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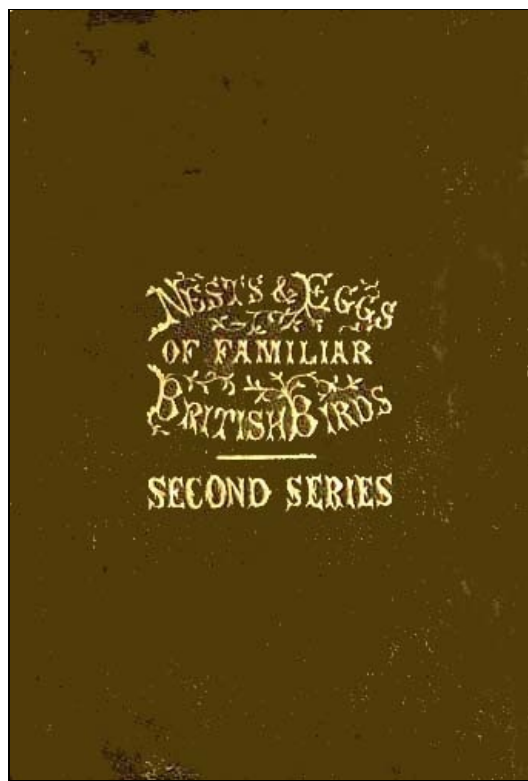
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NESTS AND EGGS  
OF  
FAMILIAR BRITISH BIRDS,  
DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED;  
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
HAUNTS AND HABITS OF THE FEATHERED ARCHITECTS,  
AND THEIR TIMES AND MODES OF BUILDING;  
SECOND SERIES.

BY H. G. ADAMS.

*Author of "Favorite Song Birds," "Beautiful Butterflies," "Humming Birds," &c., &c.*

WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES OF EGGS,  
CONTAINING THIRTY-EIGHT DIFFERENT SPECIES.

LONDON:  
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
M DCCC LVII.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### WHAT IS AN EGG?

It may at first strike our young readers that this is a question very easily answered; if they think so, let them try what sort of an answer they can give to it, and if they break down in the definition, we will endeavour to help them, as we are told in the old fable, Jupiter did the waggoner; but it is best for young people to *try*, and, for that matter, old people too; let them never believe that they *can't* do a thing—"where there's a will there's a way." Many a boy that will take a deal of pains, and incur no inconsiderable risk of life and limb, to climb up a tree after a bird's nest, finds it too much trouble to read and learn about the habits of the creature he is thus ready to deprive of its warm comfortable home and beautiful eggs. He cannot tell you, if you ask him, of what the nest is composed, nor how, nor when it was built, much less can he answer the question which we have just put to our readers,—

### WHAT IS AN EGG?

"Well," we hear some one say, "an Egg is a thing of an oval shape, large or small, white or coloured and speckled, as the case may be; it has a shell which breaks if you knock it, because it is brittle; and inside is a yellow substance called the yolk, surrounded by a white, clear liquid; if you boil it for a little time it becomes *set*, so that you can take it up in a spoon, and in this state it is good to eat. Oh! very good, I like an egg, especially for breakfast, with a little salt; and then eggs, and other things with them, make custards, and pancakes, and puddings, and all sorts of nice things; and then I recollect some such funny '*Stanzas to an Egg by a Spoon*,' which begin,

'Pledge of a feathered pair's affection,  
Kidnapped in thy downy nest,  
Soon for my breakfast—sad reflection!  
Must thou in yon pot be drest.'

Well, never mind the rest. Now listen to our definition of an Egg. The word itself, we may observe first of all, is of Saxon origin; that this is how the ancient dwellers on our island used to write it æz, you may call it *aeg* or *oeg*, which you like. Johnson says the term means, "That which is laid by feathered and some other animals, from which their young is produced;" it is also, we are told by the same authority, "the spawn or sperm of other creatures," as fish, which are said, you know, not to lay eggs, but to *spawn*. Another dictionary-maker defines it to be "the *ovum* of birds," giving us here the Latin for egg, hence that peculiar shape is called *oval*, and the science of eggs is sometimes termed

### OVOLOGY.

As we have told you in the first volume of this series, *Oology* is another term for this science, which has occupied the attention of many learned men, who have gone deeper into Eggs than ever you or I shall, and told us such strange things about them, as would scarcely be believed by the very hens that laid them. Little does the happy mother think, when she goes cackling about the yard, proclaiming the event, that she has produced such a wonderful object. It looks a simple affair enough, one might make a thing very like it with a piece of chalk; touch it, roll it about; boil it, eat it, or crack it, and let the inside flow out; there's the yellow, and there's the white; there's nothing very particular in that, all eggs are so. Well, who made them so? and of what *are* they made? and what reason is there for this peculiar arrangement of the different parts of an Egg? and how is it that, under certain circumstances, so complete a change should take place in the nature of its contents—that the fluids should be gradually absorbed into a solid body, and that, by and by, at the end of a period which can be calculated to a nicety, the shell should be burst open, and there should come forth a living creature? Truly this *is* wonderful; but we are surrounded by wonders, and only heed them not because they are so common.

*Common* is the vital air,  
*Common* is the azure sky,  
*Common* flowers are everywhere,  
*Common* stars shine out on high:  
Music of the forest bird,  
Cometh without stint or measure,  
Friendly smile and loving word,  
*Common* are as joy and pleasure;  
Why from *common* things then turn,  
And for the *uncommon* yearn?

But about this common thing, an Egg? It is the germ or seed, so to speak, of animal life; in it is contained all that is necessary for the formation of the perfect living creature; in that little oval case lie snugly packed up, bones, and muscles, and sinews, and all the delicate parts, organs, as they would be called, from a Greek word signifying an instrument, thus the tongue is an organ of speech, the eye of sight, and so on. But all these organs are in an *undeveloped* state, as the flower is in the bud; *develope* is a French word, and signifies to unroll, or unfold. The animal is there in *embryo*; this again is Greek, and means a thing unperfected, or unfinished, so the poet Thompson says:—

"While the promised fruit  
Lies yet a little *embryo* unperceived,  
Within its crimson folds."

And so with closer reference to our subject, we might say,

While the promised bird  
Lies yet a little *embryo* unperceived,  
Within its oval shell.

Dr. Harvey, who made that great discovery, the circulation of the blood, uttered a truth when he said *omne animal ex ovo*, every animal is born of an egg, for although some animals are *oviparous*, and others *viviparous*,—the two words come from *ovum* egg, *vivum* life, and *pario* to bring forth—yet may the first stage of all animal life be compared to an Egg. From the smallest insect up to the most huge and unwieldy creature that swims in the deep sea, or walks upon the land. All were at one time alike, mere specks, surrounded by fluid matter, which afforded the material for growth and nourishment, and enclosed in some kind of a case, which if not exactly like an egg shell, answers the same purpose of protection from injury.

What a vast difference is there between the bright-winged insect, whose history we traced in our volume on Butterflies, and the bird with downy plumage and the voice of melody; between that again and the great crocodile, in his scaly coat of mail; the mighty boa constrictor, king of serpents; or that tyrant of the deep, the fierce voracious shark; and yet all these come from Eggs, very similar in form, and precisely so in their nature and internal construction. Look too at the difference in size, between the egg of the Humming Bird, no bigger than a pea, and that of the Ostrich, as large as a man's head nearly, or bigger still that of the Epyornis, of which fossil remains have been found in Madagascar, the contents of which must have been equal to six ostrichs', or one hundred and forty-eight common hens' eggs, that is about seventeen English pints; and yet in all these the germ, or as it would be called, the vital principle, that is, the principle of life, is but a tiny speck, or circle, which is attached to the membrane that surrounds the yellow portion, or yolk; it is from this that the animal in embryo derives nourishment, and the size of it, and consequently of the whole egg, is in proportion to the quantity that is required to sustain life, until the protection of the shell is no longer necessary. There is only so much food stored up as the bird, or reptile, or whatever it may be, requires before it is strong enough to make an opening in its prison, and come forth to provide for itself, or be fed by the parent. Some creatures that eventually attain a large size are born, or *hatched*, as it is termed, comparatively small; thus the size of the egg is not always in proportion to that of the animal which lays it; the crocodile's egg, for instance, is but little larger than that of the common fowl; the young comes forth like a small lizard, about two or three inches long, takes to the water at once, and begins to catch insects on its own account; its mother may be twenty or thirty feet in length. Most creatures that produce eggs small in proportion to their size lay a great many; this is especially the case with fish, whose *spawn* must be numbered by millions: it has been calculated that if the young of a single pair of herrings were suffered to breed undisturbed, they would in twenty years together make up a bulk six times the size of the earth; but so many creatures feed upon this spawn, that few of the eggs of which it is composed ever come to young fish, that is comparatively few, for the vast shoals which every year visit our shores, for the purpose of depositing their spawn in shallow water, shew that immense numbers must escape the dangers to which they are exposed. There are some fish of the fierce and rapacious kind, such as the Ray, the Dog-fish, and the Shark, which attain a considerable size before they lose the protection of the egg-shell, which is of a very peculiar shape and construction, being of a leathery texture, flat, and four-cornered, with a long curling string-like projection from each corner; frequenters of the coast, to whom they are very familiar objects, being often cast up on the beach, call them Mermaid's purses, and Fairy-purses, while the clustered Eggs of the Cuttle-fish they term Sea Grapes.

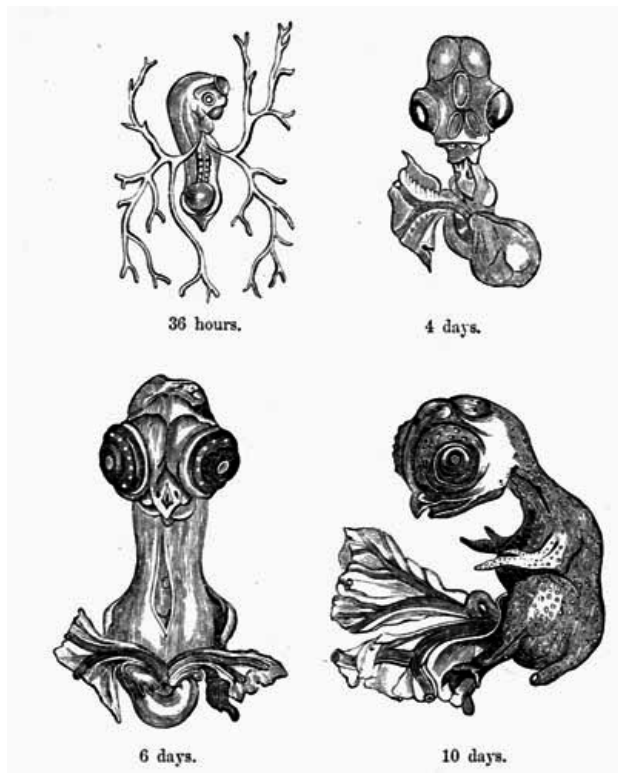
All eggs require warmth to hatch them; the fishes know this, not as we know it, because we have read, or been told so, and can *reason* upon causes and consequences, and so understand *why*, but they know it *instinctively*; they possess, in common with all unreasoning creatures, what we call *instinct*, that is, a natural impulse to do in the right way, and at the proper time, whatever may be necessary for the maintenance of that state of existence in which God has placed them; so instinct directs the fishes when the time for spawning has arrived, to leave the deep waters, where they generally remain safe from the pursuit of man, for the shores, where the warmth of the sun can reach the eggs, and awaken the principle of life within them. So instinct teaches the

bird to leave its winter home, in some far southern country, and fly hundreds of miles across land and ocean, to reach a spot suitable for the purpose of breeding and rearing its young; to collect the materials and to build its nest, and after the eggs are laid, to sit patiently on them the appointed time; to select the food proper for those little gaping bills, and to tend the fledglings carefully, until they are able to fly and provide for themselves, and then, when their wings are strong enough for the journey, and their food begins to get scarce, away they go back to the south of Europe, or Africa, straight as an arrow, and the young ones, which have never flown that way before, seem to know it as well as those which have been backwards and forwards, often and often.

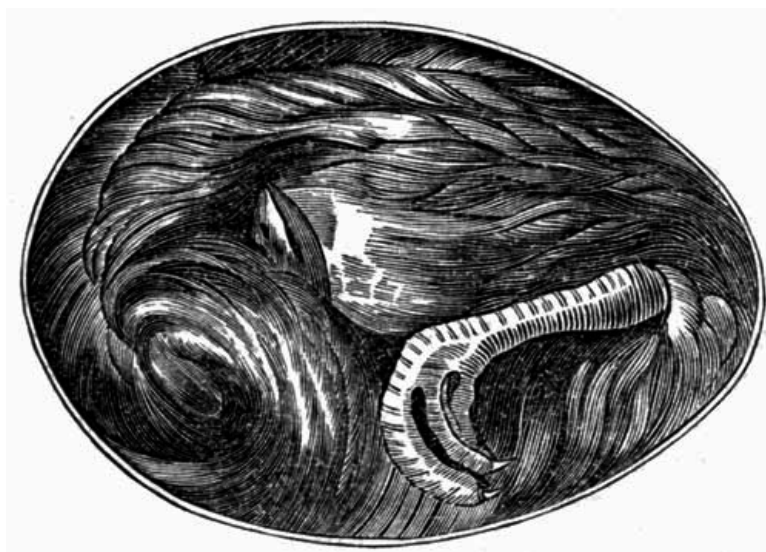
But the egg, what of that? Can we describe its nature and construction in a way sufficiently clear for our readers to understand? Let us try:—it is like a series of cases or envelopes, one within the other; the outer one only, which is the last formed, being hard and unelastic, that is, it will not stretch or change its shape. Like the shells of some fish, and other testaceous animals, it is composed of carbonate of lime, which the animal has the power of secreting, as it is called, from its food. Hens sometimes lay soft eggs, without a shell; this shews a deficiency of the secreting power, or a want of the necessary material, and may generally be remedied by mixing some chalk with the food, or scattering it about the yard. Next to the shell is a skin called the *membrana putaminis*, that means the membrane or skin of the shell; it has also a Greek name—*chorian*; it is divided into two layers, which separate at the larger end, and leave a space called the *vesicula aëris*, that is, air vesicle, or little bladder; this contains the air necessary for the chick to breathe before it chips the shell. Enclosed in this membrane is the *albumen*, or white fluid, sometimes called the *glair*, from the Latin *glarea*; in the same language *albus* means white; and our readers who live in Albion, so called from her chalky cliffs, ought to see at once from whence we derive the word *albumen*; the little chords by which this bag of fluid is suspended are called *chalaza*; this word comes from a Greek root, and has reference to the connection between the suspending chords and the germ, or spot, in which is the vital principle.

We now come to what may be called the provision bag, because it encloses the yolk, which serves as food for the animal in embryo; it is called *membrana vitelli*, or the skin of life. Thus our examination of the egg has brought to view the three great necessities of all existence—*protection*, the shell and albumen; *nutrition* or food, the yolk; and the *vital principle*, to understand the nature of which has puzzled the greatest philosophers that the world ever saw. It is said in the Scriptures that God breathed into man the breath of life, but what this may be we can none of us tell; it is given to us and we *live*, it is taken away from us and we *die*; and so do all God's creatures, which by Him, and Him alone, live, and move, and have their being. Man can do many wonderful things, but he has not yet been, nor will he ever be, able to make an egg, much less to produce a chick from it.

Let us now fancy that we are looking upon one of these strange little elongated globes, and that instead of being *opaque*, that is, dark—not clear, it is transparent, so that we can see into it, and observe the changes which are taking place there. The mother bird has been sitting on it for, say twelve hours, and the warmth of her body has called into action the principle of growth, or of vitality; the little spot and ring in the centre of the yolk have become somewhat enlarged and changed in form; they are no longer round, but the outline is irregular, shewing a tendency to shoot or spread out on all sides. Four hours later shews them yet more enlarged, and getting into an oval shape, with a distinct, though somewhat broken line down the centre. When the *incubation* has lasted thirty-six hours, (for meaning of this word, see the first series of "Nests and Eggs,") there is a still greater increase in the germ, and a spreading of its mottled margin over a portion of the yolk; if at this stage of growth we examine it through a magnifying glass, we shall see a little body like some curious kind of caterpillar, and veins shaped like stags' horns branching out of it in every direction. On the fourth day the chick is a more strange-looking object still, with great projecting eyes with rings round them, like spectacles, and what appears to be a very blunt sort of a snout or muzzle; the whole head, and there is not much else, reminds one of that of a serpent, it might be the Cobra di Capello, or the Spectacle Snake, seen through a diminishing glass. But we cannot give a proper description of it, so we have called in the aid of our artist, who has furnished us, on the next page, with portraits of the interesting creature at four different stages of its growth. In the last we get a side view, and begin to fancy we discover some resemblance to a baby-fowl, although a very hideous one.



All this time a great change has been going on in the whole interior of the egg; the chick has, of course greatly increased, and the red veins have become more numerous, and spread over the entire surface; the yolk is scarcely distinguishable from the other portions. Now, too, the bones of the chick have begun to form, and we clearly perceive the projection of the wings and the stump of the tail, while the pupil of the eye is quite clear and distinct. Larger and larger the creature grows, until it fills all the space, and has to be doubled up in a very curious manner, with the feet and the head brought together, and the bill close to the shell, ready to be used as the instrument of liberation. Many persons suppose that the parent bird chips the shell, but this is not so, it is done by the little creature within, which has first to make its way through a thick membrane, or skin; this it does on the twenty-first day of incubation; we are speaking now of the common fowl, the periods in different species of birds vary considerably, although the process of growth in all is the same. One wonders how, with its soft bill, the little creature can make its way through the tough skin, and hard, though brittle shell; but it must be remembered that the elastic skin is stretched to its greatest extent, and when in this state, a slight prick will make a large opening; and the shell, too, is no doubt, by the pressure from within, rendered less capable of resisting the stroke, slight though it be, of the bill of the prisoner, which does sometimes fail to make its escape, and dies in confinement, if not released by some friendly hand from without.



As if to assist in the work of opening a passage to the light and air, there is found on the tip of the chick's bill a small horny scale, having at the centre a hard and sharp projecting point, which, from the position of the head, is brought into direct and constant contact with the inner surface of the shell; this scale soon loosens and comes away after the chick is hatched, there is then no further use for it. The preceding figure represents the chick as it lies closely folded up on the twenty-first day, just previous to its deliverance from bondage.

We have now finished our account of this wonderful process, and may say in the words of a recent writer, "Dull indeed of soul must the man be, (or boy either,) in whom an egg does not

inspire emotions of awe and admiration, wonder and worship. The circle of life is from the adult (fully-grown animal,) to the egg. This is the vital round—the beginning and the ending—the ending and the beginning. The wheel goes round continually, life kindling sparks of life; and what is called death is the worn-out forms becoming cold and decaying away."

#### HOW TO PRESERVE EGGS FOR THE CABINET.

For this purpose eggs which are newly laid should always be chosen, as any decomposition of the contents will, probably, cause a discolouration of the shell. Make a hole at the smaller end, with an awl, or some other pointed instrument, and another at the larger end, which should be as small as possible, merely a pin hole will do; to this latter the mouth must be applied to blow out the contents. If the yolk does not come out readily, get a cup full of water, and immersing the sharp end into it, put your mouth to the blunt end, and suck up some of the water into the shell, then shake it about well, and blow it out again; repeat this operation two or three times, if necessary. If the shell has got soiled in any way, wash it well in strong lather, using a nail-brush if the stains do not come off readily, but great care must be taken in the handling of so brittle and fragile an article. Now as the membrane which lines the shell would be likely to decompose, and render it offensive, if not injure its beauty, it is best to wash the inside with a solution of the bichloride of mercury, commonly called corrosive sublimate, in spirits of wine; this solution should be prepared by a chemist, and used with great caution, as it is extremely poisonous. Pour it into a wineglass, and holding the egg firmly, yet tenderly, with the finger and thumb, which should not touch the liquid, put the smaller end therein; then apply the mouth, as previously directed, to the larger end, and suck up gently; cease doing so as soon as you are aware, by a cold sensation in the finger and thumb, that the liquid has entered the shell, which then take up by the two ends, so as to stop the orifice, and shake it well, then blow the solution back into the glass, taking care to wash the lips or the fingers if it comes in contact with either of them. The Oological specimen will soon dry, and is now ready for the cabinet. To render it more glossy and brilliant, it may have a coat of mastic varnish, put on thinly with a camel-hair brush, or, if the egg be of a blue or green tint, as many are, a solution of very pure white gum arabic is best, as the varnish is apt to injure those delicate colours.

As to the formation of the cabinet, and arrangement of the eggs therein, directions are scarcely necessary; this must depend very much upon the means and conveniences, as well as the taste of the collector. Shallow drawers with divisions sufficiently broad for the names of the specimens to be written or pasted along the tops, are perhaps best. Small pill-boxes, which may have the names on the lids, are not bad receptacles, and the cost of a few dozens of these is not much; but above all things let the arrangements be carried out with neatness and order; do not let the specimens be huddled together, but classified, and placed so that the hand may be laid upon any one which may be required. Duplicates for exchanging with other collectors, or replacing any which may be broken, may be put carefully in a drawer by themselves, their presence with the others will only cause unnecessary confusion and trouble.

Care should be taken not to name a specimen positively, if there is any doubt of its identity, it may be named with a query; and in the note-book, which every collector should keep, should be entered all the circumstances which weigh for or against the correctness of the designation given to it. This note-book ought to be a complete record of the time and place of acquisition of every specimen included in the collection, and of all that is curious or interesting connected with it. If nests as well as eggs are preserved, of course drawers with divisions are the very best receptacles; they occupy a great deal of space, and, except in some cases where the structure is peculiarly neat or curious, it is perhaps scarcely worth while to take and preserve them, especially as doing so often involves a cruel spoliation of the feathered architects, whose carefully chosen situations for building are well described by Dr. Bidlake, in his "Walks in a Forest."

"The cavern-loving Wren sequester'd seeks  
The verdant shelter of the hollow stump;  
And with congenial moss, harmless deceit,  
Constructs a safe abode. On topmost boughs  
The glossy Raven, and the hoarse-voiced Crow,  
Rock'd by the storm, erect their airy nests.  
The Ouzel, lone frequenter of the grove  
Of fragrant pines, in solemn depths of shade  
Finds rest, or 'mid the holly's shining leaves;  
A simple bush, the piping Thrush contents,  
Though in the woodland concert he aloft  
Trills from his spotted throat a powerful strain,  
And scorns the humble choir. The Lark too asks  
A lowly dwelling hid beneath the turf,  
A hollow trodden by the sinking hoof:  
Songster of heaven! who to the sun such lays



Pours forth as earth ne'er owns. Within the hedge  
The Sparrow lays her sky-blue eggs. The barn,  
With eaves o'er-pendent, holds the chattering tribe.  
Secret the Linnet seeks the tangled copse.  
The White Owls seek some ruin'd antique wall,  
Fearless of rapine; or in hollow trees,  
Which age has cavern'd, safely courts repose.  
The thievish Pie, in twofold colours clad,  
Roofs o'er her curious nest with firm wreath'd twigs,  
And side-long forms her cautious door; she dreads  
The talon'd Kite, or pouncing Hawk, savage  
Herself, with craft suspicion ever dwells."



## FACTS AND ANECDOTES OF NESTS AND EGGS.

### EASTER EGGS.

During the fifteen days after Easter, which constitute the Russian carnival, the people of that country supply themselves with eggs, variously coloured, which they send or give to one another as presents; and when they meet during this time they salute with the words, "Christ is risen;" to which the other having answered "He is certainly risen," they kiss one another. He that salutes first is obliged to present the other with an egg; no one, of whatever rank or sex, being allowed to refuse either the egg or the kiss. This custom prevails in many Catholic countries; the eggs, it appears, being considered as an emblem of the resurrection.

### EGGS USED AS COIN.

The want of any copper coin in Peru has given rise to a curious practice of which Lieutenant Maw was informed at Truxillo. A person coming to the market of that city, and not wishing to spend a real upon every article, purchases a real's worth of eggs, with which he or she proceeds to market; buying an egg's worth of vegetables from one, and so on from others, till all that was wanted has been obtained. The eggs are taken as current payment, and finally purchased themselves by those who require them for use.

### ILLUMINATED NESTS.

The birds that build hanging nests are at Cape Cormorin numerous. At night each of their little habitations is lighted up, as if to see company. The sagacious little bird fastens a bit of clay to the top of the nest, and then picks up a firefly, and sticks it on the clay to illuminate the dwelling, which consists of two rooms. Sometimes there are three or four fire-flies, and their blaze of light in the little cell dazzles the eyes of the bats, which often kill the young of these birds.—*Dr. Buchanan.*

### AN EGG WITHIN AN EGG.

A few years since, M. Seguin submitted to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, a hen's egg of extraordinary size, in which was a second egg. Its dimensions were eighty-eight millimetres by fifty-nine, or nearly three inches and a half by two and a quarter. More recently, in 1855, there appeared in an English scientific journal, an account of a similar oological curiosity, produced in Scotland, in the case of a turkey's egg.

### A BOY REPROVED BY A BIRD.

A correspondent of "The Youths' Instructor" relates the following anecdote, to which our young readers are earnestly requested to pay especial attention:—"When quite young, in my boyish days, I had watched some sparrows carrying materials to build their nests, (in the usual season,) under the eaves of a cottage adjoining our own; and although strict orders had been issued that none of us should climb up to the roofs of the houses, yet birds' eggs formed a temptation too powerful to be easily resisted, and self-gratification was considered rather than obedience. A favourable opportunity presenting itself, the roof of the house was ascended, and not only was the nest pillaged, but seized and carried away. It was soon stripped of all its unnecessary appendages, that it might appear as neat as possible. Amongst the *externals* thus removed, was a piece of paper, which had been a page of one of Dr. Watts's hymn-books; and which, thrown away, had been taken by the poor bird for the purpose of strengthening the nest, or increasing its warmth. A word or two caught my eye, and I unfolded the paper. Need I say that, boy as I was, I read these verses with, to say the least, *curious* feelings.

"Why should I deprive my neighbour  
Of his goods against his will?  
Hands were made for honest labour;  
Not to plunder nor to steal.

Guard my heart, O God of heaven,  
Lest I covet what's not mine;

Lest I take what is not given,  
Guard my hands and heart from sin."

## NESTS AND EGGS OF FAMILIAR BRITISH BIRDS.

### SECOND SERIES.

#### CROSSBILL.

#### EUROPEAN OR COMMON CROSSBILL. SHELL OR SHIELD-APPLE.

#### FIGURE 1.

Of those curious birds called Crossbills, from the peculiar construction of the bills, the points of which cross each other, there are three species known in this country, but two of them, namely, the Parrot and White-winged Crossbills, are very rare, only a few specimens having been taken here. The more common kind is a migratory bird, coming in large flocks at very irregular intervals, and visiting more especially those parts of the country where there are woods and plantations of fir and pine, of the seeds of which they are very fond, extracting them with great dexterity from between the scales of the cones; for this operation, the projecting points of the bill appear to be well adapted, as well as for picking out the apple-pips, as they are called, and kernels of other fruits; hence the name shell-apple given to the bird, which was a not uncommon visitor to the English orchards in former times; thus in a curious old record we are told that "In the yeere 1593 was a greate and exceeding yeere of apples; and there were greate plenty of strang birds, that shewed themselves at the tyme the apples were full rype, who fedd upon the kernells onely of those apples, and haveing a bill with one beake wrythinge over the other, which would presently bore a greate hole in the apple, and make way to the kernells; they were of the bignesse of a bullfinch, the henne right like the henne of the bullfinch in coulour; the cocke a very glorious bird, in a manner al redde or yellowe on the brest, backe, and head."

We would not advise our young readers to take the above as a lesson in spelling, although it is a very lively and faithful picture of the Crossbill, great flocks of which were English visitants in 1254, 1593, and 1791, when a bird-catcher in Bath caught one hundred pairs, which he sold for five shillings each; again in 1806, 1828 and 9, and 1835; ever since which time they have generally remained with us in greater or lesser numbers, having been probably induced to do so by the greater abundance of fir plantations. They are very lively birds, chattering and making a shrill noise while engaged in their favourite occupation of picking out seeds; they swing about on the branches of the trees often head downwards, and are very nimble and graceful in their movements, and so fearless of the approach of man, that they can frequently be taken with a hand-net, or knocked down with a stick.

That the Crossbill sometimes breeds in this country there cannot be a doubt, but it does this only as an exception to the general rule; the nest, which has been found at various seasons, has been described as of a loose texture, not unlike that of the Common Greenfinch, though not nearly so well nor so carefully built; the eggs also are not unlike those of that bird but larger. In Norway and Sweden, where the bird habitually breeds, the nest is built in the uppermost branches of the pines and firs; it is composed of grass, moss, and the finer portions of these trees; one has been found here on an apple tree, and another on a fir, and another, near Dartford, in Kent, on the lowest fork of a pine; this was composed of dry twigs, but no eggs were laid in it, the curiosity of frequent observers having driven the bird away.

Although we have placed this among our *familiar* British Birds, the eggs to English collectors are rare and difficult of attainment, and should be prized accordingly. The scientific name given to the species is *Loxia curvirostra*, both the terms having reference to the shape of the beak, the first coming from the Greek *loxos*, curved, and the latter from the Latin *curvus*, curved or bent, and *rostra*, the beak. By some naturalists *Europæa* is the generic term, and this so closely resembles the English name as to require no explanation.

#### STARLING.

#### COMMON STARLING, OR STARE.

#### FIGURE 2.

This handsome and well-known bird is sometimes called, when young, the Solitary Thrush. Its scientific name is *Sturnus vulgaris*, which is simply the Latin for the Common Starling. It may be met with in all parts of Britain, even in the Orkney and Shetland Isles, where it sometimes breeds in rocky caves, and fissures, and holes in the turf. More towards the south its nest is found in hollow trees, cavities in chalk-pits, sandy banks and old buildings; it is large and rudely fashioned of straw, roots, dry grass, and other vegetable fibres, with frequently a lining of hair and feathers; the eggs, from four to six in number, are of a delicate greenish blue colour, sometimes

altogether plain, but frequently spotted with black; they are of a longish oval shape.

"Nidification," as Mr. Morris tells us, in his beautiful work on British Birds, "commences about the beginning or middle of April." This word, my readers should remember, comes from the Latin *nidus*, a nest.

Incubation lasts about sixteen days; *incubatio*, as we have already explained in the first series of "Nests and Eggs," is the Latin for to lie or sit upon. These are words we shall often have to use, and therefore we think it well to explain their meaning here, lest they should have escaped the memory of some who take this volume in hand.

The Starling is gregarious and insectivorous, that is, it goes in flocks and feeds on insects; chiefly on insects, we should say, but not altogether, for it likes also worms, snails, grain, fruit, and seeds of various kinds, so that it may be almost called omnivorous, eating all things. A bold lively bird, something like the Magpie in its habits, given to picking and stealing when it can get a chance; it is, nevertheless, a general favourite, on account of its beauty and teachability, if we may use such a word. It has naturally a low musical note, which is uttered by both male and female, although least by the latter, and may be taught to articulate many words, so that it is often kept in confinement, where, like the poor bird in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," we may fancy we hear it exclaiming in piteous tones, "I can't get out!"

#### CHOUGH.

CORNISH CHOUGH. RED-LEGGED, MARKET-JEW, OR HERMIT-CROW. RED-LEGGED JACKDAW. GESNER'S WOOD-CROW. CORNISH, CHAUK, OR CLIFF-DAW. CORNWALL KAE, OR KILLEGREW.

#### FIGURE 3.

Plenty of names here for one bird. Oh, stay, here's another—Long-billed Chough; not to count the scientific names, the most common of which is *Corvus graculus*, that is a Chough Crow, or a Crow Chough, whichever may be preferred. Some naturalists use a longer specific name, and say *Pyrhacorax*, which comes from the Greek *pyrrhos*, red, and *Corax*, a Crow. A fine handsome fellow is this, with his sable plumes, over which shimmers a steely blue reflection; his bright eye, and long red bill, and legs of the same colour; the very handsomest of the Crow family, and with us the rarest, although, from all that we can read and learn, it was formerly by no means uncommon, especially in Cornwall, as its name imports. It now occasionally occurs in small flocks in various parts of Great Britain, generally near the coast, where it builds amid the cliffs a rude nest of sticks lined with wool and hair; the eggs are generally five in number, of a dull white colour, spotted with grey and light brown, most thickly at the larger end. Sometimes the nest is found in old church or other towers, especially such as are in a ruinous condition.

The Chough feeds chiefly on grasshoppers, beetles, and other insects, in search of which, says Mr. Morris, it will follow the plough like the Rooks; it will also eat the smaller kinds of crustacea, or shell-fish, and grain and berries. Now and then it indulges, like the Common Crow, in a feast of carrion. It has a shrill note something like that of the Jackdaw; it also chatters, and steals, and talks, as well as a Starling, in short is a most accomplished feathered performer. One of its favourite haunts is, or used to be, Shakspeare's cliff at Dover, and our great poet describing that grand and sublime scene, alludes to the bird.—

Here's the place:—stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air,  
Show scarce so large as beetles."

#### RAVEN.

CORBIE. CORBIE CROW. GREAT CORBIE CROW.

#### FIGURE 4.

Scientific name, *Corvus corax*, the first being the Latin, and the second Greek, for a Crow. This is the largest, as it is also one of the best known of the Crow tribe or family. It is found in nearly all parts of the world—in the coldest as well as the hottest climates—amid the wild mountainous regions of everlasting snow, in the depths of the gloomiest forests, and on the wide prairies and sandy plains, its hoarse cry may be heard; as well as on the lonely island, whose shores are lashed by the foaming waves of the mighty ocean, and seldom or ever visited by the prow of the merchant or other vessel.

A bold familiar bird is the Raven, with jet black plumes, and a large powerful bill, fitted for tearing to pieces the flesh of animals on which it often feeds; and a deep hollow voice, that grates harshly upon the ear; and strong feet armed with sharp talons; and wings that spread out to a great extent, and with regular and well-timed beats, *flap, flap, flap*, winnow the air, and support the bird in its long flight over land and sea; while the broad tail, now elevated and now

depressed, now turned this way and now that, gives to the heavy body the desired direction. "Croak!" one hears the sound, and scarcely knows whether it comes from the air above or the earth beneath; but presently the sunshine is obscured by a black shadow, and swoop! down comes the bird of ill omen, as people have generally agreed to consider it, down upon the sick sheep, or any other weak and defenceless creature, that may be within the compass of its keen sight, and commences picking out the eyes of the animal, reminding us of the punishment threatened by the Lord against disobedient children, as mentioned in Proverbs, and paraphrased in Dr. Watts' familiar lines:—

"Have you not heard what dreadful plagues  
Are threatened by the Lord,  
To him that breaks his father's law,  
Or mocks his mother's word.  
What heavy guilt upon him lies,  
How cursed is his name,  
The Ravens shall pick out his eyes,  
And Eagles eat the same."

Then again, as we see the strong-winged bird sweep far away over the wide sea, we think of the time when the waters covered the face of the whole earth, and "Noah sent forth a Raven, which went to and fro until the waters were dried up." Or, if in some scene of wild sublimity, some valley hemmed in by lofty mountains, through which a stream goes winding silently, we are startled by that black shadow and harsh grating note, we fancy ourselves by the brook Chereth, where the Ravens brought bread and flesh, morning and evening, to the prophet Elisha, being commanded to do so by God, who, as we are told in Job, "provideth for the Raven his food;" and in Psalms, "heareth the young Ravens which cry."

In nearly all parts of Great Britain these birds are found, they were formerly more abundant than they are at present, gamekeepers and others having long waged war against them, on account of their real or supposed propensity to destroy the young hares, partridges, pheasants, etc.

In the northern and western parts of Scotland, and in some of the Scottish Isles they are numerous. They make large nests composed of sticks, cemented together with mud, and lined with roots, wool, fur, and such other soft materials as come most readily to hand, or we should rather say, to beak and claw; they are said sometimes to rob the sheep's backs. Their building-places are cliffs and precipices, church towers, caves and rocky fissures, and the clefts between the forked branches of tall trees. The eggs are from four to six in number, of a pale olive green, more or less blotched and spotted with greenish brown and grey. They are early builders, sometimes commencing in January; the eggs, says Mr. Morris, have been taken in the middle of February. Incubation lasts twenty days; both male and female sit on the eggs, in defence of which and their young, they will fight desperately, driving off the hawks, and even eagles and vultures.

The Raven is known to live to a great age, often when in a domesticated state, seeing out two or three generations of a family; it is one of those birds which possess the power of imitating the human voice, and many anecdotes are told of its proficiency in this respect. It is a very sagacious bird, indeed so cunning that it has been thought by ignorant persons, to know more than it ought, and to be in league with witches and other "uncanny" people. Constantly do we find its cry alluded to by both ancient and modern poets, as ominous of death.

"The Raven is a dreaded bird,  
The stoutest quail when his voice is heard,  
For when, 'tis said, his dismal cry  
Rends thrice the tranquil azure sky,  
'Tis the token,  
Surely spoken,  
That ravenous death is hovering nigh."

#### CARRION CROW.

GOR. GORE, OR FLESH CROW. BLACK NEB. HOODY BRAN.

#### FIGURE 5.

Everybody knows the Common Crow that goes *caw-cawing* over the fields through the long summer day, and hunts in the freshly-turned furrows for grubs and wire-worms, and settles down upon the marshes where the white flocks are feeding, dotting them here and there with great black spots, as though some literary giant had taken too much ink in his pen, and scattered it out over the landscape before he began to write. Oh yes, everybody knows the familiar Crow, called by scientific people *Corvus corone*, Latin and Greek again for the same thing—a Crow! Black and all black is he, a kind of Raven in miniature, closely resembling that bird in his habits as well as appearance. A foul feeder, delighting in putrid carcasses, and all kinds of meat that is not merely a "little touched," but "very far gone" indeed. The shepherd does not like him, neither does the gamekeeper, neither does the farmer, although we are inclined to think that the dislike of the

latter is owing to an unfounded prejudice; true it is that our friend *Corvus* does sometimes eat grain, but he prefers animal food, and oftener feeds on worms and other grain-destroyers. If you wish to find his nest, you must climb into the tall elm tree, or far up the face of the chalky cliff; it is made of sticks, cemented together with clay, and lined with roots, straw, wool, moss, or any soft substance which can be had. If in a tree, it is usually placed among the topmost branches, or else on a bough near to the trunk, so as to be well sheltered and hidden from view. The eggs, from four to six in number, are of a pale bluish green or grey, speckled, some very thickly, with light brown and deep grey.

The Crows, like the Ravens, pair for life; the work of building is shared by both birds, and generally commences about the end of February, or beginning of March. There is a variety of this species which is almost wholly white, and this is the case also with the Raven. Harrison Ainsworth has written a spirited song on the Carrion Crow, of which this is the first verse:—

"The Carrion Crow is a sexton bold,  
He raketh the dead from out the mould;  
He delveth the ground like a miser old  
Stealthily hiding his store of gold.  
    *Caw! Caw!*  
The Carrion Crow hath a coat of black,  
Silky and sleek, like a priest's, on his back;  
Like a lawyer he grubbeth, no matter what way,  
The fouler the offal the richer the prey.  
    *Caw! Caw! the Carrion Crow!*  
    *Dig! Dig! in the ground below!"*

#### HOODED CROW.

ROYSTON. GREY, GREY-BACKED, DUN, BUNTING, HEEDY, OR SCARE-CROW. HOODY.

FIGURE 6.

The Hooded Crow, so called, most probably, on account of the distinct black covering of the head and neck, is not a very common bird in England generally, although it may often be found in certain localities, and at certain seasons, for it is partly migratory, frequenting the southern parts of the island only in winter, usually from October to April. In the north of Scotland, and the Hebrides and other islands, they are always to be found, and in great numbers. In its habits the Hooded Crow resembles the common kind, except that it is more of a coast bird, seldom being found far from the sea-shore, or the banks of estuaries, or tidal rivers.

Its nest is generally placed on tall trees, or the clefts and chasms of rocks and hill sides. Mr. Morris describes it as composed of sticks, roots, stalks, or heather, lined with wool and hair. The eggs are from four to six in number, of a green tint, mottled over with greenish brown; some have been found of a yellowish tinge, or with dashes and streaks of yellow, others of a uniform dull dark green, with but few spots or variations of any kind.

It is the opinion of some naturalists, that the Hooded and Carrion Crows are but varieties of one species, and certain it is that they do sometimes breed together, but there appears to be sufficient distinctive marks and characteristics to warrant the specific difference assumed for them by most of the leading ornithologists.

Frequenting as it does the sea-shore, the Hooded Crow, which may be known by its distinctly marked plumage of dull grey, extending all over the back, breast, and belly, feeds much on shell-fish, which it bears up to a great height, and then lets fall on a large stone or piece of rock, so as to break the shell. We have here an instance of something very like reasoning power, in what we must call an unreasoning creature, nor are such instances at all unfrequent in natural history.

#### ROOK.

BARE-FACED CROW. YDFRUN, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 7.

Naturalists term this bird *Corvus frugilegus*. With the meaning of the first, or generic name, our readers are already well acquainted; the specific name comes from the Latin *fruges*—fruits, and *lego*—to collect or gather, and from this we learn that it is a *frugiverous* or fruit-eating bird; it is not, however, altogether so, for it feeds much on insects, worms, slugs, and such small animals, in search of which it digs or delves with its large and strong beak, all around the base of which is bare of feathers, hence the name Bare-faced Crow, by which the bird is known in some localities. It is a matter of dispute whether or not this bareness is caused by the constant use of the bill as a digging instrument; we are inclined to think not, for several reasons, which need not here be stated; but, that the bare whitish skin which surrounds the beak, and which offers such a strong contrast to the rest of the purplish black plumage, is a natural distinction.

Rooks are said to be more abundant in England than in any other part of the world, although they are found in most temperate regions of Europe and Asia; they do not, like many of the Corvine, or Crow family, increase toward the north, but on the contrary, decrease in that direction: in the Scottish islands they are not to be met with. They are strictly gregarious birds, immense numbers of them building and rearing their young together. Almost every English Village, or Hall, or old Manor House, has, or at one time had, its "Rookery," where, on the tops of the tall elms or other lofty trees, the sable birds delight to build their large loose nests of sticks, cemented together with clay, and lined with grass and root fibres. There do they hold their noisy councils, morning and evening, but especially at the latter time, before retiring to rest. One would think they had all the affairs of the nation to settle, so long and loud is the debate, or at least that there must be an immense deal of quarrelling about the right to this or that resting-place; and more fighting, too, than there ought to be, among a decent feathered community.

There is something pleasing about the *caw* of the Rook, whether heard in the dreamy quietude of nature, or, as it often is, amid the bustle of the busy town; it is a sociable bird, friendly to man and his belongings. It is an English bird—a *home* bird, and reminds us of domestic scenes and pleasures. We have had rookeries in the very hearts of cities; there was one in the Temple Gardens, in London, close by the stream of life which ever flows and reflows up and down the Strand and Fleet Street. Not many years since it was stated in the papers that, "in the small church-yard of St. Peters, Westcheap, situated in Wood Street, Cheapside, stands a solitary tree, in the lofty branches of which, two pairs of Rooks have built themselves nests, and are now busily engaged in rearing two broods, which have been recently hatched." But volumes might be written, as they have been, about Rooks and rookeries; Leigh Hunt, and Charles Lamb, and Washington Irving, and nearly all the English poets, might be called in to give their tribute of praise to this old familiar friend and companion of our life-journey.

The Rooks are frugal nest-builders; they make the same structure do year after year. Early in March they begin to repair their old habitations, which, during the winter, we may see far up amid the naked branches, like so many bundles of dry sticks; the young pairs, we suppose, build new ones, unless they should find a nest left vacant by the removal, by death or otherwise, of parents or other relatives, for all the community must be closely allied.

"Where, in venerable rows,  
Widely waving oaks enclose  
The moat of yonder antique hall,  
Swarm the Rooks with clamorous call;  
And, to the toils of nature true,  
Wreathe their capacious nests anew,"

says the poet Warton, describing the 1st. of April; and generally by the end of May, or beginning of June, the young Rooks are fledged. The eggs from which they have emerged do not differ greatly from those of the other members of the *Corvus* family just described. They are usually four or five in number, of a pale greenish ground colour, blotched and spotted with light brown and yellowish green; they, however, vary greatly, some being nearly white, others grey, and others olive brown, with markings more or less deep and distinct.

JACKDAW.  
DAW. KAE.  
FIGURE 8.

*Corvus monedula* is the scientific name of this species, the latter, or specific title, being derived, as Mr. Morris supposes, from *moneo*, to warn; the Daw, like most of the Crow tribe, having been formerly considered a creature of evil augury.

A pert bold fellow is the Jackdaw, restless, inquisitive, and loquacious; ever poking and prying into every hole and corner, and purloining whatever he can lay his claw or his bill on. He seems to delight in mischief, and to consider that to pick and steal is the great end and object of his existence. This is a sad character to give a bird, but we must tell the truth at all hazards, and confess that, notwithstanding the respectability of his appearance, with his suit of silky black, and grey poll, like the wig of a counsellor, he is a sad scamp.

Oh, what a long catalogue of crimes and offences connected with this black-coated offender, might we present, had we space and inclination to do so; but we have not, and indeed it is not necessary, for all the world knows the character of the subject of these remarks, as well as Thomas Hood, who says—

"The Daw's not reckoned a religious bird,  
Because it keeps a cawing from a steeple."

And this brings us to one of the favourite building places of Kae, as the Scotch people call it; ruined towers, and ivy-grown steeples, holes in cliffs and hollow trees, are generally chosen for



the heap of sticks loosely piled together, and having a depression in the centre, where, on a layer of wool, hair, grass, or other soft substance, the eggs are deposited; in number from four to six, of a pale bluish white, spotted with greyish brown; some of the spots being large and distinct, and much deeper than the others. The young birds are generally hatched by the end of May, or early in June, by the end of the second week in which month they are usually fit to be taken from the nest; they are easily reared by hand, and become very tame, learning to talk, and play all sorts of curious tricks.

The caw of the Daw is more high and shrill than that of most Crows; it is found in nearly all parts of Great Britain, and is common in Holland, Germany, France, Italy, and most countries of Europe. One remarkable circumstance connected with its nidification is the immense quantity of material which it collects; sometimes it builds in chimneys, and completely stops them up with the huge pile of sticks, which it there deposits. It is said that the fire which, some years since partly consumed the cathedral of York, was much fed and assisted by the Jackdaws' nests on the turrets. In Cambridge, where the Daws are numerous, building in the colleges and church towers, no less than eighteen dozen of deal laths, about nine inches long and one broad, which had been purloined from the botanic gardens, where they were put into the ground as labels for the plants, were found in the shaft of one chimney in which the birds had built. Many anecdotes are related of the ingenuity they manifest on getting their building materials into the desired position; often through narrow loopholes, and up winding staircases, they manage to convey long sticks and pieces of wood in a manner truly surprising; and the way in which they pile up the light fabric upon joists and cross-beams, and window-sills, and make it all firm and stable, is no less so. Sometimes the Daws choose less lofty situations for their nests; generally, as Bishop Mant tells us, they make

"In spire or looped and windowed tower  
Of hallowed fane their nestling bower.  
In caverned cliff beside the sea,  
Or hollow of the woodland tree;—"

But occasionally they descend, when nature

"Prompts them in the waste to roam  
And seek a subterranean home,  
The burrowing rabbit's haunt, and there  
Of sticks and matted wool prepare  
Their dwelling, and produce their race,  
In that unlikely dwelling-place."

MAGPIE.

PIET. PIANET. MAG. MADGE.

FIGURE 9.

*Pica caudata*, *Pica melanoleuca*, and *Corvus pica* are the several names given by naturalists to this bird; the first word is Latin, and means simply a pie; in the same language *caudus* signifies a tail, and a splendid tail our handsome Magpie possesses, long and broad, and like the beautiful pinions, all shot with green and purple reflections. *Melanoleuca* is compounded of two Greek words, meaning black and white, and no one can deny that this is very appropriate, although it is not so commonly used as the former name. The third title may be translated the Crow-Pie; indicating the particular genus and species of Mag the merry. No member of the Crow family puts on so resplendent a dress as this; beautifully do the snowy shoulders (scapulars naturalists would say) and belly, contrast with the rich velvety black of the back, breast, head, and neck. Rich is the sheen of emerald and amethyst which plays about the tail and wings, as the latter are spread out in the sunshine, and the former flirts up and down with a quick vibrating motion. And such a droll fellow, too, is Mag, every now and then you would think he were dancing, or imitating some fine lady or courtly beau; he steps or hops along in such an odd, fantastic manner. Yes, a droll fellow, but a sad thief; it is not safe to leave a gold chain, or a ring, or a silver spoon in his way; up into the old church steeple it is sure to go, if it is not buried in some out-of-the-way corner, all among the moss, and dead leaves, and decayed wood, which have accumulated there for centuries. We all remember the old story of the Maid and the Magpie; and how nearly the poor girl suffered death for the loss of the silver spoons stolen by the bird, who, however, was not so guilty after all, for he did not know that the loss of the glittering objects which attracted his attention, would be attended with such serious consequences. He had no sense of right and wrong to guide him as my readers have, and had never been taught the great commandments—"Thou shalt not covet!" and "Thou shalt not steal!"

The chattering Magpie is found chiefly in the cultivated and wooded parts of Britain and Ireland; it is an *omnivorous* feeder, that is, it eats almost anything—*omnes* in Latin, you know, means all. It is a shy watchful bird, and very difficult to catch; it has a fine broad tail, but we never heard that any one was able to put salt upon it. Such a quick eye the fellow has, and a way of twisting

himself about, so as to be looking every way at once; you would catch a weasel asleep sooner than you would Maggie. The nest is made with a hole in the side, from whence a sharp look-out can be kept. It is placed in some thick bush, or tall prickly hedge, generally at a considerable distance from the ground; it is of a longish oval shape, and made of sticks and thorns, cemented together with mud; on the lining of roots and grass lie the bluish white eggs, spotted over with grey and greenish brown; there may be six, seven, or even eight of them, although very rarely so many as the latter number. The breeding-time is quite early in the spring, and the same nest is resorted to by one pair of birds year after year.

It is thus that Bishop Mant describes the mode and place of building of what he calls the "Artful Pie."

"On turf-reared platform intermixt,  
With clay and cross-laid sticks betwixt,  
'Mid hawthorn, fir, or elm tree slung,  
Is piled for the expected young,  
A soft and neatly-woven home,  
Above of tangled thorns a dome,  
Forms a sharp fence the nest about,  
To keep all rash intruders out.  
So like a robber in his hold,  
Or some marauding baron bold,  
On coasted cliff in olden time,  
They sit unblenched in state sublime,  
And fortress intricately planned;  
As if they felt that they whose hand  
Is aimed at others, rightly deem  
The hand of others aimed at them.  
So there they dwell, man's dwellings nigh,  
But not in man's society;—  
Arabian-like: and little share  
His love, nor for his hatred care;  
Prompt of his rural stores a part  
To seize, and joyful of their art  
His efforts at revenge elude."

JAY.  
JAY PIE. JAY PIET.  
FIGURE 10.

In scientific language *Corvus glandarius*, or *Garrulus glandarius*; the specific name is from the Latin, and signifies of or belonging to acorns; the second generic name is also Latin, and means chattering or talkative, a leading characteristic of this bird, whose harsh cry is frequently heard amid the stillness of the solitary woods.

"Proud of cerulean stains  
From heaven's unsullied arch purloined,  
The Jay screams hoarse,"

says Gisborne, in his "Walks in a Forest," and all persons who are accustomed to woodland scenery, must have been startled, ever and anon, by the grating syllables *wrak, wrak*, shortly and sharply repeated by this bird, and have noticed the dull gleam of its blue wings, as it passed in a heavy scurrying manner from tree to tree, or shuffled away down the glade, as though it had committed some crime, and was fearful of being taken.

The Blue-winged Jay is a name commonly given to this certainly handsome bird, whose plumage of delicate brown, variegated with white and black, and set off with "cerulean stains," as Gisborne says, give it a striking and pleasing appearance, notwithstanding its general air of dullness and apprehension. It is true, we seldom have an opportunity of observing it closely, except in a state of confinement, where it is not likely to be very lively, for it is a bird of the wild woods, and likes not to be deprived of its free range, and brought into close companionship with man. Sometimes, however, if taken young and properly trained, it becomes a very amusing domestic pet, having a decided talent for mimicry, and being gentle and teachable.

The nest of the Jay is commonly built in a high coppice wood, or hedge, generally many feet from the ground, although it is seldom seen near the tops of tall trees, like those of the Magpie and Crow. Montagu says, "He who feels inclined to study the nidification of this bird, must search the lower branches of the oak, or inspect the woodbine mantling round the hazel."

Morris describes the nest as "of an open shape, formed of twigs and sticks, and well lined with small roots, grasses, and horse-hair. Some are much more cleverly constructed than others." And

certainly from the representation which he gives of one, we should take the Jay to be a much neater builder than any of its *congeners*, as birds of the same family or genus would be called.

The eggs are five or six in number, of a greenish or yellowish white, freckled all over with two shades of light brown.

Several variations from this common pattern have been found and described, some being lighter and some darker, and some having a greater degree of polish on them than others.

The Jay is an omnivorous feeder; but is said to have a great partiality for acorns; and also for the eggs and young of game-birds, hence he is shot without mercy by those interested in their preservation.

Let us see what Bishop Mant says of him.

"He who makes his native wood  
Resound his screaming, harsh and rude,  
Continuously the season through;  
Though scarce his painted wing you'll view  
With sable barred, and white and grey,  
And varied crest, the lonely Jay!"

#### GREEN WOODPECKER.

LARGE GREEN WOODPECKER. NICK-A-PECKER. ECLE. HIGH-HOE. HEW-HOLE. AWL, OR RAIN-BIRD, OR FOWL. POPINJAY. WHITTLE. YAFFLE. YAFFER. YAPPINGALL. WOODSPITE. WOODWALL, OR WELE.

FIGURE 11.

We have in England six species of Woodpeckers, namely, the Black, the Green, the Greater Spotted, the Lesser Spotted, the Hairy, and the Three-toed, but only the one above-named is at all common. It is a handsome bird, with green and brown plumage, prettily marked and barred with white; the bill is large and black, which colour extends over the sides of the head and part of the throat; there is a light-coloured rim round the eye, and a crest like a crimson cap, also a few feathers of the same rich colour set in the black patches of the throat. A truly handsome bird, rather awkward in appearance, on account of the shortness of the tail, and the large size of the feet, head, and bill. A shy, unsocial bird, too; not fond of exhibiting its beauties; for ever tapping the hollow beech, or other tree, in the depth of the solitary woods; often heard but seldom seen, and when it is, in all sorts of inelegant positions, creeping up or down the rugged bole, clinging to the broken bough, crouching close, and peeping and peering into every hole and crevice, in search of its favourite food—insects and their eggs, spiders, and grubs and caterpillars; and boring into the decayed bark with its hard wedge-shaped bill. The old poet Chaucer describes a very busy, inquisitive person as being

"As prate and prying as a Woodpecker,  
And ever inquiring upon everything."

And Gisborne gives us a true picture of this restless and curious bird:—

"With shrill and oft-repeated cry,  
Her angular course, alternate rise and fall,  
The Woodpecker prolongs; then to the trunk  
Close clinging, with unwearied beak assails  
The hollow bark; through every call the strokes  
Roll the dire echoes, that from wintry sleep  
Awake her insect prey; the alarmed tribes  
Start from each chink that bores the mouldering stem;  
Their scattered flight with lengthened tongue the foe  
Pursues; joy glistens in her verdant plumes,  
And brighter scarlet sparkles in her crest."

We have here perhaps a little bit of what is called poetic licence; true, it has been said that the Woodpecker taps on the tree to alarm the insects lurking within, and make them come out to see what is the matter, but it is most likely done to ascertain which are the parts most unsound and pervious to the bill. In the above lines is an allusion to the shrill cry of the bird; this, heard amid the stillness of the wood, is perfectly startling; like a peal of unearthly laughter, it bursts forth and rings around; it has been compared to the syllables *glu, glu, glu, gluck!* finishing off with a sharp *gk*, as though a laugh had tumbled down and broken its neck, turning into something like a cry before it expired. Only just as you are thinking it is really dead and done for, out it bursts again louder than ever, and you listen aghast to

"The ringing of the Whitwall's shrilly laughter,  
Which echo follows after,"

but is never able to overtake. And we are here reminded of the long array of names with which this noisy fellow is honoured; a different one for almost every locality, and having reference mostly to the cry of the bird, or its singular habits. The scientific name is *Picus viridis*; the first signifying a Woodpecker, and the last green.

"The Woodpecker," says Mudie, "is especially a bird of the ancient forests. You do not find it in the hedge or the coppice, where so many of the little birds, especially the summer migrants, build their nests, and spend their mid-days, when the reflections of the sun come bright on all sides of the foliage, in picking the soft caterpillars from the leaves, or capturing the insects that resort thither for the purpose of depositing fresh myriads; and when they have thus secured the shelter and beauty of their habitation, farewell the evening, and again hail the morning with their joyous songs. The aged tree is all to the Woodpecker, and he is much to the aged tree." Yes, for he eats the insects which are revelling in its decay, and of the fine dust thereof he makes his nest, if nest it can be called, which is merely a hole in the trunk, high up, perhaps twenty or thirty feet, lined with the small particles of rotten wood.

All the Woodpeckers lay white or nearly white eggs, and all, with whose habits we are acquainted, are early builders; the common green species, found in most of the southern parts of Britain, commences making a new, or repairing its old nest as early as February; the eggs are from four to eight in number. The young are hatched in June.

#### WRYNECK.

CUCKOO'S MATE, MAID, OR MESSENGER. RINDING, SNAKE, TURKEY, BARLEY, OR TONGUE BIRD.

EMMET-HUNTER. LONG-TONGUE.

#### FIGURE 12.

This bird, which appears to be a kind of connecting link between the Woodpeckers and Cuckoos, having some of the characteristics of both, is only a summer visitant of this country, generally arriving in April. Its scientific name is *Yunx torquilla*; the first is undoubtedly Greek, but its meaning is not very obvious; the second comes from *torqueo*—to turn or twist, and refers to a singular habit which the bird has of twisting its neck with a kind of slow undulating motion, like that of a snake; hence also the common English name Wryneck, and one or two others given above. The Welsh consider this the forerunner of the Cuckoo, and call it *gwas y gog*, or the Cuckoo's attendant. In the northern counties of England the common people call it Cuckoo's Maiden; it generally comes to us a few days in advance of that bird, as though it were deputed to prepare a place for it.

Although it can boast of no bright and gaudy colours, the Wryneck is a most elegant bird, both in shape and plumage.

"The embroidery of that vesture grey  
No pen nor pencil can pourtray,"

says Bishop Mant. But it is seldom that one can get a good sight of its beautifully marked and mottled dress, for it is, like the Woodpecker, a shy and retiring bird; like that, too, it lays its eggs in a hole of a tree, lined with the decayed wood; they are six or seven in number generally, sometimes nine, and even ten, have been found in one hole; the colour is a pure white, or slightly tinged and spotted with yellowish brown. The time of incubation is fourteen days, and the female is so much attached to the young birds, that she will often suffer herself to be taken rather than desert them. These birds resort to the same spot year after year; it is at various heights from the ground, and sometimes the deserted nest of a Woodpecker or other bird is used.

#### NUTHATCH.

NUT-JOBBER. WOODCRACKER.

#### FIGURE 13.

The *Sittine* Birds, or Nuthatches, are little short-bodied creatures, with large heads, and very small tails; the bill is tolerably long, straight, and slender, pentagonal, or five-sided at the base, or part where it is inserted into the head. They are pretty lively birds, and seem to occupy a position between the *Certhias*, or Tree Creepers, and the *Parine* Birds or Tits. We have but one species in this country, known as the *Sitta Europæa*, or European Nuthatch; the generic name being derived, as Morris thinks, from some word in a primitive, or early language, (from *primus*—first,) from which also comes the term hatchet, and having reference to the habit of hacking and hewing at the nuts, on which this bird chiefly feeds.

The Nuthatch is not found generally throughout Britain, only in certain localities, and very rarely in the northern parts. It has long curved claws, by means of which it ascends the trunks of the trees, and clings about the branches much like the Creepers and Woodpeckers, frequently descending head downwards, which few other birds are able to do. It bores into the nuts with its

strong-pointed bill, and feeds upon the kernels; it also with the same instrument extracts the insects from the holes and crevices, and thus varies its diet. Its motions are abrupt and jerking, so that it always appears in a desperate hurry, and it keeps up a constant *quit, quit*, as though giving warning to its landlady of an intention to leave its lodgings forthwith. Bewick says that it will pick bones, and that it lays up a store of food for the winter in various little granaries.

For a nesting-place it makes choice of some hole in a tree, which it lines with dried leaves, moss, scales of fir-cones, bits of bark, and it may be, a little hair. If the entrance is too large it is partly closed up with clay, so as to leave but just room for the bird to enter. The eggs are from five to seven or eight, sometimes nine in number; they are greyish white, with spots or blotches of reddish brown.

The following interesting account of a pair of Nuthatches engaged in making their nest, is from the pen of a contributor to a periodical called "The Naturalist;" the date of the occurrence was the 18th. of April.—"The birds had fixed upon a hole in an ash tree, about twenty feet from the ground, and were contracting it with a plastering of mud, for which they flew to a small pond about fifty yards distant from the tree, and took pieces in their beaks about as big as a bean, which they laid on, and smoothed with their chin. Sometimes one of them would go inside and remain for a short time, I suppose for the purpose of smoothing the mud there. They would every now and then leave off from their task, and chase one another up the trunk and round the branches of the tree with amazing rapidity, uttering all the while their flute-like whistle. They both seemed to take an equal share in the labour; and had, like the House Martin, small pieces of straw mixed with the mud, for the purpose of making it bind better. They seemed to be quite at ease on the ground, and hopped about much after the same manner as the Sparrow. The male bird was easily distinguishable by his brighter plumage."

#### CUCKOO.

COMMON, OR GREY CUCKOO. GOWK, OR GECK. COG, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 14.

Of the *Cuculine* Birds, or Cuckoos, none are permanently resident in countries subject to severe winter cold. They feed mostly on insects, worms, or soft fruit, gliding amid the trees in search of their food in a peculiarly rapid and noiseless manner. In passing from branch to branch they generally leap; they do not climb like the Woodpeckers and Creepers, although they have much the same conformation of feet, the outer toe being directed backwards, as well as the first; this is called *Zy-go-dac-ty-lous*, a Greek word, signifying that the toes are yoked, or in pairs, two before and two behind. We have thought it well to introduce this queer word to our readers, lest they should stumble over it, as they are likely to do, in many works on Natural History which they may consult, and be frightened at its uncouth appearance; they will now know what is meant by *zygodactylous*, or *dactytic* birds, such as Owls, Woodpeckers, Cuckoos, etc. But having explained thus much, we should go a step farther, and introduce also *A-ni-so-dac-ty-lous*, Greek again, meaning unequally yoked, that is, when there is a wider interval between one pair of toes than between the other.

Of Cuckoos the British Naturalist knows of three species; the Great Spotted Cuckoo, inhabiting chiefly the northern and western coasts of Africa, and only now and then paying a short visit to these northern climes; the Yellow-billed, or American Cuckoo, or Cowcow, as some call it, which is a more frequent, although still a rare visitant, and the Common Grey species, termed *Cuculus canorus*, that is, the Musical Cuckoo, with whose curious cry—*cuck-oooo*, most of our readers must be familiar. It may not be generally thought that there is much music in this *monotonous*, that is, single-toned call, but we are assured by a competent authority, that this is the only feathered performer who sings in strict accordance with musical numbers, its notes being the fifth and third of the diatonic scale. But be that as it may, the cry of the Cuckoo is extremely pleasant to most ears, when first heard, soon after the bird arrives in this country, which is sometimes about the middle of April, "in April, come he will," says the old proverb; we know that the fresh floral season of sunshine and country delights, has fairly set in, and all through the summer, to the time of his departure, in August or September, we love to listen to the far-away, dreamy kind of call, for it seems like an invitation to 'follow, follow,' some invisible leader, through greenwoods and flowery dingles, and into scenes of quietude and peace; then, too, there is a kind of mystery about it which excites the curiosity, for who ever sees the utterer of these dreamy sounds. We are inclined to say with Wordsworth,—

"Oh, Cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,  
Or but a wandering voice."

And indeed the Cuckoo is a flying and feathered marvel altogether; we should fill this book were we to repeat all the strange tales that have been told about it, and by grave authorities too, from Aristotle of ancient Greece, to Dr. Jenner, and the rest of modern England. Amid all the disputations that have arisen upon the points of this bird's natural history, we can only clearly gather that it is a summer migrant, coming and going at the times just mentioned; that while with

us it is to be found in all wooded and sheltered parts of the island, frequenting most parks and pasture-grounds, groves and thickets, it is more likely to be seen at early morning and evening, than during the broad daylight, and its cry has been heard at all hours of the night, proving it to be somewhat nocturnal in its habits,—*nox*, you know is the Latin for night, and from thence comes this word.

The Cuckoo lives almost entirely upon insects, devouring great numbers of hairy caterpillars. It makes no nest of its own, but lays a single egg in that of some other bird, or conveys it thither in its bill. Its eggs are small for the size of the bird, in colour white, with a greyish, or it may be a reddish tinge, with cinereous (that is, ashy) or grey brown speckles. How many of these the bird lays no one can tell, but it has the judgment, or compassion, or whatever it may be, to give the Pipit, Hedge Sparrow, Wagtail, or other small bird so favoured, the task of rearing but one of its young, which soon grows to be quite a monster in the eyes of its foster parent, and sometimes, says the old Greek, Aristotle, eats her up; but this is just a physical impossibility, and a most vile slander. Whether the intruder, as Dr. Jenner says, *shovels* up with its broad back its fellow fledglings, to whom the nest rightfully belongs, and pitches them over the edge to die miserably of cold and starvation, while he gets the whole of the food brought by the provident mother, we cannot say, but may hope, for the credit of bird nature, that this too may be a mistake, if not a fable.

The Cuckoo is an elegantly-formed and agreeably-coloured bird, the prevailing tints of its plumage being a greenish grey, fading off into white, which is barred and mottled with silky brown; the large tail is spotted and edged with white. The male resembles the female; the young at first have bars of light red and olive brown about the upper parts.

#### KINGFISHER.

COMMON KING, OR KINGFISHER. GLAS Y DORIAN OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 15.

The Kingfishers belong to the order called *Jaculatrices*, or Darters, and to the family *Alcedinæ*; so they are *Alcedine* birds. These terms are not very easy of explanation. *Alcedo hispida* is the name of the Common Kingfisher. The second term may mean either rough, or hairy, or wet, all of which are quite applicable to this bird, which must be familiar to many of our readers; for although by no means common in any part of Britain, and very rare in the north, it is yet to be found, all the year through, in most parts of the country where there are streams of water, and river banks, and moist meadows suited to its habits, which are solitary. It generally nestles in holes in the declivities near to its favourite hunting ground—the clear stream, fringed with reeds and bulrushes, which glides away over pebbles that shine like gold and silver, and weeds as green as emeralds, or red as rubies, amid which dart the minnows and other small fish, on which, together with aquatic insects, the gorgeously-painted fisher feeds. You may see him in some quiet out-of-the-way place, beneath the shade of the grey alders, sitting motionless as a statue upon a branch of an old thorn, that projects over the stream. It may be that a ray of sunshine finds its way between the shivering branches, and out flash the glorious tints of its plumage—red, and green, and blue, and all changeable colours. Truly he is the monarch of fishing birds, and rightly named *Kingfisher*! Not handsome in form, certainly not elegant, nor well proportioned—with his short squat body and stump of a tail, thick neck, large head, and immense bill, little feet, that seem meant for a Sparrow, and eyes which, although bright and sharp enough, are much too small for the head. But he is a swift flier, for all that he looks so awkward; and see! quick as light he darts down upon that heedless fish that has come too near the surface, swallows it at a gulp, and is ready for another dart before you can look round you.

The eggs of our Common Kingfisher are what is termed broadly ovate in shape, that is, they are nearly round, not tapering out much, as some eggs do; they are simply white and semi (that is half) transparent. The number is generally six or seven. They are laid some time in May, in a hole, often that of the water-rat, sometimes on the bare earth, but more frequently on a layer of small fish bones; now and then on a little dried grass. The note of the bird is sharp, shrill, and piping, like that of the Sandpipers, but is not often uttered.

#### SWALLOW.

RED-FRONTED, COMMON, OR CHIMNEY SWALLOW.

FIGURE 16.

The *Hirundine* Birds, or Swallows, form a very distinct group; they have slender bodies, and large, powerful wings, which enable them to fly with great velocity, skimming over the moist meadows, where their insect food most abounds, and wheeling and circling about trees and buildings in a swift and easy manner, which appears to be the very perfection of motion. They are all migratory birds, coming to us from Africa and the south of Europe to breed, and returning to those warm climates to pass the winter.

The Common Swallow, called by naturalists *Hirundo rustica*, the first word signifying a Swallow, and the second, of, or belonging to the country, generally arrives in Britain in the latter half of the month of April, or the beginning of May, some time in which month the nest is commenced; it is of a broad cup-like shape, and is formed of moist earth, collected bit by bit from the side of a pond or stream, and moulded together with straw and grass: there is a lining of feathers, or some other soft materials. The situations chosen are sheltered spots beneath eaves or projecting roofs of any kind, shafts of mines, holes in the sides of pits and quarries, old wells and out-buildings, bell turrets, the under sides of spouts and bridge arches; most usually the spot selected is near human habitations. Who is not awakened in the bright summer mornings by the twittering of the young birds near his bed-room window? These birds have frequently been known to build in empty unused rooms, to which access could be gained through a broken pane of glass; they are said to nestle near chimneys for the sake of the warmth, being apparently not at all annoyed by the smoke which issues thence.

The eggs of the Swallow are usually from four to six in number; they are white, thickly speckled over with ash-coloured, dark red, or brown spots. Morris says that two broods are frequently hatched in the year, the first of which flies in June, and the second in August. It is most interesting to see the parent birds tempting them on from one resting point to another, and so teaching them to use their wings, feeding them in a most dexterous manner while on the wing; it is said that these careful parents, ere the young can provide for themselves, bring them food about once in every three minutes throughout the day. The male Swallow is a handsome bird; the wings, long forked tail, head, neck, and upper part of the breast, being brownish black, with a steely blue reflection, which is only seen in certain lights. The forehead and throat are chestnut, and there is a tinge of the same on the delicate white under parts of the body. Undoubtedly a handsome bird, and one of the most familiar of our feathered friends while it remains with us, which is until the autumn is fairly set in. You may know when the Swallows are about to leave, by their frequent consultations on the roofs, and by the more frequent utterance of their low, and not unmelodious warble, which is very different from the short, sharp cry, consisting of two notes, which they utter occasionally when hawking, as it is called, after insects.

Previous to their departure they may be frequently observed wheeling in rapid circles in the air, as if trying their wings, and drilling for their long, and no doubt orderly flight. We might quote plenty of poetry on this bird, for its beauty, grace of motion, and familiarity with man, have made it ever a general favourite, but for want of sufficient space we shall not be able to make use of any. In some allusion is made to a notion once entertained even by scientific naturalists, that the Swallows did not actually leave this country in the cold season, but *hybernated*, as it is called, from the Latin *hyems*—winter; that is, wintered here, passing the time in a state of torpor, or sleep, somewhere out of sight, as the dormouse and some other animals do. But it is now certainly known that this is a false impression; a few young or sickly birds, unable to endure so long a journey, may be, and no doubt are, left behind; these constitute but an exception to the rule of annual migration.

MARTIN.

WHITE-RUMPED, WINDOW, HOUSE, OR MARTIN SWALLOW. MARTINET. HOUSE OR WINDOW MARTIN.

MARTLETT.

FIGURE 17.

This is the *Hirundo urbica* of naturalists, the latter term coming from the Latin *urbs*—a city. Its plumage is of a more decided purple tint than the Common Swallow, from which it is also distinguished by the absence of chestnut brown on the forehead, throat, and under parts, which in this species are pure white. In its habits the Martin closely resembles its congeners, than which it is, perhaps, even more a house and city bird; hence its specific name. It reaches our island generally a few days later than the Swallow, and departs at about the same time.

The eggs of this bird are four or five in number, of a longish oval shape, smooth, and perfectly white. The nest, which is composed of mud, so cemented and tempered that it will adhere even to glass, is lined with hay or feathers. Gilbert White, in his "Natural History of Selborne,"—a delightful book which all young naturalists should read, says that there are generally young birds in the nest up to Michaelmas, there being two broods, and sometimes even three, in the year; the first brood are generally ready to fly by the latter end of May, and the second early in August: the period of incubation is thirteen days.

SWIFT.

COMMON, OR BLACK SWIFT. BLACK, OR SCREECH MARTIN. SWIFT-SWALLOW. DEVELING. SCREECH.

SCREAMER. SQUEALER. CRAN. MARTIN DU, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 18.

Like the rest of our Swallows, this is a migratory bird, and it remains with us a shorter time than

most of the others, generally arriving in May, and departing in August. Its scientific name is *Hirundo apus*, meaning a Swallow without a foot, derived no doubt from the small size of the feet, and the little use it seems to make of them, being almost constantly in the air, where its evolutions are peculiarly rapid and graceful, even for one of its family. The rapidity with which it skims and dashes along, wheeling and turning in the most sudden manner, is truly marvellous; so great is the force of its forward impetus, that it has been known to kill itself by dashing against a wall; it has been estimated that Wild Ducks fly ninety miles an hour, and Swallows rather more, but the Swift above two hundred miles an hour; this may possibly be an exaggeration, but if we make a large allowance, say one half, the rate of progress is something astounding.

The note of the Swift is a harsh scream, hence several of the common names by which it is known; it is generally uttered while pursuing its insect prey on the wing, and may be considered as an exclamation of triumph or delight, as much as to say,—“Ha, ha, I have caught you!”

The Swift resorts much to ruinous castles, steeples, towers, and precipitous rocks, for the purpose of building; sometimes it nestles under the eaves of cottages and barns, or in holes in walls, and hollow trees, etc. The nest is rudely formed of sticks and straws stuck together with mud; the materials are picked up with great dexterity while the bird is on the wing, and, sometimes, it is said, the Sparrow or other small bird is robbed of its goods and chattels by the impudent stranger, which snatches them up, and is gone like a flash of lightning.

The eggs are white, of a longish oval shape, and seldom more than two or three in number.

This bird, like the rest of the Swallows, is pretty widely diffused over the country during the time it remains here; it has a near relative called the White-bellied or Alpine Swift, which is common in the south of Europe, but which seldom comes so far north as this. There are also belonging to this family of *gliders*, as they are sometimes called, the Purple and Sand Martins, which are placed among British Birds; the former is common in America, but rare with us, the latter, the smallest of the family, are not unfrequently found in Britain.

The whole plumage of the Common Swift, with the exception of a greyish white patch under the chin, is blackish brown, with a bronzy green tinge, which greatly relieves its otherwise dull appearance.

#### NIGHTJAR.

GOATSUCKER. EUROPEAN OR NOCTURNAL GOATSUCKER. DOR, OR NIGHT-HAWK. FERN, CHURN, OR JAR-OWL. NIGHT-JAR, OR NIGHT-CHAR. WHEELBIRD. PUCKERIDGE. RHODWR AND ADERYN V DROELL, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.  
FIGURE 19.

To the above long list of names, we might add two or three others by which different naturalists distinguish this remarkable bird, but the most common of its scientific designations will be sufficient; this is *Caprimulgus Europæus*, the first name being derived from the Latin *caper*—a goat, and *mulgio*—to milk; it having been at one time supposed that the poor innocent bird was in the habit of sucking the teats of the goats to obtain the milk; and there are, we believe, some ignorant persons in out-of-the-way country-places, who still give credence to this absurd notion, and even fancy that the udders of the cows, as they lie asleep, are drained by the feathered depredator, as they consider the Churn Owl to be. From this supposed habit of the bird, and the whirring or jarring noise which it makes when flying, are derived most of the names given above.

The Goatsucker flies chiefly by night, and is oftener heard than seen; *whirr, whirr, whirr* it goes, like a spinning-wheel, and the sound is interrupted every now and then by a shrill whistle or scream, or a softer cry, *dec, dec*, which it generally utters when getting on the wing. White, of Selborne, says, that when a person approaches the haunt of the Fern Owls in an evening, they continue flying round the head of the intruder, and by striking their wings together across their backs, in the manner that the pigeons called Smiters are known to do, make a smart snap. He thinks it likely that this is done by way of menace, to scare those who are approaching their young. This author also observes, that the powers of flight of this bird are truly wonderful, exceeding, if possible, in graceful ease and celerity, even those of the Swallow, than which it is a much larger bird.

Its plumage is remarkably soft and downy, like that of the Owl, and is prettily marked and mottled, the colours being brown, yellow, and grey of various shades. The eye is large and hawk-like, the bill small, the mouth capable of great distension, and fringed with small feathers, which have a very curious appearance.

The Goatsucker is pretty common throughout the whole of England, but more so in the south than the north; it is a migratory bird, arriving towards the middle or end of May and departing in September. It chiefly inhabits woods, moors, heaths, and commons, especially where fern and brushwood abound. Its food consists chiefly of moths, beetles, and such insects as are most frequently met with on the wing in the morning and evening twilight.



The nest consists of a few dead leaves huddled together in some hollow in the ground, among the heath, long grass, or fern; it is frequently found at the foot of a furze or other bush. The eggs, two or three in number, are of a perfect oval shape, beautifully clouded and streaked with grey and light brown on a white ground; they are laid in the beginning of July, in about the middle of which month the young are generally hatched.

RING DOVE.

RINGED DOVE, OR CUSHAT. QUEEST, OR CUSHIE. WOOD PIGEON.

FIGURE 20.

Of the *Columbine* birds, or Doves, we have in this country four distinct species, three of which are permanent residents, and one a summer migrant. There is also a member of the family, although classed in a different genus, of which a few specimens have been taken in this country, namely, the Passenger Pigeon of North America. All these are extremely beautiful birds, and general favourites on that account, as well as for their pleasing habits and manners, which have mainly contributed to make the name of the Dove synonymous with all that is gentle, and peaceable, and loveable. It was a Dove, we may remember, which first gave to Noah assurance that the waters had subsided from the earth, by returning to the ark with an olive leaf in its beak, since which, both bird and plant have ever been emblematical of peace; and it is under the mystic semblance of a Dove, that we find the Holy Spirit personated in Scripture.

The particular species above named is termed by most naturalists *Columba palumbus*, the first term meaning a Dove or Pigeon, and the second a "Wood Pigeon," which, in this country, is its most common appellation, although it is also frequently called the Ring Dove, or Cushat. This truly elegant bird occurs throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, frequenting most the cultivated and wooded districts, where it does a good deal of mischief by feeding upon the wheat, peas, barley, and other agricultural produce; it also partakes freely of beech-mast and acorns; it is *graminivorous*, that is, feeding on grass; as well as *granivorous*—feeding on grain. Its favourite resting-place is amid the thick branches of tall trees, especially beech, ash, and pine, in which most frequently its nest will be found; just a few twigs, loosely put together in a circular form; it is generally from sixteen to twenty feet from the ground.

The eggs are two in number, of a pure white colour, and of a roundish form. Three broods are sometimes produced in a season, the first of which is generally abroad by the beginning of May, and the second about the end of July. The period of incubation is sixteen or seventeen days.

All must be familiar with the soft *coo coo* of this shy bird; heard in the summer woodlands, it falls on the ear with a particularly soothing effect. In the winter it congregates in large flocks, the number of the permanent residents being then much increased by fresh arrivals from the continent; and very beautiful they look, flying about amid the snow, in their greyish blue plumage, ornamented with black and white, green and purple, and suffused on the breast with a reddish flush, as though the light of the setting sun were shining on them.

STOCK DOVE.

BLUE-BACKED OR WOOD DOVE.

FIGURE 21.

*Columba ænas* is the scientific name of this species. The first term, as you are aware, means simply a Dove, the etymology of the second is not so clear, most likely it comes from *oinos*—relating to wine, and alludes to the ruddy or vinous tinge of the breast. This is a somewhat stouter bird in the body than the last, and it wants the white patches which so vary and enliven the plumage of the Ring Dove, than which it is less elegant, although perhaps its plumage is more rich and splendid, with that shifting play of golden green and violet which all the Doves, and some other of the feathered tribes present. But for this, the plumage of our Stock Dove, (so called, it is said, because it is the original stock from which our common domestic Pigeons are derived,) would be considered plain and dull; it is chiefly greyish blue, deepening at parts into purple, and flushed here and there with deep red; the legs of this, as of most Doves and Pigeons, are light red, and the bill light brown or yellowish.

"The Stock Dove builds in the old oak wood,"

says Mary Howitt, in her beautiful song of the Pheasant, and so no doubt it often does; but more frequently, perhaps, in the fir plantation, or among the beeches, or any other trees that present a suitable nesting-place; a hole in the trunk is frequently chosen, it may be only four or five, or as many as forty or fifty feet from the ground. Sometimes the flat and shallow nest, just a few sticks loosely put together, is placed on the ground itself, in a deserted rabbit-burrow, or some other hollow place; beneath furze bushes it is occasionally found, and even in hedges and fruit trees near to woods and coppices.

Nidification commences about the end of March or beginning of April; incubation lasts about seventeen days, and in a month from the time of hatching the young are ready to fly. There are two or three broods in the year. The eggs are white, somewhat smaller than those of the Ring Dove, and more pointed at the smaller end. The parent birds sit very close, and will even allow themselves to be taken off by the hand; they evince great attachment for their young, as well for each other, and although several pairs may build within a very limited space, they do not appear to quarrel; indeed gentleness and tenderness is the main characteristic of all their motions, as well as of their soft notes, the old familiar *coo, coo, coo*. In winter they consort with the Ring Doves, but are not perhaps so numerous in this country as these birds. They migrate from place to place, and feed on hemp, rape, and other seeds, young shoots of plants, berries, beech-mast, acorns, and grain.

ROCK DOVE.

WHITE-BACKED DOVE. WILD, OR ROCK PIGEON.

FIGURE 22.

Scientific name *Columba livia*; the latter name probably from *livida*—livid, blue, or lead-coloured. It is held by some that this species, and not the Stock Dove, has the best claim to be considered the original of the Common Pigeon; others have confounded the species, although there appears to be a very clear mark of distinction in the white patch over the tail, which is never absent, the broad black band across the grey wings, and the more deep and distinct marking of the plumage altogether. Besides, the habits of this bird differ considerably from those of either of the other species.

It is, as its name implies, a haunter of rocks, in the crevices and caverns of which it generally builds its rude nest of twigs, and grass, and stalks of plants. It is a social bird, building in companies; the first eggs, two in number, and white, are generally laid about the middle of April, and the last towards the latter end of August; the young are fledged in about three weeks, and after that, a few days' training by their parents, enables them to fly and obtain their own livelihood. They feed like their congeners, and are great grain-eaters, only at times varying this kind of food with a few snails. Like all the Doves they are swift flyers.

TURTLE DOVE.

RING-NECKED TURTLE.

FIGURE 23.

This is perhaps the most beautiful, as it is also the smallest and rarest of our native Doves; naturalists term it *Columba turtur*, of which its English name is simply a translation; sometimes the specific name *auritus*—golden, is applied to it, and this well describes the plumage of the bird, which has a rich golden tinge throughout most parts of the plumage, the chief colours of which are brown and grey, running off into yellow and white, flushed at places with red, and elegantly marked with black.

With us, the Turtle Dove is migratory, generally arriving towards the latter end of April, and departing early in September; it is pretty much confined to the southern and eastern counties, but few specimens having been found in Scotland. It frequents the wooded districts both hilly and flat, flies in small flocks, and feeds on grain and seeds, peas, of which it is particularly fond, and sometimes small slugs and snails; being fond of drinking and bathing, it is commonly found in the neighbourhood of streams and brooks; in such situations may its soft note, *tur, tur*, doubtless the origin of its name, be frequently heard, when the shy bird itself is hidden amid the thick shade of the leafy boughs.

Mr. Morris tells us that the nest is so slight and carelessly constructed that the eggs may frequently be seen from below; it is generally placed at some distance from the ground, ten or twenty feet, and is commonly well concealed among the foliage. The glossy white eggs, two in number, and of a narrow oval form, are generally laid about the middle of May, and the young birds come forth in sixteen or seventeen days: there are two or three broods in the year.

The prophet Jeremiah, we may remember, speaks of this as a migratory bird, "Yea, the Stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming." The soft note of the bird is also spoken of by Solomon as one of the signs of returning spring, "For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land."

PHEASANT.

COMMON OR RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

This glorious bird is the *Phasianus Colchicus* of naturalists, the first term meaning a Pheasant, and the second of Colchis, the ancient name of a country of Asia Minor, from whence it is said the bird was originally brought into Europe, by the old Greek navigators, called the argonauts, say some—those who in the ship Argo, sailed the seas under the command of Jason, and went through a series of surprising adventures connected with the bearing away of a certain *golden fleece* from the King of Colchis, all of which are faithfully reported in the mythology, for the admiration and belief of the credulous. Certain it is that if Jason had not with him such a treasure as a golden fleece, he had in the Pheasant a golden bird, if there really ever was such a person, and he did in reality bring the splendid king of the English preserves into Europe.

A description of the bird's gorgeous plumage we need not attempt, as all of our readers must have seen it hanging up in the poulterer's shops, if they have not been startled by the sudden *whirr* of its wings as it rose from the fern-brake or thicket at their approach, as they wandered amid the green woods where it delights to dwell.

The nest of this bird consists of merely a few leaves placed in a slight depression on the ground, sometimes in the open field near to a preserve or plantation, but more frequently among the underwood, in long grass and in hedge-rows; frequently the situation chosen is beneath boughs that have been felled, or have fallen from the tree. The laying of the eggs commences in April or May; incubation lasts from twenty-four to twenty-six days; the number sat upon varies from six up to as many as fourteen; more than this have been found in one nest, but it was not likely to have been the produce of a single hen; the colour of the eggs is pale olive brown, covered all over with very small dots of a deeper tint. Poachers are ever on the look-out for these eggs, as a sitting of them fetches a high price; they are generally, when taken from the nest, placed under a common hen to be hatched. Some have been found of a greyish white tinged with green. It is said that Partridges are sometimes expelled from their nests by these birds, which will sit upon their own eggs, and those of the rightful owner of the nest, and hatch them all.

Generally speaking, the Pheasant is a shy wary bird, and with good reason, being such an object of pursuit with sportsmen, as well as unlicensed depredators; but where secured from molestation and well fed, it becomes bold and familiar. Its general food is grain of various kinds, peas, beans, nuts, and berries, shoots and leaves of several plants, roots, and insects: it is particularly partial to sunflower seeds and buckwheat.

The variety called the Ring-necked Pheasant is distinguished by a clear ring of white round the neck; there is also a variety known as the Bohemian Pheasant, which is of a stone-colour prettily marked and mottled with black and brown. White and cream-coloured ones occasionally occur.

#### BLACK GROUSE.

BLACK GAME. BLACK COCK. FEMALE—GREY OR BROWN HEN.

#### FIGURE 25.

The meaning of the generic name of this bird—*Tetrao*, is by no means clear, neither is that of its specific name *tetrix*: are they not both derived from the Hindostanee word *Tetur*? is the query of Morris, who does not tell us what this *tetur* means.

The Black Grouse, conspicuous for its large size, glossy black plumage, forked tail, turning out like the flakes of an anchor, and noble bearing, is, with the exception of its near relative, the Capercaillie, or Cock of the Woods, now only to be found in some of the Scottish forests, the largest of our native game birds. It is found chiefly in Scotland, where it frequents those parts where there is a good growth of underwood or heather, or other thick vegetation, and also plenty of water, which appears to be necessary to its existence. It is also found in many of the English counties, being tolerably plentiful in Yorkshire and Northumberland, and about Windermere, in Westmoreland. It feeds on juniper and most other berries, and wild fruits, heather-twigs, and young shoots of many plants; the tops of grasses, rushes, sedge, and buds of trees, turnip and rape leaves, and even the young fronds of the fern.

The nest, which is placed in some marshy spot among heath, or in plantations or hedge-rows, amid the rank vegetation, is composed of grass or twigs, neatly laid but not woven together. The eggs are from five to eight or ten in number; the colour is reddish yellow, in some nearly white; they are irregularly spotted with reddish brown: they are generally laid in May.

A fine full-grown Black Cock will weigh nearly four pounds; and the Grey Hen, which has a sober dress of brown and grey prettily intermixed, about half this weight. They are birds much valued as table delicacies; and every year immense numbers are shot by eager sportsmen, who leave the desk and the counter, the senate-house and the drawing-room, to roam amid the Scottish moors and mountains, and undergo fatigues and privations with an endurance and perseverance worthy of a better cause.

RED GROUSE.

GOR, OR MOOR-COCK. MOOR, OR MUIR-FOWL. RED-GAME. RED, OR BROWN PTARMIGAN.

FIGURES 26 & 27.

*Tetrao*, or *Lagopus Scoticus* is the scientific name of this species; the meaning of the first term is already explained, the second comes from *Lagos*—a hare, and *pous*—a foot, and is given to this bird because it has the lower joints of the leg, and even the toes, feathered, differing in this respect from the other kinds of Grouse. *Scoticus* means Scotch, and indicates the country in which the species most abounds, although it is also found in various parts of England and Wales; it is, however, peculiar to Great Britain, and therefore the name *Britannicus* has been suggested as a more appropriate generic name for it.

The Red Grouse is, perhaps, the most highly-prized of all game birds, and the wonder is that it continues so abundant, notwithstanding the annual slaughter which takes place in its breeding and feeding grounds, which are mostly the open moors and hill-sides, where there is plenty of heath and ling, and other low-growing plants of the like nature. It is especially partial to the heather, which affords it both shelter and food. It also feeds on various grasses and mountain berries, and grain when its home is near cultivated districts, which it generally, however, avoids, retiring as far as possible from the presence of man, as though it knew and feared him as its greatest enemy.

The nest of the Muir Cock, as the Scotch call it, is formed of heather and grass, with a few of the soft downy feathers of the bird, and is placed in a hollow of the ground among the heath. The first eggs are laid in March or April; they are usually six or seven in number, although sometimes they amount to twelve and even more; they vary considerably in colour, the ground being usually a greyish white, with more or less of a reddish brown or yellow tinge. They are thickly dotted or clouded with dark grey and brown; the shape is a regular oval.

The Heath Poults, as the young are called, leave the nest directly they are hatched, as do most of the game birds, and are very soon able to fly. At first they lie close, and may almost be trodden upon, but they get more wild and wary as the shooting-season advances; this commences in August.

PTARMIGAN.

WHITE GAME, OR GROUSE. IN GAELIC, PTARMICHAN.

FIGURE 28.

Rich as is the plumage of the Red Grouse, with its beautiful markings, and warm sienna tint, which prevails throughout every part except the snowy legs, yet we are inclined to give the preference to this, its close relative, for elegance of appearance. It is all over of a pure delicate white, except just the points of the toes, the larger tail feathers, the bill, and a patch on each side of the head, which surrounds the eye, all of black; there is also, as in every other species of Grouse with which we are acquainted, a semicircular patch, like a piece of crimson velvet over each eye. The edges of the white feathers are delicately pencilled, as we see them in the Silver Pheasant, so that they appear perfectly distinct from each other. This is the winter dress, according well with the snowy regions which the bird chiefly inhabits. In summer the plumage in parts becomes brown and yellowish grey of different shades; this dress also assimilating well with the lichen-covered rocks of those Alpine solitudes where the Ptarmigan must be sought. With us it is found only in the Grampians, and others of the Scottish mountains; there it dwells in seldom-disturbed security, feeding upon such plants as grow in these elevated places, in winter descending lower, to obtain a better supply of food, but never venturing into the plain.

Its eggs, which vary from seven to twelve in number, are sometimes laid on the bare earth, under the shadow of a rock or some plant; their colour is white, with sometimes a green, yellow, or reddish tinge; they are blotted and spotted with dark brown. The laying does not commence until June; incubation lasts three weeks. The young at first feed on insects.

The scientific name of this bird is *Tetrao lagopus*, the meaning of which has already been explained, and *Lagopus vulgaris*, that is, common, or mutus—changeable, in allusion to the variation in the colour of the plumage.

PARTRIDGE.

COMMON OR GREY PARTRIDGE.

FIGURE 29.

This is one of the best-known and most-esteemed of our native game birds; its scientific name is *Perdix cinerea*, the first term meaning a Partridge, and the last ash-coloured, the prevailing tint of the plumage of this species being ashy grey and brown, with a reddish tinge throughout.

Beautifully marked and mottled is the dress of the plump little Partridge, as our readers know well,—delicately barred, and pencilled, and variegated, as if to shew what glorious effects may be produced with two or three colours only.

Partridges are tolerably plentiful in nearly all parts of Great Britain, where cultivation has smoothed the rugged features of the landscape; for, unlike the Grouse, which retreat as man advances further and further into the wilds of nature, these birds seldom go far from the farm and the home plantations. Coveys, as the family parties are called, are sometimes met with on the edges of moors, and they often wander, as Mr. Morris tells us, to wastes and commons; but their home is not there; the clover, turnip, grass, or stubble field is their cover and resting-place; there, and in the coppice and along the hedge-row they feed, and build their nests, if the placing a few loose straws in a hole scratched in the ground can be called building; there they lay their eggs, generally ten or twelve in number, although sometimes more, and of a uniform pale greenish brown colour. Early in the spring, from the first to the middle of February, may the not unpleasing call—*chicurr, chicurr*—of these birds be heard; and towards the end of May, or the beginning of June, the nest will most likely be quite finished. The hen bird alone sits, the male keeping watch, and, when the covey are hatched, assisting to feed and protect them from their numerous foes. The chicks run directly they are out of the shell, frequently with portions of it sticking to them; they are very lively and nimble, and so escape many dangers. But one brood is reared in the year, unless the first eggs are taken, in which case others will be laid, and the work of incubation recommenced, although the eggs will be less in number, and the young, it is said, weaker. It is related by Mr. Jesse, as a curious fact, that "when young Partridges are hatched, and have left the nest, the two portions of the shell will be found placed one within the other." We have observed this in eggs of the Common Fowl, and believe with the above-named naturalist that it is done by the chicks themselves, in their efforts to escape from their confinement.

QUAIL.  
COMMON OR WANDERING QUAIL.  
FIGURE 30.

The Quail can scarcely be called a common bird with us, although it may be found occasionally in various parts of both England and Ireland, and sometimes, though very rarely, in Scotland. It is migratory, generally arriving in May and departing in September; some few remain throughout the year, and scraping together a few bits of dry grass, clover, or straw, make a rude nest in a hollow place on the ground, and there deposit their eggs, which are of a yellowish, greenish, or reddish white, blotched and speckled with brown. They vary in number from six to fourteen, and even, it is said, twenty; the most common number is ten. The period of incubation is about three weeks; the young, like Partridges, run as soon as hatched.

The Common Quail is a plump little bird, not much unlike the Partridge in its form, colours, and markings, but the head and throat are curiously barred with black and white, and the distinct patch of the latter colour beneath the chin gives the bird a very peculiar appearance. Naturalists call this species *Perdix coturnix*, the former term meaning a Partridge, and the latter a Quail.

This is thought by some to be the bird with which the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness, as mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, and the immense flocks which pass from country to country in the migratory seasons, render the supposition likely. It is said in Numbers xi., 31, that "There went forth a wind from the Lord and brought Quails from the sea;" and it is well known that the direction of the wind will often determine the flight of these birds. As many as one hundred thousand are said to have been taken in one day in the kingdom of Naples after an unusually exhausting flight over the Mediterranean; thousands of dozens are sent every year into the London market, where they are eagerly purchased: their flesh is esteemed a great delicacy.

Quails are desperate fighters, and in some countries are kept especially for the cruel "sport," as it is called, which their pugnacious propensities afford. They feed upon grain, seeds, young leaves, and insects; and have a shrill whistling note like *whit, whit*, which is called "piping."

BUSTARD.  
COMMON OR BEARDED BUSTARD.  
FIGURE 31.

If you can fancy a bird in general conformation something between an Ostrich and a Goose, you will have a pretty fair notion of the Great Bustard—*Otis tarda* as naturalists call it, the first term meaning a Bustard, and the second slow or lazy; yet lazy as he may be, this long-legged stalker is by no means slow in his movements when once roused to action; he runs with great swiftness, and, when he does take wing, which he appears to do with difficulty, has a strong and sustained flight. This is now a very rare species in Great Britain, although once plentiful, according to old

writers, who state that it was customary with greyhounds

"To hunt the Bustards in the fens."

A tall, strong, and stately bird is this, slow and sedate in its general manners and movements, frequenting plains, and heaths, and open moors, where it can have a wide range of vision, and so be aware of the approach of an enemy. The gradual extension of cultivation over its favourite places of resort, and the incessant war waged against it by sportsmen, anxious to bag such a noble head of game, have nearly driven it from our island. A specimen was shot as late as January, 1856, near Hungerford, in Berkshire.

The prevailing colours in the plumage of the Great Bustard are white or bluish grey, and yellowish or orange brown, with black mottlings; the legs and beak are dark horn-colour; underneath the chin is a plume of narrow feathers, falling backwards, and partly covering the front and sides of the neck; they are six or seven inches long, and very light and graceful.

The Bustards are called graminivorous, but are somewhat omnivorous feeders; mice, frogs, worms, and young birds are occasionally added to their usual vegetable diet. We have a species called the Little Bustard, much smaller than the one we have been describing, and also a very rare bird. The eggs of both these species are great treasures to collectors; those of the larger kind are like what our artist has represented, of an olive brown colour, clouded and spotted with ash and rust-colour. They are generally two in number, laid on the bare earth, or in a hollow carefully lined with corn stalks or grass; the length is nearly three inches. The eggs of the Little Bustard are more decidedly green, with ashy or dull brown variations.

#### GOLDEN PLOVER.

WHISTLING, YELLOW, GREEN, GREY, OR BLACK-BREASTED PLOVER.

FIGURE 32.

Of the *Pluviline* Birds, or Plovers, we have several species in this country, and the one above named is the commonest. Naturalists call it *Pluvialis aurea*, the first term meaning a Plover, and signifying rainy, or pertaining to rain, and the last golden; or *Charadrius pluvialis*. Of the meaning of this generic name we are obliged to confess our ignorance; by some it is, applied to all the Plovers, and by others to the Sand Plovers only. This Golden species is a very remarkable bird, both in its habits and appearance; all the under parts of the body, the breast, throat, and sides of the head up to and above the eyes, are of a deep velvet black; then comes all round an edging of white, which deepens into grey tinged with yellow; and then again all over the back, pinions, tail, and top of the head, are black feathers, beautifully bordered, and barred with what appears to be gold embroidery. It is a nimble active bird, constantly running about on the open plains and ploughed fields in search of food, which consists of insects of various kinds, green corn and leaves of vegetables, small berries, etc.; or in flying hither and thither in the air, now close to the ground as if about to settle, and then with a sudden upward wheel urging a strong and swift flight to some distant part of the field, or sea shore, which is a favourite resort in winter, where the birds collect in large flocks, uttering their wild shrill whistle, which harmonizes well with the sounds of the winds and waves.

The Golden Plover may be found all over Britain, where it remains throughout the year, generally resorting to the heaths, downs, or marshes to breed. Its nest is merely a few stems of grass and vegetable fibres laid in a slight hollow in the ground, just about large enough to contain the eggs, which are usually four in number, of a yellowish stone colour, blotted and spotted with brownish black. They are generally placed with great regularity, with the smaller ends meeting in the centre; they are laid early in June. The young leave the nest as soon as hatched, and are able to support themselves in a month or five weeks.

#### DOTTEREL.

DOTTREL. DOTTEREL PLOVER.

FIGURE 33.

This, the *Charadrius morinellus* of naturalists, is another lively and beautiful bird, more so, perhaps, than the species last described, having greater variety and more distinct markings in the plumage. The crown and sides of the head are black, with a white band proceeding from above each eye, running down into a point, and nearly meeting another band from the back of the head; the throat is white, tinged and spotted with grey, which is the colour of the breast, which is divided from the orange-coloured belly by a broad waved band of white; black and bright yellow complete the under parts; the back, wings, and tail are brown and black, the larger feathers being distinctly edged with golden yellow.

"The Dotterel," says Morris, "has acquired the character of being a foolish bird, hence its English name from the word to dote, and its Latin one from the word *morio*—a foolish fellow." The bird

was formerly supposed to imitate the actions of the fowler, and so to fall into the trap, instead of providing for its escape by a timely flight.

The Dotterel, which is a migratory bird, frequents open and exposed situations, wide heaths and barren mountainous districts, where it generally breeds. Any hollow in the ground serves it for a nest, which is composed of a few lichens, not woven but merely laid together. The eggs are seldom more than three in number; they are generally laid in June; the colour is a deep yellowish brown, or it may be a fine grey, thickly spotted, especially about the darker end, with dark or reddish brown, and deep grey.

#### RINGED PLOVER.

RING, OR STONE PLOVER. RINGED DOTTEREL. SAND LARK, OR LAVROCK. DULL-WILLY. SANDY-LOO.

#### FIGURE 34.

*Charadrius hiaticula* is the scientific name of this species; we have already confessed our ignorance of the meaning of the first term; according to the old naturalist Pliny, it is "a bird the seeing of which cures those that have the jaundice;" but we must say that we are extremely doubtful if the sight of any bird included by modern naturalists in the genus *Charadrius* would have such a wonderful effect. The Latin dictionary tells us that the term comes from the Greek, and that one of its meanings is *terræ fissura*, which we may translate furrowed earth; so that the name may have reference to the bird's real or supposed habit of haunting the furrows of the ploughed field, or the rough uneven ground of rocky shores or barren places. With regard to the specific name *hiaticula*, we have something very like it in English—*hiatus*, a break, an aperture, or opening; the Latin word from which it comes is precisely similar. Why applied to this bird cannot tell, except it be from its being chiefly found on broken and uneven ground.

The Ring Plover, or Dotterel, is altogether a shore bird, and may be found on most parts of the British coast, and along the margins of the creeks, estuaries, and tidal rivers, and sometimes by the inland lakes and ponds. It is a bright lively creature, with party-coloured plumage of black, brown, and white. It plays about on the sands, following the retiring tide, and fleeing before its advance, as we see children do; its silky feathers ruffled by the wind, and its shrill clear whistle making pleasant music amid the rocks, and over the wide wild ocean scenery. Its eggs are laid in some slight natural hollow in the sand or small gravel, sheltered by a tuft of reeds or coarse herbage, sometimes just above high-water mark, but frequently in the marshy grounds further inland; they are four in number, of a greenish grey, buff, or cream-colour, spotted and streaked with grey and black, or dark brown.

These birds generally pair in May; the male and female both sit on the eggs, and are very careful of them and the young. Their general food is worms, marine and other aquatic insects, shrimps, and small crustaceous animals. On moonlight nights they may be seen searching diligently with quick and incessant movements, their white plumes flashing here and there like silver.

#### LAPWING.

COMMON, CRESTED, OR, GREEN LAPWING. GREEN PLOVER. LAPWING SANDPIPER. PEWIT. TEWIT.

TEACHET. PEESE-WEEP. FRENCH PIGEON.

#### FIGURE 35.

*Vanellus cristatus* is the scientific name of this beautiful bird; the first term may perhaps come from *vannus*—a fan, and be given to it on account of the graceful fan-like motion of its glossy green pinions, as it skims along the shore, or over the wide heaths, or low-lying marshes, which it most frequents; the specific name means crested, and has reference to the crest of long black feathers which adorn the head, and can be raised nearly straight up or depressed at pleasure. We have called this a beautiful bird, and truly so it is, with bronzy green and coppery reflections playing over its black back, breast, throat, wings, top of the head, and end of the tail; the breast, back, and sides of the neck are pure white, as is part of the tail, and a long patch on each side of the head; the legs, belly, and under side of the tail, are all bright orange colour; and then its long shining crest gives it such a pert and comical air, that it is quite a pleasure to behold.

Lapwings, or Peewits, as they are more generally called, from their shrill cry, which sounds like the syllables *pe-wit*, or *pees-wit*, are tolerably familiar birds with us, being found in summer on most wet heaths, moors, and marshy pastures. It nestles in April, and lays its four eggs, which, in general, are of a dull green colour, blotted and irregularly marked with brownish black, in April. A slight depression in the ground, with perhaps a few straws for lining, suffices for a nest; it is sometimes placed amid a tuft of rushes or long grass. Being considered delicate food they are eagerly sought for, and great numbers are every year taken and exposed for sale in the poulterers' shops in London and elsewhere.

The Lapwing feeds on worms and insects, runs with great speed, and has a quick flight, although the flapping of its wings is heavier and more measured than that of the Plovers.

TURNSTONE.  
COMMON, OR COLLARED TURNSTONE. HEBRIDAL SANDPIPER.  
FIGURE 36.

This is a very remarkable bird with regard to personal appearance, having a variegated dress of black, white, and brownish red, with little fading or running off into the other, so that the colours are strongly contrasted; it has a tolerably heavy body, a strong stout bill of moderate length, and longish thick legs, which are of a dull orange colour, the toes terminating in strong black claws, very useful in what appears to be the chief occupation of the bird, namely, turning up the stones and pieces of rock on the shore, in search of the sea-worms and small shell-fish which lurk beneath; farther inland it searches in the same way for beetles and other insects; hence its common name Turnstone, and Collared Turnstone, from the distinct white mark which passes over the neck and down each side of the breast, until it nearly meets beneath. In the Hebrides we find that it is called a Sandpiper, because it closely resembles, in habits and general conformation, some of the birds which belong to the *Tringa*, or Sandpiper genus, of which there are several species in this country.

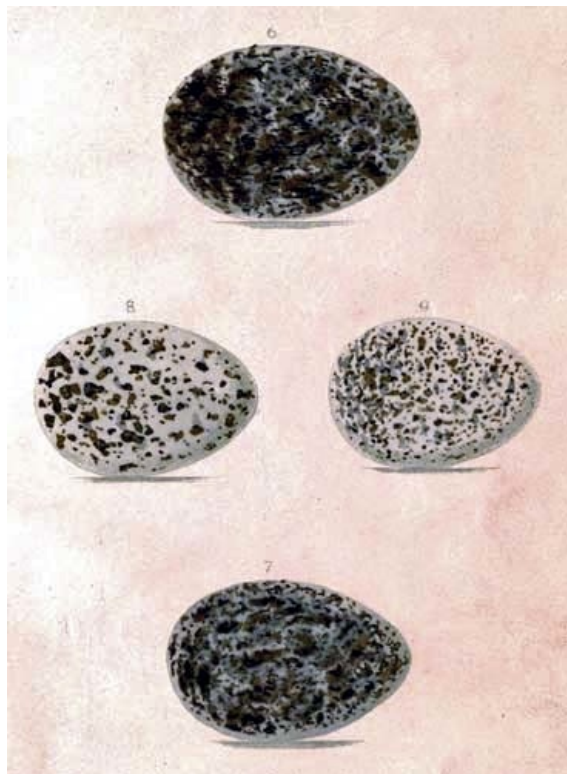
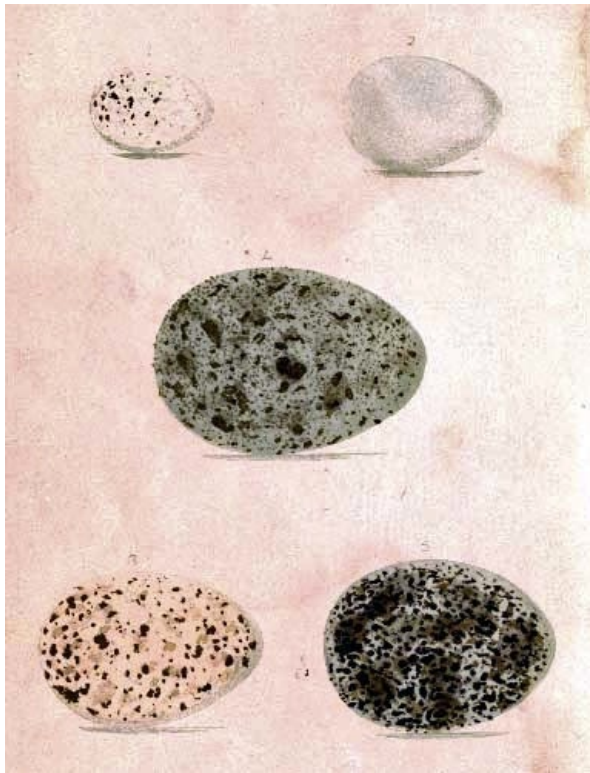
The most commonly used scientific name of the Turnstone is *Streptilas interpres*—rather a difficult name to translate; the first term appears to come from two Greek roots, *Strepho*—to turn, and *laas*—a stone; the second term may mean an interpreter, and is applied to the bird, as Morris conjectures, from its habit of careful investigation, and turning over, as a translator does the leaves of a book. So we may set down our feathered friend, who goes poking and prying into holes and turning up stones, as one who likes to see the bottom of things. It is well for my readers to have the like inclination, to possess an inquiring mind, so that they pursue their investigations with a due regard to the wishes and interests of others, and are not merely curious and Paul Pryish, if we may use the term. The secrets of nature cannot be too closely and perseveringly investigated, and in her domains much information may often be gained by becoming a Turnstone.

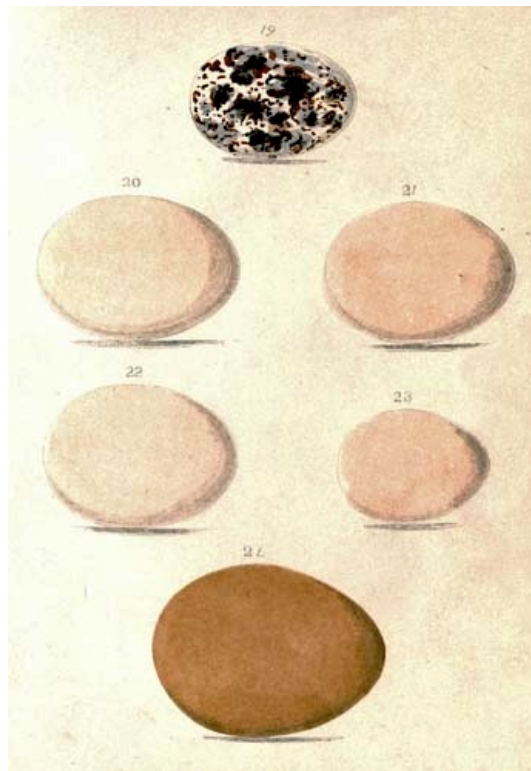
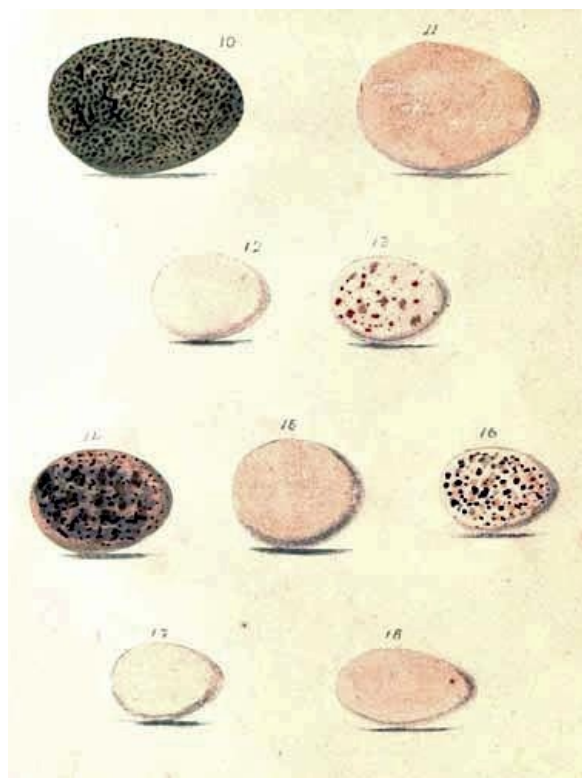
This bird is one of our winter visitants, arriving, says Morris, at the end of August; the Scottish naturalist, Macgillivray, we see, says, "visiting our coasts at the end of October;" perhaps he refers more particularly to Scotland and the northern parts of the island; both agree in assigning May as the latest date of departure.

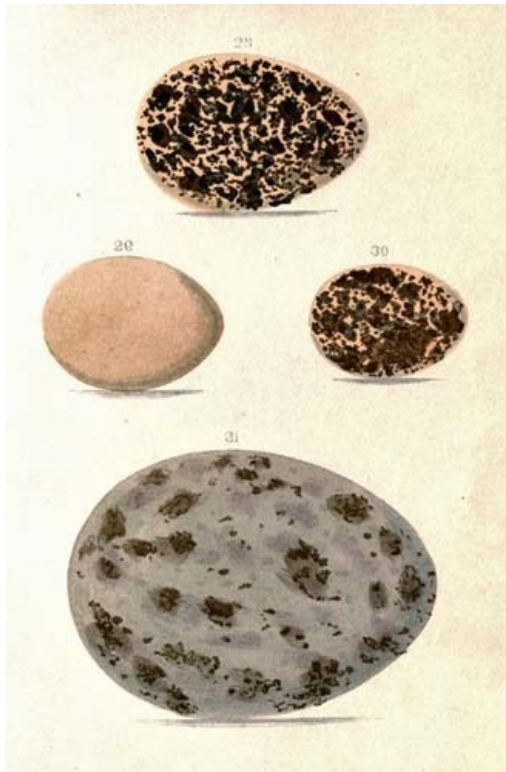
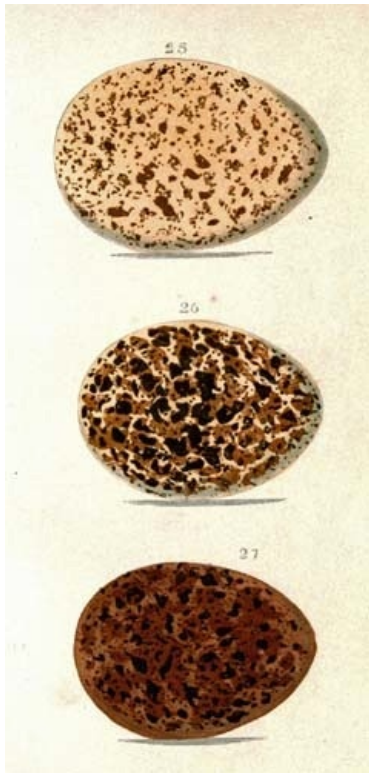
The Turnstones frequent rocky and gravelly places more than the smooth level sands. They are active energetic birds, running swiftly, and flying rapidly with regular well-timed beats of the wings, sometimes in a direct course, but oftener in curves. They have a clear twittering or whistling cry, uttered frequently while flying. Their time of breeding is about the middle of June, when they are found on the coast of Norway and other northern countries of Europe. They lay their eggs on the sandy and rocky shores, sometimes amid the stunted herbage, but often in a slight hollow, natural or scraped out for the purpose, and lined with a few blades of grass. The eggs are four in number, of a reddish olive cast, spotted with dark grey, greenish brown, and black, some very thickly, others not so much so. They are smaller than the eggs of the Peewit, and more rounded in shape. Hewitson has remarked that those which he met with in Norway had a beautiful purple or crimson tinge.

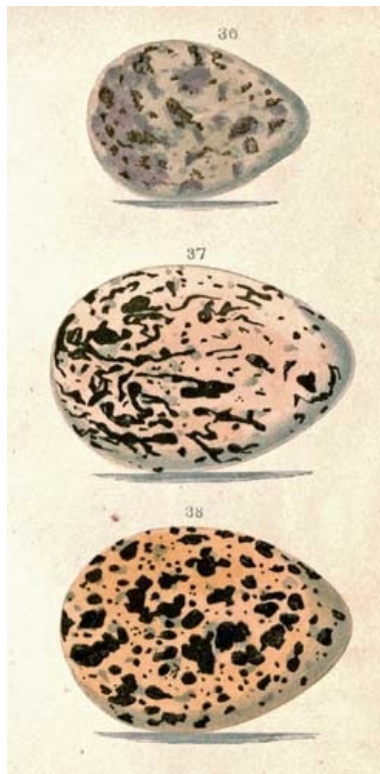
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Transcriber's Note:

The eight pages of illustrations preceding the title page have been moved to the end of the text.

Minor spelling and typographical errors have been corrected without note. Dialect spellings, contractions and inconsistencies have been retained as printed.

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