelagica*; formerly, *Thalassidroma procellaria*).

Mother Carey's Chicken.—This is said to be the smallest web-footed bird known. It never comes to the shore except at the breeding-season, and only seeks comparative shelter under the pressure of very heavy weather. It breeds in the Scilly Islands, some of the islands on the Irish coast, and abundantly on St. Kilda, the Orkneys and Shetland. They breed in holes in a cliff, or under large-sized stones, which, from their great size and accumulation of boulders and large shingle about them, afford many deep recesses well suited to the wants of the nesting

Petrel. Like the Manx Shearwater, they are by no means silent in their nest-holes, but make themselves distinctly audible to the passenger above. They lay one white egg, a little exceeding 1 inch long, by ¾ broad.

FAMILY II.—OCEANITIDÆ.

WILSON'S PETREL—(*Oceanites Oceanicus;* formerly, *Thalassidroma Wilsonii*).

Equally rare with the bird last-named.

ORDER.—PYGOPODES.

FAMILY I.—ALCIDÆ.

RAZOR-BILL—(*Alca torda*).

Razor-bill Auk, Black-billed Auk, Murre, Marrot.—It may almost be said that wherever the Guillemot is met with the Razor-bill is sure not to be far distant. They have their habits, their food, their haunts, even to a great degree their general appearance, in common. There is, however a great difference both in the shape and size and also in the colouring of the single egg laid by the Razor-bill, from that of the Willock. It is less in proportion, less elongated, wants the infinite diversity of colouring which characterises the egg of the latter, the ground-colour being always whitish or white tinged with some light buffy shade, and the spots and blotches, which are sufficiently abundant, are some of a reddish or chestnut brown, others of a very deep rich brown.—*Fig.* 4, *plate X.*

GREAT AUK—(*Alca impennis*).

Gair-Fowl.—Not merely an exceedingly rare British bird, but extinct as a British species. While yet in existence it was said scarcely ever to leave the water, and it laid its one large egg almost close to high-water mark. These eggs are white in ground, or sometimes soiled or slightly yellowish white, blotched and streaked, most at the larger end, with black. They somewhat resemble the Guillemot's egg in shape, but are rather less elongated. The value of these eggs is almost fabulous, sixty guineas [1] having been given for a couple of them. I had to thank the late Mr. Champley, C.E., of Scarborough, for most kindly sending me an engraving of a Great Auk's egg in his possession, as well as for offering me access to his admirable collection of eggs, numbering upwards of 8,000 specimens.

COMMON GUILLEMOT—(*Uria troile*).

Foolish Guillemot, Willock, Tinkershere, Tarrock, Scout, Sea Hen, Murre, Lavy.—It is remarkable in several particulars connected with its breeding peculiarities. It makes no nest, and lays but one egg, but that an egg of huge dimensions as contrasted with the size of the bird itself; besides which, it is almost impossible, out of a collection of many scores, to pick out half a dozen that are precisely alike, either in ground-colour or general markings. The eggs are laid on the ledges of rocky precipices overhanging the sea, on various parts of the British coasts. I have

[1] Morris's "British Birds."

frequently seen the Willocks under the impulse of a sudden alarm—for instance the firing of a gun in the close vicinity of their egg-bestrown ledges—fly off in very large numbers and with every symptom of precipitation. But no egg is ever dislodged; a circumstance which some have sought to account for on the supposition that they must be cemented to the rock! The explanation really is, it would seem, that the shape of the egg is such that, instead of rolling off in any direction, as a ball would do on being sufficiently moved, they simply turn round and round within the length of their own axis. It would serve but little purpose to attempt a description of the Guillemot's egg. They are of all shades, from nearly or quite white to a dark green, some profusely spotted and blotched and streaked with dark colours, others very slightly so or scarcely at all. Unfortunately the egg is so large that but two illustrations can be given in the limited space available to us.—*Figs.* 1, 2, *plate X.*

BRÛNNICH'S GUILLEMOT—(*Uria Brünnichii*).

Thick-billed Guillemot.—Easily distinguished by an experienced eye from the last, but a bird of which, perhaps, it can scarcely be said that it has been actually ascertained to breed anywhere within the limits of the British Isles. The eggs are described as varying from those of the Common Guillemot in their greater roundness; they are less long in proportion to their thickness than the others, but seem to run through the same endless variations of ground-colour.

RINGED GUILLEMOT—(*Uria lacrymans*).

Bridled Guillemot.—There has been some doubt whether this bird is to be considered a distinct species, or merely a variety of the Common Guillemot. It is now hardly admitted as a good species. It occurs in company with the other Guillemot on various parts of our coasts, and in Wales is said to be equally numerous with it. The eggs are scarcely distinguishable from those of the other two species already named, and exhibit precisely similar characteristics.

BLACK GUILLEMOT—(*Uria grylle*).

Tyste, Scraber, Greenland Dove, Sea Turtle.—Sensibly less in size than the Common Guillemot, and not found commonly on our more southerly coasts. Shetland, the Orkneys and Western Isles are all frequented by them, and their quick and lively motions are pleasant enough to witness. These birds lay two eggs each instead of one, in holes or crevices of precipitous rocks, and at some distance from the aperture; sometimes, where no such nest-sites are available, on the bare ground, under or between fragments of rock or large stones. They are most commonly white, more or less tinged with blue, speckled, spotted, and blotched or marbled with chestnut brown, very dark brown and a kind of neutral tint.—*Fig.* 3, *plate X.*

LITTLE AUK—(*Mergulus alle*; formerly, *M. melanoleucos*).

I have rarely seen any bird, much more a very

small bird like this, whose whole air and deportment conveyed to me more completely the idea of entire independence. Only under the pressure of severe storms or long continued hard weather do they leave the deep sea in order to seek the comparative shelter of some land-sheltered bay or reach. It breeds on the Faroe Isles and in Iceland, but not in Britain.

PUFFIN—(*Fratercula arctica*).

Sea Parrot, Coulterneb, Tammy Norie.—This is, one may safely say, the quaintest-looking of all the host of our English birds. The young Owl is grotesque enough, but more by reason of its deliberate, solemn-seeming, and yet laughable movements; but the Puffin, with its upright attitude and huge ribbed and painted beak—reminding one somewhat strongly of the highly-coloured pasteboard noses of preposterous shape and dimensions which, at some seasons, decorate the windows of the toy-shop—strikes us as more laughably singular yet. They breed abundantly about many of our rocky coasts in all parts of the kingdom, depositing their one egg—a large one, again, in proportion to the size of the bird—sometimes in crannies or rifts in the surface of the cliff, often very far back; at other times in rabbit-burrows where such excavations are to be met with sufficiently near the coast and otherwise suitable to the wants of the bird. It does not follow that because the Puffin occupies the hole, that the rabbit had forsaken it or even given it up "for a consideration." On the contrary the Puffin is quite ready and equally able to seize on and continue to occupy the desired home by force of arms. In

other cases they dig their own holes, and often excavate them to the depth of two or three feet. The eggs are nearly white before they become soiled—that is, spotted and marbled with a tinge of ash colour.

FAMILY II.—COLYMBIDÆ.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER—(*Colymbus glacialis*).

Greatest Speckled Diver, Great Doucker, Immer, Immer Diver.—This magnificent bird—I shot one, in full plumage, several years since, which weighed nearly thirteen pounds—is usually found at some distance from the coast, except during that part of the year which is devoted to the work of propagation. There seems good reason to think some of them may breed in some of the most northerly British Islands, but no authentic history of its ever having been known to do so, is, I believe, extant.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER—(*Colymbus arcticus*).

Lumme, Northern Doucker, Speckled Loon.—The rarest of the three Divers known in our seas. It is, however, described as breeding in several of the lakes of Sutherlandshire. It makes no nest, but lays its two eggs on the bare ground, at no great distance from the water-edge. These are in some instances of a light shade of chocolate-brown, others having more of an olive-brown tinge about them, and sparingly spotted with black.

RED-THROATED DIVER—(*Colymbus septentrionalis*).

Rain Goose, Cobble, Sprat-borer, Spratoon, Speckled Diver.—The commonest and the smallest of the Divers, and varying greatly in its plumage, according to age and season. It breeds on the Scottish mainland, in Shetland, in the Hebrides, and until lately, in the Orkneys. The eggs are said to be always deposited very near the water's edge. They are two in number, of a greenish-brown colour, spotted with very dark brown, but, as Mr. Yarrell states, when the egg has been long sat upon, the brown ground-colour is apt to assume a chestnut, or dark reddish-brown tint.

FAMILY III.—PODICIPEDIDÆ.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE—(*Podiceps cristatus*).

Cargoose, Loon, Greater Loon, Tippet Grebe.—The family of Grebes to be noticed now are to be looked upon as principally, but not exclusively, frequenting the fresh water. The bird now under notice remains almost all the year on the large sheets of water which it inhabits in Wales, Shropshire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. Like the rest of the Grebes, it is little able to walk, and not much disposed to fly, but possessing marvellous capacity and power of diving. Its nest is made of a large heap of half rotten water weeds, but little raised above the surface of the water, and always soaked with wet. On this likely-seeming place for duly addling every egg deposited, three, four, or five

eggs are laid, which are almost white when newly dropped, but soon become so stained from constant contact with wet and decaying vegetable substances as to be any colour rather than white. They are about $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches long, by $1\frac{1}{2}$ broad. The eggs, in the absence of the parent bird, are usually found covered with portions of some water vegetable; and the owner, on being disturbed on her nest, always dives away from it. The first lessons of the young Loon in diving are taken beneath the literal "shelter of their mother's wing."

RED-NECKED GREBE—(*Podiceps rubricollis*).

Not so common as the Grebe last named, and more frequently met with on salt water, though not usually far from some estuary or inland arm of the sea. It is not known to have bred in this country.

SCLAVONIAN GREBE—(*Podiceps auritus*; formerly, *P. cornutus*).

Dusky Grebe, Horned Grebe.—Rather a rare bird in the summer, and not common at any period of the year; nor has it ever been known to breed with us.

EARED GREBE—(*Podiceps nigricollis*; formerly, *P. auritus*).

The rarest of all the Grebes. It occurs, however, from time to time, and I knew of one instance in Essex some sixty-five years ago in which one of these birds was taken from a Water Rat's hole into which it had been seen to creep for shelter.

LITTLE GREBE—(*Podiceps fluviatilis;* formerly, *P. minor*).

Dabchick or Dobchick, Didapper, Small Ducker, Black-chin Grebe.—A very common and very interesting little bird, and yet, in spite of its frequency and familiarity, blessed with two scientific names, originating (as in the case of the Dunlin) in differences of plumage, depending on age or season. It is difficult to say where it is *not* to be met with in spring, provided only there be what the Americans call a sufficient "water-privilege," neither too shallow nor too rapid, for its requirements. As expert a diver as any of those hitherto named, it seldom resorts to the use of its wings, except just at the time when birds' love-making goes on. Then the male (at least) may be seen working his short wings most vigorously and rapidly, uttering his rattling cry as he circles over and about the mere on which he has "squatted" for the season. The nest is a heap of water weeds only just flush with the surface, and always steeping wet. The eggs are four, five or six in number, perfectly white when laid, but soon ceasing to be clean-looking, for they grow more dingy day by day, until on some waters they become completely mud-coloured, on others, assume a hue which I can compare to nothing but old blood stains on some dirty surface. I am quite convinced that in some cases at least this discolouration is intentional on the part of the parent bird, though in others it may be simply due to the action of the juices of fresh or decaying vegetable substances. I never yet, though I have seen some dozens of nests, found the eggs left uncovered by the owner

save only in one instance, in which only one egg had been laid. The weeds used as a covering were, moreover, in the majority of instances, fresh, and evidently procured by the Dabchick in virtue of her skill in diving. The young birds swim and dive almost immediately they are hatched, and are very persevering little skulkers if disturbed on their breeding waters.

ORDER.—STEGANOPODES.

FAMILY.—PELECANIDÆ.

COMMON CORMORANT—(*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

Crested Cormorant, Corvorant, Great Black Cormorant, Cole Goose, Skart.—Wherever there are any traces of a rocky coast about our island, there the Cormorant is pretty sure to be found, so that he may very well be described as a common bird. Where the rocky coast is not only extensive, but not liable to much disturbance from human intrusion, these birds abound, and may be seen in numbers and observed to anyone's heart's content. They build their nests, which are of ample size, with sticks, sea-weed and coarse herbage of any obtainable sort, on ledges of the precipices; and many nests are usually formed in the near neighbourhood of each other. They are much disposed also to select as the situation for their nests a rocky islet with cliffy sides, and woe to the nose of anyone who approaches such an island rock from the leeward side. What from the nature of their food and the abundance of their excrement, an intolerably

fetid odour always prevails about their breeding-place. The eggs vary in number from four to six, and are almost entirely covered over with a white chalky incrustation, which, however, admits of easy removal by a knife or similar means, leaving a shell of a bluish-green colour apparent.

SHAG—(*Phalacrocorax cristatus*).

Green Cormorant, Crested Cormorant, Crested Shag. —A smaller bird than the last, but easily distinguishable by that and its prevailing green colour. As to habits and haunts, the differences are not great. The Shags are said to breed lower down on the rocks than the Cormorant, and the nests are principally composed of sea-weed and grasses. The eggs are three to five in number, and covered with the same incrustation as those of the Cormorant, and equally removable. White at first, they soon become as soiled and stained as those of the Grebes.

GANNET—(*Sula Bassana*).

Solan Goose.—Common enough in certain localities, though the localities in which they occur vary with the season. When the breeding time comes round, they congregate in hosts of many thousands at some half-dozen different stations, particularly affected by them, on different parts of our coasts. During the breeding season if, or where, unmolested, they become exceedingly tame, and will even suffer themselves to be touched. They make their nests of a large mass of sea-weed and dry grass, *on* rather than *in* which they lay each one single egg, of no very considerable

size. This, when first laid, is white or bluish-white (the colour being due to an incrustation similar to that of the Cormorant's egg), but soon becomes soiled and stained.

ORDER.—HERODIONES.

FAMILY I.—ARDEIDÆ.

COMMON HERON—(*Ardea cinerea*).

Hern, Heronshaw, Heronseugh.—It would have been no light matter once to have molested a Heron. Those birds were "preserved" with a strictness we scarcely can imagine even in these days of game-preserves. They were the peculiar game of royal and noble personages. Now, however, the case is widely different, and probably not one Heron in a hundred can now be met with as compared with the days of falconry. It is a strange odd sight to see a Heron balancing himself on the topmost twig of some fir-tree, and succeeding after a few uneasy motions of body and wings in poising himself. The Heron sometimes breeds on precipitous rocks, but much more commonly on trees,—generally trees of large size, and commonly oaks or firs. It is not a solitary builder, but like the Rook forms a community, and frequents the same tree or clump of trees through successive years for many generations. Each nest is of large size, and composed of sticks with a lining of wool. Four or five eggs are usually deposited, of an uniform pale green colour. A few nests are said to have been

met with on the ground and even in a laurel.—*Fig.* 1, *plate VIII.*

PURPLE HERON—(*Ardea purpurea*).

A few instances only of the occurrence of this bird in Britain have been recorded.

GREAT WHITE HERON—(*Ardea alba*).

White Heron, Great Egret.—A rarer and more accidental visitor than even the bird last named.

LITTLE EGRET—(*Ardea garzetta*).

Egret, Egret Heron, Little Egret Heron.—There is good reason to believe that this bird may once, at a remote period, have been sufficiently common, or even abundant in England. Now, however, it is of exceedingly rare occurrence anywhere within the British seas.

BUFF-BACKED HERON—(*Arde abubulcus;* formerly, *A. russata*).

Red-billed Heron, Rufous-backed Egret, Little White Heron (the young).—An exceedingly rare bird, with as scanty claim as not a few others to be considered British at all.

SQUACCO HERON—(*Ardea ralloides*).

Buff-coloured Egret.—A bird which has been met with in several of the counties in the southern half of England, and I believe more or less frequently in some of them. Still it is but a visitor, and, comparatively with many other not very common birds, a

rare one; and, as certainly not breeding in our island, possessing no claim upon us for lengthened notice here.

NIGHT HERON—(*Nycticorax griseus;* formerly, *N. Gardeni*).

Gardenian Heron, Spotted Heron, Night Raven.—This bird claims to be a British bird, inasmuch as upwards of a dozen specimens have been met with here. But it does not breed with us, if indeed commonly at all in Europe.

LITTLE BITTERN—(*Ardetta minuta;* formerly, *Botaurus minutus*).

It would seem that this bird is to be looked upon rather as a summer visitor to us; and Mr. Yarrell says of it, "Some, if not prevented, would probably have bred in this country." Still, although the grounds for this opinion seem valid and conclusive, no actual instance of nidification here has ever been ascertained.

COMMON BITTERN—(*Botaurus stellaris*).

Mire Drum, Butter-bump, Bog-bumper, Bittour, Bumpy-coss, Bull-of-the-Bog, Bog-blutter, Bog-jumper.—Clearances and drainage, and the onward strides of agriculture, and the gun, and the pursuit of specimen-hunters and collectors, have made this a rare species almost everywhere. It was common enough a century or two since; and many a fertile cornfield, which then was a seemingly hopeless marsh and bog, has resounded far and wide with the deep, booming, bellowing cry of the Bittern. Recorded instances

even of its nesting here are becoming more and more rare and unusual, and ere long, it is to be feared, this beautifully plumaged bird will be among the things that "have been." Its nest is composed of sticks, reeds, and like matters, built on the ground, at no great distance from the water it frequents, and hid among the plentiful water-growth found at the edges of shallow standing waters. The eggs are three to five in number, of an uniform olive-brown colour.—*Fig.* 2, *plate VIII.*

AMERICAN BITTERN—(*Botaurus lentiginosus*).

A bird of rare and most accidental occurrence in England.

FAMILY II.—CICONIIDÆ.

WHITE STORK—(*Ciconia alba*).

A much too conspicuous object not to be noticed whenever its visits have been paid to our shores. Accordingly, we find it had long been known as a visitor, though the instances of its occurrence in the last generation or two are noticeably less frequent than in former days. As breeding abundantly in Holland, it would be strange if the Stork did not come to us sometimes.

BLACK STORK—(*Ciconia nigra*).

The Black Stork has occurred much more rarely than its white congener.

FAMILY III.—IBIDIDÆ.

GLOSSY IBIS—(*Plegadis falcinellus;* formerly, *Ibis falcinellus*).

This visitor has been met with in late years, even in some numbers. There was one about the moors in this district thirty-four or thirty-five years since, which I saw myself and heard of as seen in the same neighbourhood by others; and about the same time I noticed that birds of the same species had been observed in several other parts of Yorkshire and elsewhere. Still it is only a visitor, and a casual one.

FAMILY IV.—PLATALEIDÆ.

WHITE SPOON-BILL—(*Platalea leucorodia*).

A bird which is said to have bred in former days in our country, but which has certainly become, for a long time past, a mere visitor, and not a frequent one.

ORDER.—ODONTOGLOSSÆ.

FAMILY.—PHŒNICOPTERIDÆ

FLAMINGO—(*Phœnicopterus roseus*).

Strange as it may seem, at least three occurrences of this remarkable bird in our country have been recorded.

ORDER.—ANSERES.

FAMILY I.—ANATIDÆ.

GREY-LAG GOOSE—(*Anser ferus*).

Grey-legged Goose, Grey Goose, Wild Goose.—It is not proposed to give any illustrations whatever of the eggs of the Wild-fowl—the Geese, Swans, Ducks, and Diving Ducks—inasmuch as they are not only of large size, and would usurp much space to the absolute exclusion of many others of much interest and urgently demanding pictorial illustration, but, also, are characterised by so much sameness or general uniformity of colour;—for they vary only, in that respect, about as much as the eggs of the common Fowl and common Duck do. A very large proportion of them, moreover, never by any chance breed in any portion of the British Islands, but resort to distant and very northerly localities for that purpose. The first on our list, the Common Grey, or Wild, Goose, is an instance in point. It is believed once to have been a regular inhabitant, and to have bred abundantly in the fenny districts which then prevailed over many parts of the kingdom, not at all near or connected with what is yet called "the fen country." But now it is comparatively a rare bird at any season of the year, and nests no nearer to us than some of the isles and coasts of Scandinavia.

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

Laughing Goose.—A regular winter visitor, and not

in any very scanty numbers. One of my very worst discomfitures in my early sporting-days took place in connection with a flock of these birds. There were seven or eight of them which flew deliberately right on towards my father and myself till they were within twenty-five yards of us, and then they doubled up into a confused clump, and I was already counting the slain when my gun missed fire. My father's did not, and gave us the opportunity of identifying the species. It breeds in Scotland and other countries far to the north.

BEAN GOOSE—(*Anser segetum*).

Like the last, and in common with the Goose next to be mentioned, indiscriminately known by the name of Wild Goose. Unlike the last, however, it is ascertained to breed in small numbers on some of the large lakes in the north of Scotland, and in the islands of Lewis and Harris. Besides which, a nesting locality of this species in Westmoreland is named. The nests, in some instances, are hid in very tall ling, and the eggs are from five to seven in number. In size they are a little under $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ broad.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE—(*Anser brachyrhyncus*).

A smaller bird than the last, but otherwise bearing a very strong resemblance to it; so much so, that it appears more than probable it has often been assumed to be a young or small specimen of the former species. It is, however, of comparatively rare occurrence.

SNOW GOOSE—(*Chen hyperboreus*).

Of rare occurrence, and, it is believed, in Ireland only.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE—(*Bernicla ruficollis*; formerly, *Anser ruficollis*).

A very rare species, and one of which but little is known as to history or habits.

BERNICLE GOOSE—(*Bernicla leucopsis*; formerly, *Anser leucopsis*).

Another winter visitor; often appearing in great flocks, but always retiring to the north again to breed. It is supposed to frequent the shores of the White Sea especially for such purpose.

BRENT GOOSE—*Bernicla brenta*; formerly, *Anser brenta*).

Black Goose, Ware Goose.—By far the most numerous of all the geese which visit our shores in winter, as it is also the least. I have seen it in inconceivable numbers on the Essex coast in hard winters, and the numbers reported to have been killed at one discharge of a heavy punt-gun seem simply incredible. In the very hard and long-continued winter of 1837-38, I saw the ice, which, in broken fragments of four or five feet square by three or four inches thick, covered the whole estuary of the Blackwater at Tollesbury (a space of very considerable width), black with them during highwater. The expression made use of by one of the sea faring men of the neighbourhood was, "There are

acres of 'em." Still of all their vast numbers none remain to breed, and no great proportion of them are known to breed in Europe.

CANADA GOOSE—(*Bernicla Canadensis;* formerly, *Anser Canadensis*).

Cravat Goose.—Many of these remarkably fine birds are kept on ornamental waters in many different parts of the kingdom; and these have been known sometimes (aided by a storm, perhaps, or some unusual occurrence) to make their escape. Many of the supposed wild birds shot, or otherwise taken, have been accounted for on the supposition that they are such escaped birds. However, it would seem almost certain that considerable flights of really wild Cravat Geese do occasionally visit this country, and even that some pair or two of them may occasionally stay to breed. The eggs are six to nine in number, of very large size, and white.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE—(*Chenalopex Ægyptiaca;* formerly, *Anser Egyptiacus*).

As rare and not less exceptional than the last; as the few that have occurred may have escaped from confinement.

SPUR-WINGED GOOSE—(*Plectropterus Gambensis;* formerly, *Anser Gambensis*).

Gambo Goose.—An accidental visitor indeed.

WHOOPER—(*Cygnus ferus*).

Wild Swan, Whistling Swan, Elk.—Of sufficiently

common occurrence on the British coasts, and particularly in hard winters. Few birds vary much more in size and weight than do these. A young bird of the year may weigh only twelve or thirteen pounds; the older and more full-grown specimens, twenty or twenty-one. They breed very far to the north.

BEWICK'S SWAN—(*Cygnus Bewickii*).

A smaller bird than the Whooper, and of very much rarer occurrence. Still it is an ascertained species, and visits us frequently, if not annually, in some numbers.

MUTE SWAN—(*Cygnus olor*).

The Common tame Swan of our ornamental waters. —They are found wild in many, if not all, the northern countries of Europe. It is too well known by everyone to require detailed notice here.

POLISH SWAN—(*Cygnus immutabilis*).

A bird of very rare occurrence in a wild state, and deriving its Latin name from the circumstance that its plumage undergoes no change in colour at any period of its age. It is always white. The cygnets of the other swans are, on the contrary, grey or dusky-coloured for a lengthened period, and only become white on their reaching maturity.

RUDDY SHIELDRAKE—(*Tadorna casarca ;* formerly, *T. rutila*).

A bird of exceedingly rare occurrence.

COMMON SHIELDRAKE (*Tadorna cornuta*; formerly, *T. vulpanser*).

Burrow Duck, Skel Goose, Bar Goose.—One of the most extremely beautiful of all our wild fowl, or even of those which for their beauty are selected to be ornamental accessions to the waters of the park or pleasure-ground. Its plumage is so beautiful and clear and brilliant, and its attitude in repose so graceful, one cannot but admire it greatly. It breeds not uncommonly on many sandy parts of our coasts, occupying the deep rabbit-burrows, which are found in what are called the "sand-hills," to place its nest in. The nest is one really made of bents and dry stalks, and lined or cushioned with down liberally plucked from the builder's own breast. The number of eggs laid varies between eight or nine and twelve or fourteen. They are nearly or quite white, about $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches long by nearly 2 in breadth. I have known instances in which the eggs obtained from one of their nests have been hatched under a common Hen. The young seemed to accustom themselves to their life of restraint tolerably well, but never showed any disposition to pair or breed. Probably it might be because no suitable hole for a nest was within their reach. The male of this species is known to assist the female in the labours and constraint of incubation.

WILD DUCK or MALLARD—(*Anas boschas*).

By far the most common of all our wild fowl among the Ducks, but lessening, year by year, in the numbers which visit us. Within my own recollection many

Decoys on the Essex coast were worked constantly and successfully, which for many years now have been dismantled and unused. I well remember, when I was a lad of ten or twelve, being at a house in Tolleshunt D'Arcy, on the farm belonging to which was an active Decoy, and seeing the birds which had been taken in the course of one morning. The numbers were so great that many of the undermost Ducks, where the great accumulation had taken place at the end of the "pipe," had died of pressure and suffocation, and some even were sensibly flattened by the superincumbent weight of their fellows. The multiplication of shooters on shore and afloat has sensibly tended to lessen the numbers of the Wild Duck; while drainage on a large scale in many a district the country through, has materially lessened the number of their haunts. Still a very considerable number remain to breed, and a Wild Duck's nest in many parts of the kingdom is no rarity. The nest is made of grass, lined and interwoven with down. It is customarily placed on dry ground on the margin of water, among reeds and bulrushes, or the like; but may often be found at some distance from water, and in places so unlikely for the purpose as on the open moor, or in a tree top, or in the lofty deserted nest of a crow. The eggs are from nine to twelve in number, sometimes, however, exceeding the latter limit, of a greenish-white colour, and about $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ broad. It is long before the young Wild Ducks fly well enough to leave their native reed beds or similar shelter, and, in the state preceding that of actual power to fly away, they are called Flappers.

GADWALL—(*Anas strepera*).

Rodge, Grey Duck.—A Duck which occurs in no very great numbers at any time; mostly about the end of the winter, or in spring; and is not known to breed commonly in any part of Europe.

SHOVELLER—(*Spatula clypeata*; formerly, *Anas clypeata*).

Blue-winged Shoveller, Broad-bill.—A very beautifully plumaged bird indeed. But gaily feathered as he is, and brilliant as is a part, at least, of the plumage of all the male Ducks during a certain portion of the year, yet it is remarkable that they all undergo a change in this respect about the breeding time, just the reverse of that which takes place in the males of so many other birds at the same season. *They* become more brilliant, or their colours deeper or richer then:—the male Ducks duskier, plainer coloured, more like the female in her more unobtrusive hues. The Shoveller's bill is very remarkable, and, as I said of the Oyster-catcher's, a study for all who admire the works of Creation. It merits our notice for its adaptation to its purposes, in a direction just opposite to that which characterises the bill of the bird just named. Dilated at the sides so as almost to look awkward, it is furnished with a large series of very sensitive laminæ or plates, such that the minute objects which form a considerable portion of the birds' food may be instantly detected by the sense of touch, and retained. It used to breed very commonly in many parts of the kingdom, Norfolk and the Fen

district for instance, as well as in Romney Marsh and other places more in the south of the island. At present it has become comparatively rare. The nest is made of fine grass, and the eggs are eventually enveloped in down procured from the bird's own breast. The eggs may be from eight to twelve in number, white, tinged with a greenish-dun shade, and about 2 inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ broad.

PINTAIL DUCK—(*Dafila acuta;* formerly, *Anas acuta*).

Cracker, Winter Duck.—An early visitor to our shores when winter has once urged the wild fowl hosts to leave their northern nesting-places. It is not, however, a numerous bird with us, but abounds in many of the northernmost countries of Europe.

TEAL—(*Querquedula crecca;* formerly, *Anas crecca*).

A very pretty little Duck, and the least of all our winter visitors of that species. It is of common occurrence, but not met with in any great numbers. It breeds abundantly in Norway and Sweden, and especially in Lapland, whither the great bulk of our winter friends retire on the approach of the northern summer; still, pairs often remain throughout the summer in various parts of our country to nest and rear their young. When I was a boy I heard of nests, almost annually, on some of the marshes I knew most familiarly; and I have known of many broods hatched and reared on these North Riding moors. The Teal builds a nest of abundance of different

vegetable substances, varying according to the locality and its productions, and lines it with down and feathers, the concealment afforded by the neighbouring herbage being carefully adopted. Eight to ten or twelve eggs are laid, of a buffy-white, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch long by rather over $1\frac{1}{4}$ broad.

GARGANEY—(*Querquedula circia;* formerly, *Anas querquedula*).

Summer Duck, Summer Teal, Pied Wiggon—This is a somewhat rare bird, and is seen sometimes in late autumn, but more usually in the spring. It has been known to breed in this country, though by no means commonly or frequently. It is said to make a nest among reeds of dry grass, rushes and down, and the number of eggs deposited to run from eight or nine to twelve, or even more. They are of a distinct but pale buff colour, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch long by $1\frac{1}{4}$ broad.

WIGEON—(*Marcca Penelope;* formerly, *Anas Penelope*).

Whewer, Whim.—Mr. Waterton has recorded an observation on the habits of this Duck, which is of great interest. Whereas, all the birds of the Duck-kind which we have hitherto named are night-feeders, the Wigeon obtains its food by day, "and that food is grass." The great body of our winter visitors of this species retire to the north to breed about the end of March, or April; but a few have been ascertained to remain for that purpose in north Scotland. A nest, found on Loch Laighal in Sutherlandshire, was "placed in the midst of a clump of grass, and was made of

decayed rushes and reeds, with a lining of the birds' own down. The eggs were smaller than those of the Wild Duck, and of a rich cream-white colour." The number of eggs laid varies between five and eight or nine; the length, 2½ inches by 1½ in breadth.

AMERICAN WIGEON—(*Marcea Americana;* formerly, *Anas Americana*).

Of entirely rare and accidental occurrence.

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

Red-crested Whistling Duck.—A rare winter visitor.

POCHARD—(*Fuligula ferina*).

Dunbird, Red-headed Wigeon, Red-headed Poker, Duncur.—A winter visitor, and in very considerable numbers in districts where the presence of inland waters to a sufficient extent enables them to follow out their natural habits. It is almost impossible, from their great quickness and skill in diving, to take them with the other "Fowl" in the Decoy, and they are therefore captured by a peculiar arrangement of nets affixed to poles so heavily weighted at one end as on being liberated to elevate the net in such a way as to intercept the flight of the birds, as soon as they are fairly on wing. The Dunbird does not now breed in this country.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK—(*Fuligula nyroca*).

Somewhat resembling the Pochard in general hue, but smaller, and in respect of the numbers in which it

has been met with in this country, comparatively a very rare visitor.

SCAUP DUCK—(*Fuligula marila*).

Spoon-bill Duck.—A winter visitor, and not an unusual one, although its numbers are never such as to commend it to notice in the same way as the Wild Duck, the Dunbird, the Wigeon, and some others. It breeds commonly in Iceland, but never in Britain.

TUFTED DUCK—(*Fuligula cristata*).

Another constant winter visitor, and as well or better known than the Scaup. Like the Scaup Duck it usually prefers oozy or muddy estuaries and their customary accompaniments. But I have met with it here in the narrow, rapid trout-stream which runs through this part of the country, and at a distance of not less than nine or ten miles from the sea. It breeds sparingly in Holland and in more northerly countries.

GOLDEN EYE—(*Clangula glaucion*; formerly, *Fuligula clangula*).

Brown-headed Duck, Grey-headed Duck, Pied Wigeon, Golden-eyed Wigeon, Duck, or Teal, Morillon, Rattlewings.—As well known and as common as perhaps either the Scaup or the Tufted Duck, but known by different names according to the state of plumage depending on sex and age, females and young birds being much more common than adult males. As not known to breed in England, no notice of nest or eggs can be inserted here. In the Appendix, however, a

very interesting notice of one of its habits connected with its breeding time will be inserted.

BUFFEL-HEADED DUCK—(*Clangula albeola;* formerly, *Fuligula albeola*).

A visitor, but a very rare one, to our shores in winter.

LONG-TAILED DUCK—(*Harelda glacialis;* formerly, *Fuligula glacialis*).

Another bird which, like the two last, is sufficiently well known without being exceedingly or indeed in the least degree numerous. It is, in fact, a rather rare and very beautiful Duck, and is remarkable for the great variations of plumage to which it is liable, according to differences of age, sex, and season. It breeds abundantly in Norway and Denmark, and much more so in purely Arctic regions.

HARLEQUIN DUCK—(*Cosmonetta histrionica;* formerly, *Fuligula histrionica*).

Another very beautiful bird, and most peculiarly marked. So much so as to remind its sponsors, as it appears, of the artistic effects produced by the customary pictorial adornment of our facetious friend Harlequin's face. A rarer bird, however, than even the Long-tailed Duck last named.

EIDER DUCK—(*Somateria mollissima*).

St. Cuthbert's Duck.—We have now arrived at

another section of the Duck family. Those hitherto named all frequent the fresh waters, and chiefly affect those that are of no great extent or depth. These, the first of which we have just named, frequent the sea or, in a few instances, the deepest parts of large freshwater lakes. The Eider Duck, well known to most of us by name, to some of us by sight, breeds in some marshes on the Farne Islands, and in many of the islands on the coast of Scotland. The nests are principally composed, on a foundation of sea-weed or grass, of the beautiful light elastic down, commonly known as Eider-down ; and if the first is plundered, a second, and even a third are formed ; but the down decreases in quality and quantity in each successive instance. The first accumulation is so large and springy as quite to conceal the eggs contained, which are usually five in number, and are of a light-green colour, about three inches long by two wide. The lining of one nest, admitting of easy compression by the hand, is described by Mr. Hewitson as capable, when fully expanded, of filling a man's hat.

KING EIDER—(*Somateria spectabilis.*)

King Duck.—A much rarer bird than the last, indeed occurring only very casually. It has been known to breed in one of the Orkney Islands, while Iceland, Nova Zembla, Spitzbergen, and like localities, are the great breeding haunts of the species. The nests are made on the ground, and contain five eggs, very closely resembling the Eider Duck's, except in size. They are rather less.

STELLER'S EIDER OR WESTERN DUCK—(*Somateria Stelleri;* formerly, *Polysticta Stelleri*).

Exceedingly rare in Britain, and not much less so, it seems, in Europe generally.

COMMON SCOTER—(*Œdemia nigra*).

Scoter, Black Scoter, Black Duck, Black Diver.—This dusky-coloured Duck is seen in considerable numbers on various parts of our coasts in winter, and always swimming and diving in what may be called "loose order," like the Coots rather than any of the true Ducks. It does not, however, ever stay to breed with us, and can have no further notice here.

VELVET SCOTER—(*Œdemia fusca*).

Velvet Duck.—A winter visitor, and rare on our south coasts. More common in the far north of Britain.

SURF SCOTER—(*Œdemia perspicillata*).

A bird of very rare, and, perhaps also it may be added, very local occurrence.

GOOSANDER—(*Mergus merganser*).

Dun Diver, Sparling Fowl, Jacksaw, Saw-bill.—A few of these birds also remain to breed in Britain, though by far the most retire to the north of Europe for that purpose. Its nests are common both in the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides. They are large, made of dry grass and roots, and lined with the down of the female, and placed amid bushes or stones, or in

some cavity afforded by an old tree. The eggs rarely exceed six or seven, not varying much in shade from those of the next species, and are $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ in breadth.

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

Red-breasted Goosander.—This handsome bird is an undoubted denizen of our country during the breeding season, but in no great numbers in any year or district. It breeds in Ireland, on islands in several of the loughs; also in the Hebrides and other Scottish islands. The nest is made of long grass or moss, small roots, dry water-herbage, mixed and lined with the bird's own down, doubtless added to as incubation proceeds. It is often placed at the foot of a tree, if there be one on the islet selected. The eggs are six to nine in number, of a pale buff or fawn colour. They are $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $1\frac{3}{4}$ broad.

SMEW—(*Mergus albellus*).

White Nun, Red-headed Smew (for young), Smee, Lough Diver, White-headed Goosander, White Merganser.—The Smew is perhaps quite the most common of the entire family; but they are very wary and difficult to approach. They are not known to breed in any part of the United Kingdom.

HOODED MERGANSER—(*Mergus cucullatus*).

A rare and accidental visitor to this country, and indeed to the European continent. As far as is known, it makes its nest in the hollow of trees.

APPENDIX

Our object in adding this Appendix is simply a wish to make the book more complete by adding notices, more or less detailed, of the nests and eggs and any interesting breeding-season peculiarities of birds recognised as really well entitled to the name of British Birds, but not happening to remain within the limits of Britain to breed. The first bird of the kind in our complete list is—[1]

GREENLAND FALCON,

The equivalent to Mr. Yarrell's Gyr Falcon.

ICELAND FALCON.

These two species are now, I believe, looked upon as established, but the differences between them are not excessively striking, except it be to a scientific naturalist. Mr. Hewitson has figured an egg of the Iceland Falcon which he believes may have lost some of its colour. It was taken from a nest made with sticks and roots, lined with wool, which once perhaps was the nest of a Raven. The nest in question was in a cliff, and had the remains of many sorts of birds

[1] If any reader desires to know more about the breeding habits of the birds not mentioned in this Appendix, the "Ibis" List named in the text above in several places will give him ready means of acquiring the information desired.

—Whimbrels, Golden Plovers, Guillemots, Ducks—strewed round it. The egg is of a buffy red colour, mottled and speckled—very thickly in places—with deeper red.

SNOWY OWL.

Sufficiently often met with in North Britain (and even occurring sometimes in England) to merit a short notice here. It inhabits Sweden, Norway, Lapland, and the greater part of Northern Europe. These birds are accustomed to take their prey by daylight, and seem, from the accounts received, to be in the habit of "bolting" their food, when not very large, whole. It makes its nest on the ground, and lays in it three or four white eggs.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE.

This bird is met with in Denmark and other northern countries of Western Europe, and also in Russia, Germany, and France. It is said to frequent woods and forests, and to build upon trees at some distance from the ground, as well as in thick bushes and hedges. The nest is made of roots, moss, wool, and dry stalks, lined with dry grass and root-fibres. The eggs are four to seven in number, and though they vary a good deal in colour, they always illustrate the peculiar tendency of the eggs of the Shrikes to show a sort of zone or girdle, due to the agglomeration of the spots about some part of the circumference. They are yellowish or greyish white, and the spots of grey and light brown.

FIELDFARE.

I have sometimes seen this favourite game-bird of the school-boy here as early as the latter part of September, and I have frequently noticed them feeding in hundreds on the holly berries which abound

in more than one part of this district. They must breed very late in the year, from the late period of their departure hence, and the distance of the countries to which many of them resort for that purpose. It breeds very abundantly in Norway, and also in Sweden, Russia, and Siberia, not to mention other and more southerly countries in Europe. Their nests, in Norway, are usually built against the trunk of the spruce-fir, and at very variable heights from the ground. They are said to be very like those of the Ring Ousel, except that small twigs are added to the outside structure. The eggs are from three to five, and are very like those of the Ring Ousel, but with somewhat more red about them. The Fieldfare seems to prefer breeding in numerous groups or colonies, two or three hundred nests being frequently seen within a rather limited space.

REDWING.

This winter visitor has been known to breed occasionally, but yet only very exceptionally, in this country. A nest was brought to me many summers since, which, from its construction, the size and colouring of the eggs, and especially from the description of the bird which my informant saw leaving the nest, I have little doubt was a Redwing. It breeds abundantly in Sweden, and in lesser numbers in Norway, and is described as being a very sweet singer, as heard among the forest solitudes of the latter country. Its nest is very similar to those of the Blackbird, Ring Ousel, and Fieldfare, in materials and structure. The eggs are four to six in number, and very similar, allowing for a little inferiority in size, to those of the Fieldfare, and to very red specimens of the Ring Ousel's. A nest, with the parent birds, was kept for years at Kildale Hall, in the North Riding. It was found in the parish.

SNOW BUNTING.

This bird resorts in the breeding season to the "Arctic regions

and the Islands of the Polar Sea." Mr. Yarrell says, "The nest is composed of dry grass, neatly lined with deers hair and a few feathers, and is generally fixed in a crevice of a rock, or in a loose pile of timber or stones. The eggs are a greenish white, with a circle of irregular umber-brown spots round the thick end, and numerous blotches of subdued lavender purple."

MOUNTAIN FINCH.

This Finch is occasionally met with in sufficient numbers to be deserving of a short notice here. It seems to breed in Denmark, Norway, and Lapland, and it is at least possible that a few pairs may, from time to time, stay to nest with us. It is said to build in fir-trees, though from Mr. Hewitson's account, the nests are by no means easy to find. The following is an account of a nest made by a pair in an aviary at Beccles in Suffolk :—"The nest was deep, the walls thick, a large quantity of materials employed for the foundation, which was worked among the stalks of the ivy-leaves. It was composed of moss, wool, and dry grass ; and lined with hair." The general appearance of the eggs is one of resemblance to those of the Chaffinch ; the spots, however, seeming to be fewer, smaller, and less decided.

SISKIN.

This little bird has been known in several instances to breed with us in its natural wild condition, but its nesting-home is in Russia, Germany, and North-Western Europe. It has been ascertained to build in furze bushes, and also close to the trunk of a fir-tree, where a projecting bough afforded support for the structure. The nest is composed of similar materials to the Chaffinch's, and the eggs present a good deal of resemblance to those of the Goldfinch, with a little inferiority in size.

TURNSTONE.

This very handsomely plumaged bird inhabits the countries bordering on the Baltic, as also Greenland and other localities far to the north. Mr. Hewitson gives a most interesting account of his discovery of its nest in Norway:—"We had visited numerous islands with little encouragement, and were about to land upon a flat rock, when our attention was attracted by the singular cry of a Turnstone. We remained in the boat a short time until we had watched it behind a tuft of grass, near which, after a minute search, we succeeded in finding the nest. It was placed against a ledge of the rock, and consisted of nothing more than the dropping leaves of the Juniper bush, under a creeping branch of which the eggs, four in number, were snugly concealed and sheltered." Several other nests were also found in the course of further researches, which, however, were required to be both close and systematic. The eggs are of an olive-green colour, spotted and streaked with different shades of red-brown, and all having a beautiful tint of purple or crimson, seen in few other eggs."

SANDERLING.

It breeds in Greenland, Labrador and other Arctic countries. It makes its nest on marshy grounds, of grass, and lays four "dusky-coloured eggs, spotted with black." But little seems to be known of either the nidification or the eggs of this species, as no figure is given by either Mr. Hewitson or in the Rev. O. Morris's book.

HOOPER.

Occasionally met with during the breeding season in Iceland, and more commonly in Lapland. They are described as inhabiting the most remote and inaccessible lakes and morasses in forest districts.

The nest is made of any coarse water herbage which is suitable and at the same time accessible. It is large, and raised some inches above the surface of the supporting soil. The eggs are believed to be from three or four to seven in number, and are usually of a pale brownish white colour, extending to about 4 inches long by $2\frac{3}{4}$ broad.

PINTAIL.

This Duck breeds in Iceland, and commonly in Lapland and some of the districts about the Gulf of Bothnia. It builds, like most others of its kind, among the thick herbage commonly growing near the edge of pieces of fresh water; the nest being made of the same, but dry, and lined with down. The eggs are six to eight or nine in number, and are of a light greenish-white colour, and about the same size as those of the Wild Duck proper.

VELVET SCOTER.

This Sea Duck is found in Russia, Norway, the Faroe Islands, and also in Iceland. Mr. Audubon's account of its nest and eggs is as follows:—"The nests are placed within a few feet of the borders of small lakes, a mile or two from the sea, and usually under the low boughs of the bushes, of the twigs of which, with mosses and various plants matted together, they are formed. They are large and almost flat, several inches thick, with some feathers of the female, but no down, under the eggs, which are usually six in number, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, by $1\frac{7}{8}$ in breadth, of an uniform pale cream colour, tinged with green."

COMMON SCOTER.

It breeds, but not very numerously, in Iceland; but is seen nest-

ing in company with the Velvet Scoter, in Scandinavia, rather more commonly. It makes a nest of any available vegetable substance, such as grasses, twigs, leaves, dry stalks; it is lined with down, and placed under the partial cover or concealment afforded by low shrubs or other plants. The eggs are six or seven to ten in number, of a pale buff colour slightly tinged with green, 2½ inches long by 1¾ broad. After the eggs are laid, the males assemble in large flocks and draw towards the coast.

POCHARD.

The breeding haunt of this bird seems to be more to the eastward than that of the majority of those hitherto named. It is said to be abundant in Russia and in the North of Germany, and is very commonly found in the fur countries in America during the breeding season. A few also breed on the borders of the Meres in Holland. The nest is similar in site and materials to those of the Wild Duck and other Ducks, and the eggs sometimes reach the number of twelve. They are of a greenish buff colour, 2 inches in length, by 1⅜ in breadth. The Pochard was discovered, several years since, as breeding about the Mere at Scarborough, and has also been stated to nest occasionally in one or two places in Norfolk.

SCAUP DUCK.

This Duck has also been known as breeding very incidentally in this country, but its almost unbroken habit is to return to such countries as Iceland, the swampy lake-district north of the Gulf of Bothnia, and some parts of Norway, for nesting purposes. It sometimes makes its nest in what may be almost called the usual site for the nests of Ducks, and sometimes upon the stones and shingle at the edge of sheets of fresh water. The nest is very thin and slightly formed, but well lined with down, and the eggs seem to be six,

seven, or eight in number. They are of a pale buff colour, and sensibly less in size than those of the Pochard last named.

TUFTED DUCK.

This little Duck is known to breed near the head of the Bothnian Gulf, as well as in other parts of Sweden, and in Lapland and Russia. A few pairs also are seen nesting in Holland. It makes a very slight nest of grasses and the like. The eggs are seven or eight to ten in number, very similar in shade to those of the Scaup Duck last mentioned, but much less in size, being only a little over 2 inches long, by less than 1½ in breadth.

LONG-TAILED DUCK.

It is known to breed in Iceland, and believed to do so in Norway. It makes its nest among low brushwood and the herbage usual at or near the margin of fresh water. A few stems of grass form the substructure, on which is placed a plentiful lining of down. The eggs are from six to twelve in number. They are of yellowish-white, just tinged with green, and nearly 2¼ inches long by 1½ in breadth.

GOLDEN EYE.

This Duck seems to prefer wooded or forest districts for nesting in. It breeds in Lapland, Sweden, and Norway, and has such a strong liking for a hole in a tree to nest in, that if suitable boxes with an adequate entrance-hole are placed on the trees growing on the banks of streams or lakes frequented by them, their eggs are sure to be deposited therein, to the great profit of those who suspend the boxes. Of course when it is known that a Duck hatches its young in a hole in a tree, the question must suggest itself—as it

did to the original observer in the case of the Wild Duck's nest on a pollard, or in a fir tree—How can the young ducks ever be got down safely, and, still more, finally launched on their proper element? An observed habit of the Golden Eye answers this question. A Lapp clergyman saw the parent bird conveying its young, to the number of five or more, but one at a time, from the nest to the water, and he was at last able to "make out that the young bird was held under the bill, but supported by the neck of the parent." The eggs of the Golden Eye are said to be ten or twelve or even more in number, and of a brighter colour than is usual with the eggs of the Duck tribe, being of a rather decided green colour.

SMEW.

But little that is quite authentic seems to be known of the nesting habits of this little Duck; nor is it certainly ascertained where its chief numbers retire to breed. The eggs are said to be eight or ten in number, or even more than that, and to be of a yellowish-white colour.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.

This bird breeds on the Faroe Islands, and on some of the lakes in Iceland; as also on some of the islands of Finmark. Spitzbergen and Greenland are also named as the breeding resort of many of these Divers. They lay, it is supposed, two eggs each, though in some observed instances only one was to be seen. Mr. Audubon says that three are sometimes laid. They are of a dark olive-brown, with a few spots of dark umber brown, and are of considerable size.

LITTLE AUK.

This little wave-dweller has its nesting home in countries far more to the North than ours. It abounds on some parts of the Green-

land shores, and it is also met with, but much more sparingly, in Iceland. It makes no nest, but lays its one egg on the ground amongst or possibly beneath the large rock-masses which encumber the shore after falling from the overhanging cliffs and precipices. The parent birds are exceedingly averse to leave their egg when incubation has commenced, and like some other species already mentioned, will rather suffer themselves to be removed by the hand. The egg is white, lightly tinged with blue, a little spotted and veined with rust colour.

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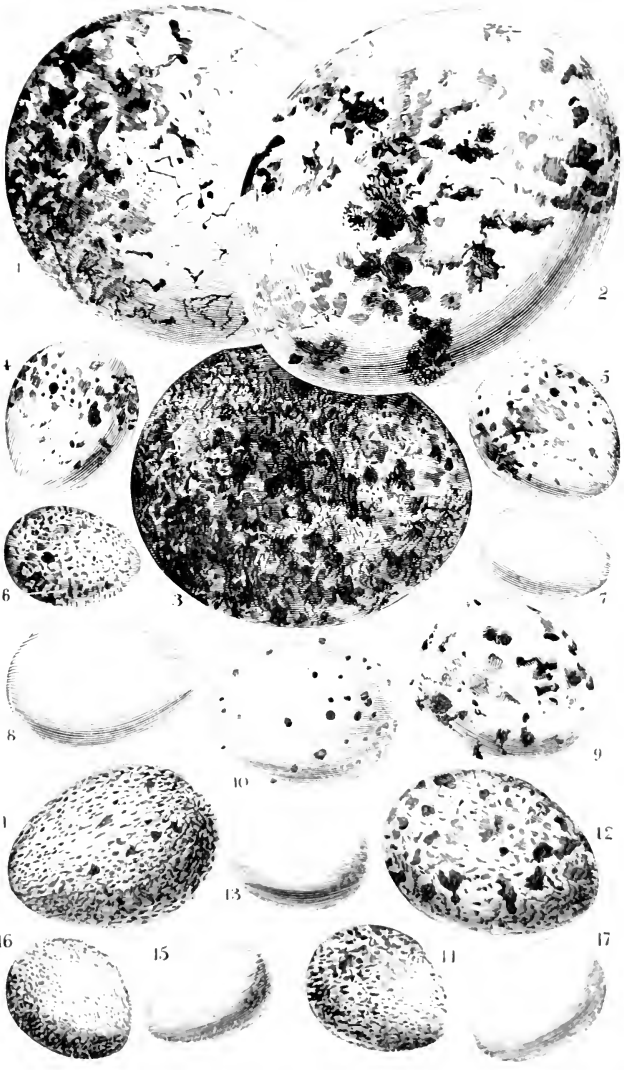

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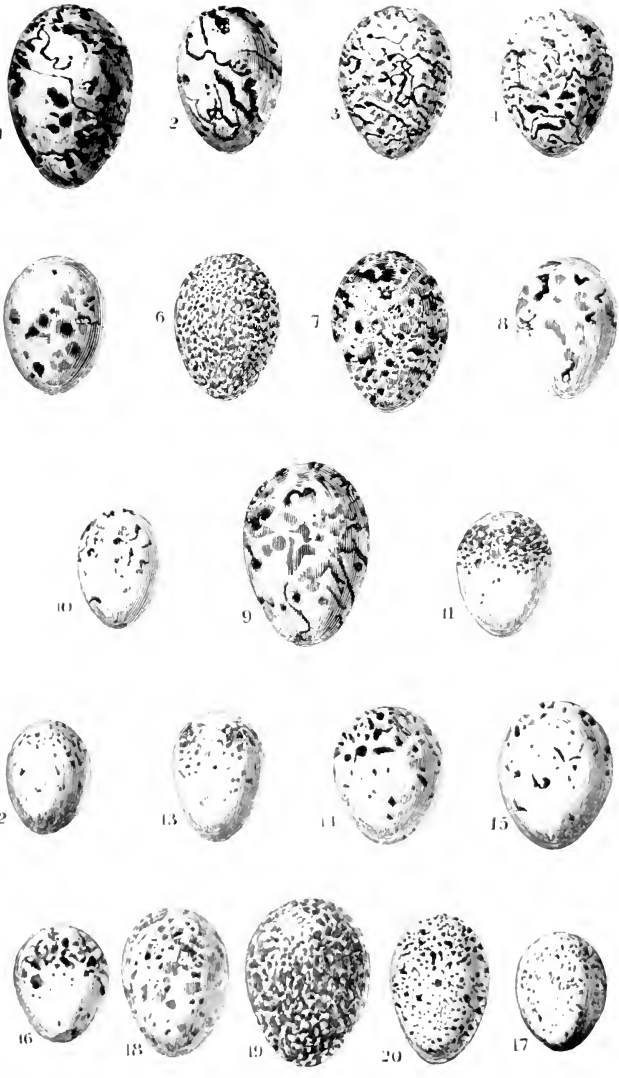

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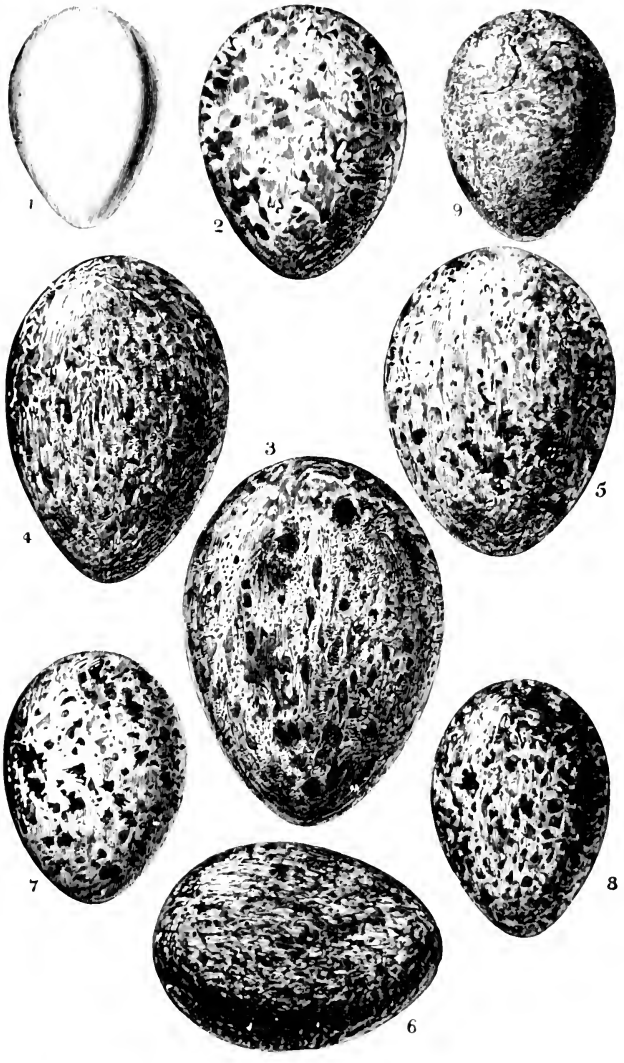

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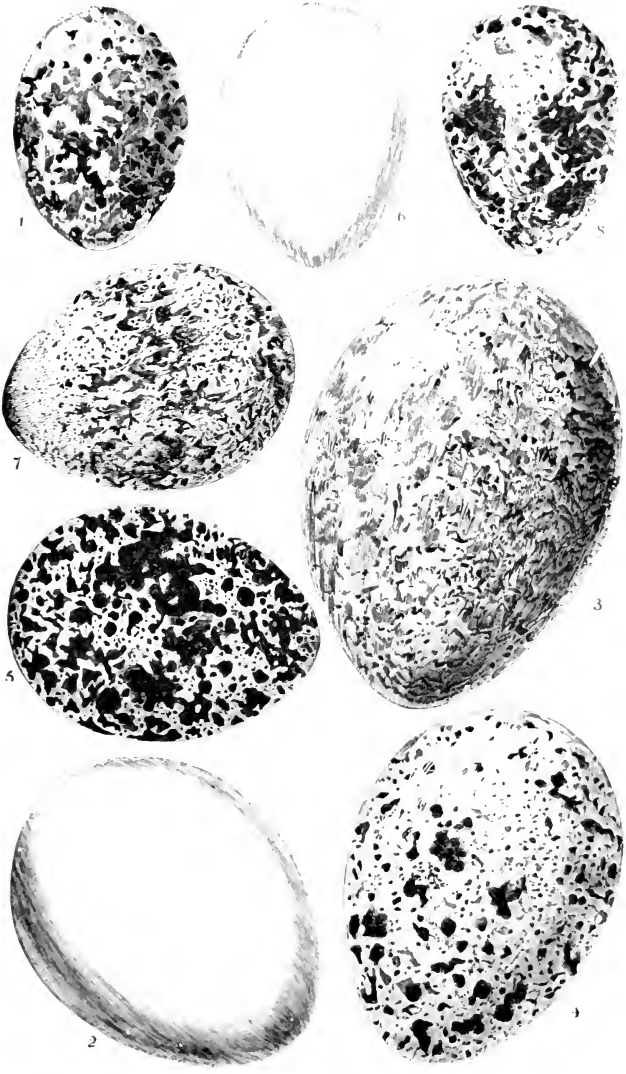

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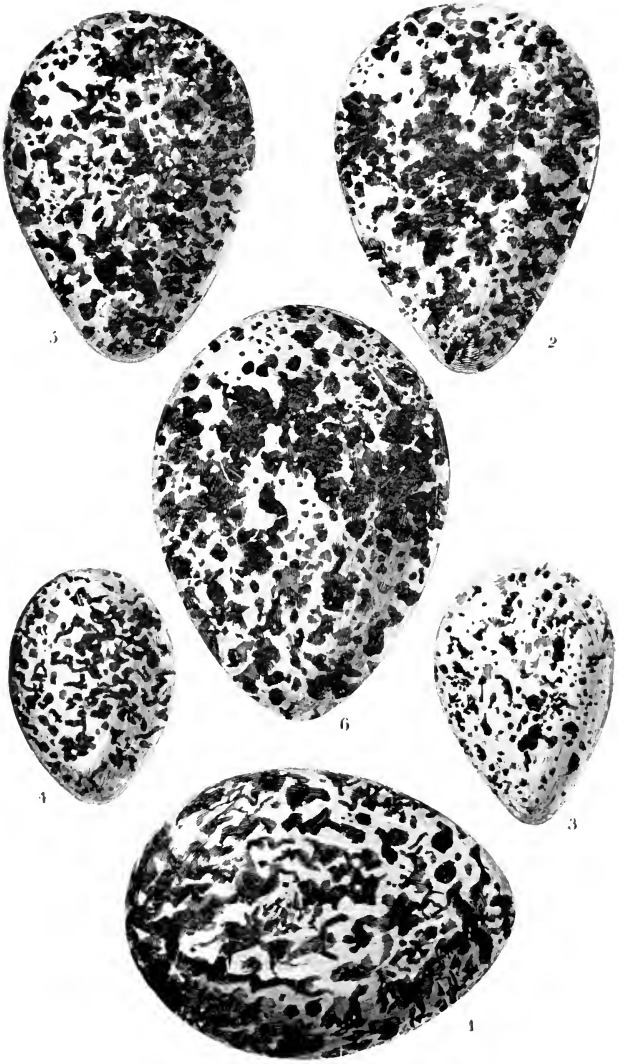

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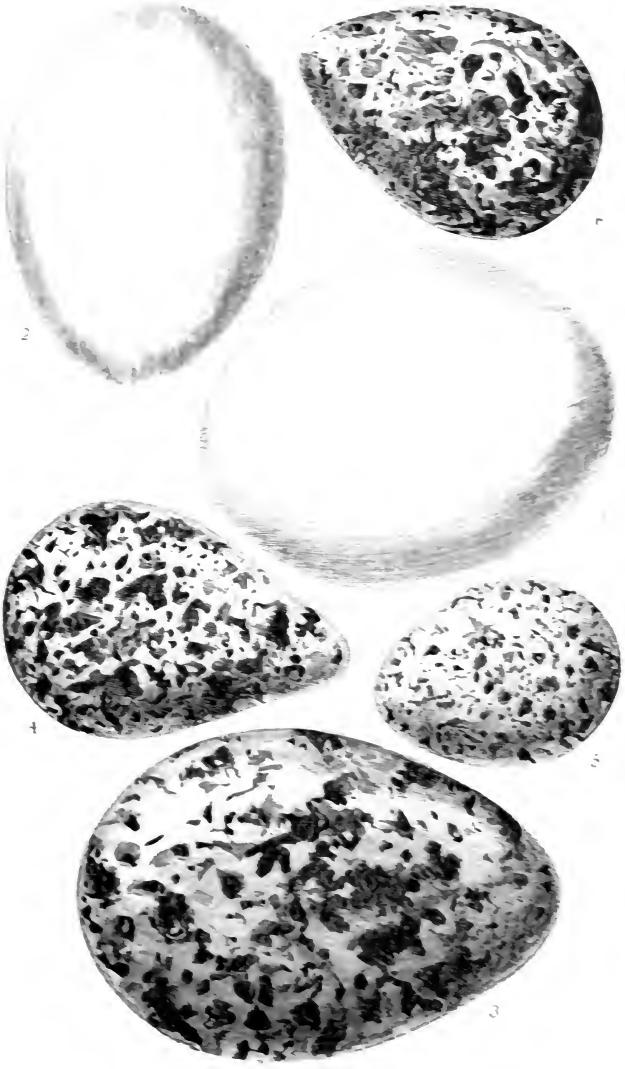
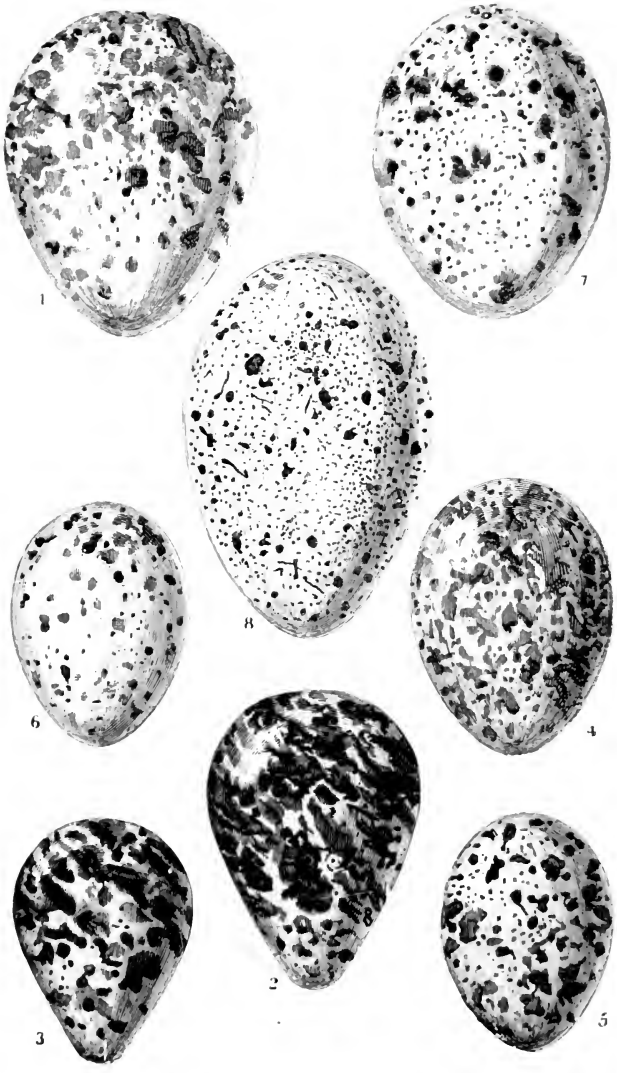
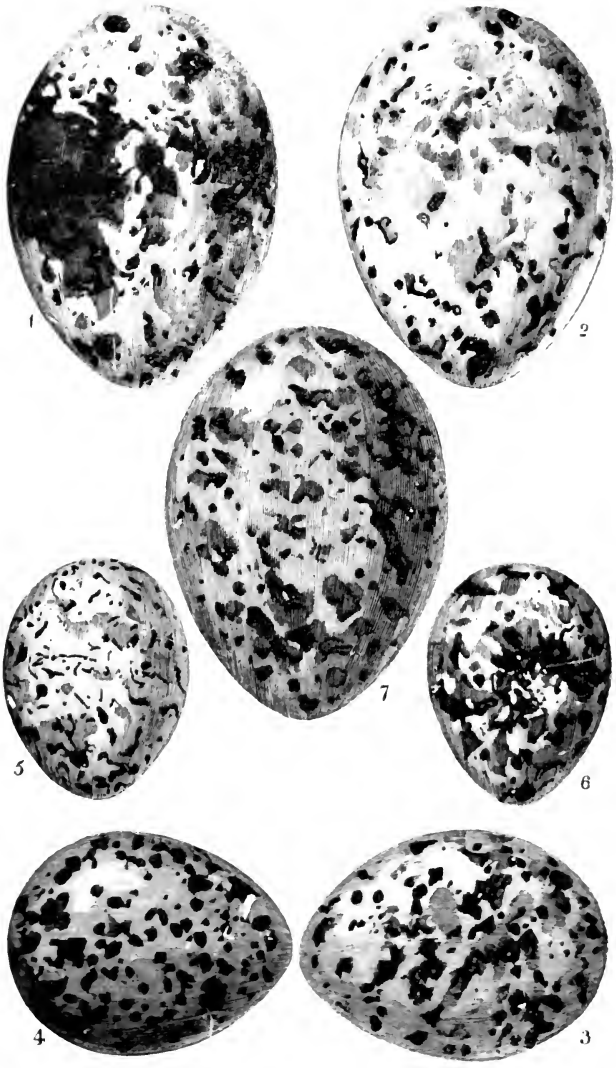


1. Heron. 2. Bittern. 3. Curlew. 4. Oystercatcher. 5. Common Sandpiper. 6. Ruff.

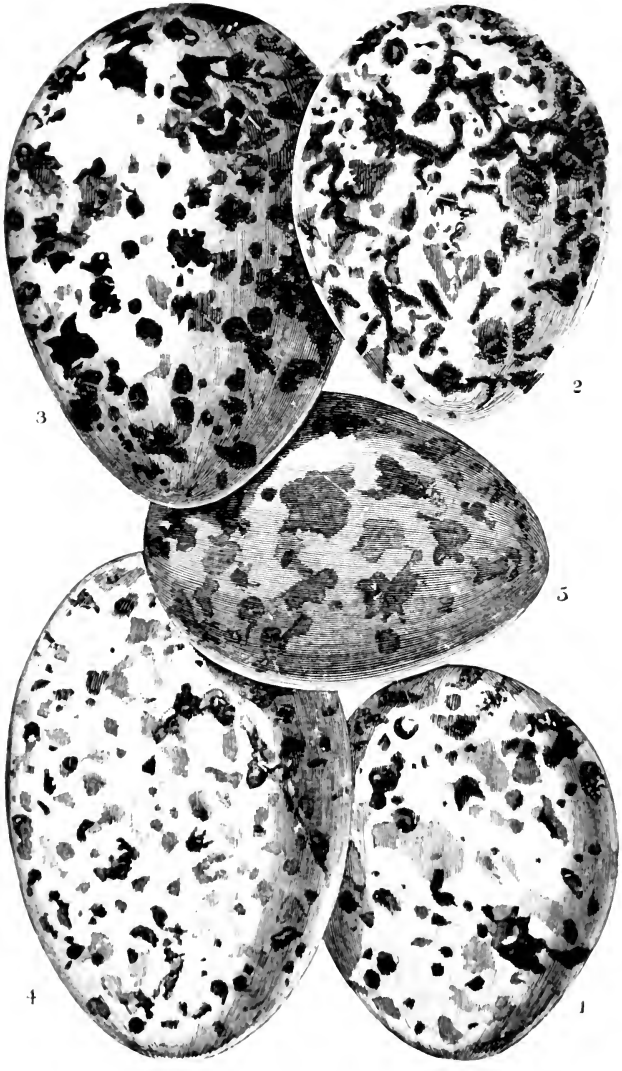


1. Woodcock. 2. Common Snipe. 3. Dunlin. 4. Land Rail. 5. Spotted Crake.
6. Water-Rail. 7. Moorhen. 8. Coot.

1, 2. Common Guillemot. 3. Black Guillemot. 4. Razorbill.



1, 2. Sandwich Tern. 3. Common Tern. 4. Arctic Tern. 5. Lesser Tern. 6. Black Tern.
7. Black-headed Gull.



1. Kittiwake. 2. Common Gull. 3. Lesser Black backed Gull. 4. Herring Gull.
5. Richardson's Skua.