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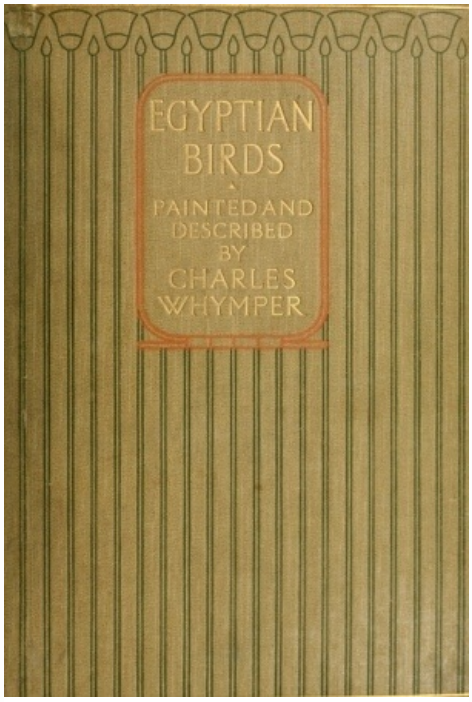


Every attempt has been made to replicate the original as printed.

Some typographical errors have been corrected; a list follows the text.

(etext transcriber's note)

EGYPTIAN BIRDS

COOT
The Sacred Lake, Karnak.

E G Y P T I A N
B I R D S

FOR THE MOST PART SEEN IN
THE NILE VALLEY

BY
CHARLES WHYMPER

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1909

DEDICATED TO

His Highness The Khedive

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION

OF MUCH PERSONAL KINDNESS AND INTEREST

SHOWN TO

THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD

THE question is so often asked, “What is the name of that bird?” that the author has tried in plainest fashion to answer such questions. The scientific man will find little that is new in these pages; they are not meant for him—they are alone meant for the wayfaring man who, travelling this ancient Egypt, wishes to learn something of the birds he sees.

C. W.

HOUGHTON, HUNTINGDONSHIRE,
1909.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Also eleven line drawings in the text.

BIRDS IN MID-AIR

EGYPTIAN BIRDS

Pliny declares that it was by watching the flight of birds in general, and of the Kite in particular, that men first conceived the idea of steering their boats and ships with a tail or rudder, for, says he, “these birds by the turning and steering by their tails showed in the air what was needful to be done in the deep.” Nowhere can the aerial movements of birds be better studied than on the Nile, and as one’s eye becomes trained it is just by the varying individual methods of flight that one is often able to identify the particular species of birds. This is to the most casual observer self-evident in those birds that fly close, near, or over one’s head; but it is astonishing how, as the eye gets trained, even a faint speck high up in mid-air can be absolutely identified by some peculiarity of shape and movement. On Plate 2 are some half-dozen different birds depicted as in flight, to assist the reader to identify the birds he will frequently see.

No. 1 is the ordinary Kite of Egypt. Seen as soon as one lands at Alexandria or Port Said: it is with us everywhere. Its most distinctive characteristics are the forked shape of its tail, and its familiarity with man, the latter leading it to have no sort of fear of flying near one, so near that its yellow beak and ever-restless eye, as it turns its head this way or that, can easily be seen, whilst its tail, moving in sympathy, sweeps it round to right or left.

No. 2 is the Kestrel, or Windhover of England. As this hawk is not a devourer of carrion, but feeds on mice, lizards, beetles, and other living things, it does not usually come so near the habitations of men, and is rarely seen in the centre of cities, but on the outskirts of towns and up the country it is common enough. When seen hovering with its body hanging in mid-air, with its wings rapidly beating above its head as shown, there should be no difficulty in recognising it. Again, when flying low its rich brown-red plumage and sharp-pointed wings should be noted, and if seen dashing into some cleft of ruined masonry or rocky cliff-side it can often be identified by the incessant, penetrating, squeaky call of the young in the nest, for by the time most visitors are in the country, *i.e.* March and April, it has its young nearly fully fledged.

No. 3 is a Peregrine Falcon. In general shape this is typical of all the falcons, and gives a characteristic attitude in its rushing downward swoop. The head is blunt and sunk into the shoulders, the wings are stiff, rigid, pointed and powerful, the tail straight and firm.

Nos. 4 and 5 are Vultures shown flying farther away from the spectator’s eye, and consequently on a smaller scale. The black and white of the adult Egyptian Vulture, No. 4, is such a distinctive characteristic that recognition is easy, but in the case of the young bird the plumage is dirty brown and grey with faint dark streaks on it, and at that stage might be confused with Griffon Vultures, if it were not for its smaller size. In flying, the way it tucks its head in so that only its bill seems visible, and the very small tail in proportion to the wing area, are the outstanding peculiarities of this, and indeed all Vultures.

No. 5 shows a distant group of Griffons, purposely placed at a distance, as on the small space of a page, if they were brought as near the eye as the other birds, they would completely cover the whole space, for they have an enormous span of wing. Note how small the tail is, and how the head is practically invisible.

Nos. 6 and 7 are of different orders of birds altogether, one being a Stork, the other the Heron. The Storks fly with outstretched neck, whilst all of the great family of Herons fly with their neck doubled up and the head rather tucked back towards the shoulders.

If these seven characteristic diagrammatic pictures of birds are once really learnt, it will enable the most ordinary observer not only to know those particular six birds, but the whole families, meaning many scores of birds of which these are chosen as representatives. The eyesight of some may need help in the form of a good field-glass. What is a good field-glass each individual must discover for him or herself, since the good glass is the one that really suits the sight of its owner. Some of the most noted glasses of to-day are not, anyhow to myself, of as much use as an old-fashioned one that I have had for years, and with which I am able *at once* to “get on” to the object I wish to observe. This is a most important detail, because birds are rarely still or quiet for long. When flying, this is particularly the case, and the simpler the glass and its mechanism the quicker you are on the object,—and this when, perhaps, you have only a matter of seconds for your observation is of first importance. As I do not wish either to embark on a libel action on the one side, or act as an advertiser of any maker, not even of the maker of my own glass, I praise or blame none, but suggest with all earnestness to every one who desires to really enjoy the study of bird life on the Nile or in their own country, without fail to get a glass that suits them, and which they can handle with lightning speed. I dwell on this because I have met so many having most expensive modern glasses who say they cannot find any pleasure in using them on birds, and I generally find that it is owing to the small field that their glasses cover. Sometimes these glasses are of quite extraordinary power, so that I have heard a man declare he could see a fly crawling over a carved face on the tip-top of some far-away temple, but that type of glass is not what is wanted for rough and ready quick field work, and it is of no more use than the three-feet long telescope still beloved by the Scotch stalkers. Birds rarely if ever allow time for one to lie down on one’s back, and with help of stout stick and the top of knee make a firm stand on which to place the glass and get the range. Over twenty-five years ago I wrote on “Nature through a Field-glass,”[1] and although since then one has had to alter one’s views on so many different points, I do not think I would wish to alter one single word in the claim made for the value of this aid to Nature study. So many birds are such small objects, that ten or fifteen paces away they are mere spots, and very difficult to recognise, as the detail of their plumage at that distance is lost, and all you can say is, that it is some small bird, but with a glass you can have it brought up to your very eye, you can see the arrangement of the masses of the feathers, and note even the ever lifting and falling of its little crest, as it goes creeping and stealthily gliding through the twigs and bushes after its insect food.

[1] In *The Art Journal*.

Egypt certainly is singularly fortunate in that birds here are far tamer than we find them at home, and so admit of a closer inspection; but even so, I should have been, times without number, utterly at a loss to exactly identify certain birds if it were not for my trusty glasses. There are some occasions where, owing to the extraordinary tameness of birds, no glasses are needed, and I recommend to all bird enthusiasts the

ground within the areas under the control of the Antiquities Department. No guns are allowed there, as they are up and down the Nile, and the birds know it. One of my favourite places of observation was at the Sacred Lake at Karnac. By the courtesy of Mr. Weigall, Chief Inspector of Antiquities, Upper Egypt, I was allowed to sleep in a disused building by the water-side, and by that means enjoyed opportunities, which fall to the lot of few, of studying bird life from midnight to early morning, and it is astonishing the number of birds that foregather to that quiet spot. Practically all night through there were sounds of birds coming or going at intervals. The calling of Coots one to another were the commonest sounds during the darkest hours; but at about 3 A.M., when I thought I could discern a little light, I would distinctly hear the “scarpe scarpe” cry of Snipe. A little later the hooting of the Eagle Owl, whom I knew had his nest up on the top of one of the end columns of the great hall, and then gradually from this side, then from that, came an ever-increasing series of calls and pipings, and one could make out flocks of Duck disappearing over the ridge of sand and broken-up masses of masonry. Later, shadowy forms of Greenshank or Plover showed as they went paddling by some faintly lighted-up pool, till at last the sun was up, and crested Larks were running round the banks fearlessly, and blue-throated warblers were hopping about the few bushes at the edge, and ever and anon flitting down to the ground and back again to the leafy shelter.

The question is asked and asked, but no very distinct answer comes, why are the birds so tame in Egypt? I am at a loss to know myself, for the land teems with foxes, jackals, kites, vultures, eagles, falcons, and hawks without end, all with an eye to business, ever circling round ready to devour any unprotected thing they can lay claws upon, and yet this seemingly utter fearlessness of all these mild-natured, defenceless little birds. Further, here in Egypt are perhaps more “demon boys” than are to be found elsewhere, and I hold firmly with the ancient sage, who said “that of all savage beasts the boy is the worst,” so that the tameness of some of Egypt’s birds is one more mystery of this land of mysteries.

In the following pages I have almost entirely spoken of the particular birds pictured in the illustrations. I am quite prepared for the question, however, “But why did you not include such and such a bird?” and my defence can only be the old one of the difficulty of settling various person’s ideas of what should be considered the best representative list of anything—whether it be birds, books, or pretty women. It must also be remembered that Egypt proper—the area alone treated upon in these pages—begins at Alexandria and ends at Assoan, a stretch of country of about 525 miles, whilst the breadth may be anything from fifty miles to less than one. From that area our selection has had to be mainly confined, and it has meant excluding a certain number of very beautiful and interesting forms.

Bird lovers should remember that when the, at first, seemingly rather extortionate demand of 120 piastres is made, before they are given the card which admits them to the temples, tombs, and areas under the control of the Antiquities Department, they are, in a very important way, really helping on the preservation of birds, for, as already has been said, on no ground under the control of the Department are birds allowed to be shot, and as these spots are the very ones in all Egypt most visited, it is very necessary, as amongst the thousands of tourists that are made familiar with the fact that wild duck, snipe, and waders were very tame at these places, there would always be some unsportsmanlike guns, who would seize the opportunity of going to those very places. Then no longer would the hooting of owls be heard in the ruins, no swallows nesting in the rock-hewn tombs, and no coot and wildfowl would ever be seen on the small sheets of water or sacred lakes that adjoin the temples. That all these birds are there means a very great added interest to these places to every one, and to some of us bird enthusiasts the living interest is greater than that which we can whip up for those heavy, severe, architectural achievements, or wild chaotic masses of ruined masonry.

Elsewhere the point of the scarcity of bird life in the hot summer months has been spoken of, but it is also curious to note that there are just about three to five weeks of mid-winter during which there is no migratory wave seemingly going on at all, up or down the Nile valley. No bands, great or small, of birds heading due north or due south are ever to be seen, and the remark is often made on the paucity of bird life, some persons even declaring that it is “a birdless land.” That the native birds are very small in number is true, but the total number of birds, and varieties of birds, that come for a time and pass on is very great. Those that live in temperate climes do, however, have the best of the deal, as it must ever be a greater

A VIEW ON THE NILE NEAR MINIEH

possession to have the birds nesting around one than merely passing by in migrating flights, be those flights as amazing as they may. Birds, from whatever reason is not certainly known, do not love the excessively hot or cold areas as breeding-places, but do seem to love the more moderate temperate climes. In Great Britain the number of birds that will and do breed within a very small tract of ground is amazing, and Mr. Kearton tells of a small copse in Hertfordshire in which were the nests, with eggs or young, of nine different species

of birds, all within fifty yards of one another; and in another case, within a space of ten yards, were a tit's, a flycatcher's, and a wood wren's nest. In Egypt, the number of birds breeding is not large, and excepting some of the great lakes with their margins of shallow water and swampy reeds, there are few places that offer any attractions for birds to nest in any numbers. In the groves of palms you do get many doves building in close proximity with kites and crows, and along certain stretches of the Nile banks large colonies of sand-martins build, but with these exceptions the fact remains that this country has not a large list of birds breeding in any numbers. In the great lakes of Lower Egypt and the Fayoum there are, however, enormous areas of some of the best feeding-grounds imaginable for water-fowl, and the fowl know it; nowhere can be seen more variety of duck, and herons, and waders, and shore birds, than at Lake Menzaleh. Elsewhere, I have already referred to my visit in March and April to this little known part of Egypt, and I wish that those who say this is "a birdless land," would only go and stay a few days at Kantara, Matariya, Damietta or Port Said, and then see if they could still call it "birdless." The extreme north and east side of the lake is separated only from the Mediterranean by a narrow bank of sand. Its waters are brackish, the Nile contributes but little to its bulk, and the opinion is largely held that if it could be made to contribute more, the food supply for the fish in it would be considerably increased, to the very great benefit of the fish supply of the country. Every village and town on the lake has many fishermen with boats out night and day. They catch a very large quantity, but it is said every year the size of the fish caught is steadily decreasing, and to increase the food-supply for the fish is now the aim of the authorities. This matter does not immediately affect the birds, as they love the small fry, but if Lake Menzaleh were to once lose its value as a supplier of profitable fish food, it might come to pass that some future engineer would turn his attention to this great area of waste water, and turn it into profitable cultivated ground, and then the birds would be driven away here as completely as they were in England when our fens and meres were drained to make good corn land. Therefore, this proposal to let in more Nile water is of much importance to Menzaleh remaining the great stronghold of bird life in Egypt. At present the spectacle it presents of its crowds of birds seen under the almost constant blue sky, is one that all would be very sorry to lose. The Flamingo come as its crowning glory, but the list of birds is long, and Mr. M. J. Nicoll tells how in only one week's stay, at Gheit-el-Nassara, on the north-west side of the lake, he met with no less than eighty-seven species. The ordinary visitor to Egypt hurries away from Alexandria or Port Said, but any who love Nature ought to leave a few days for places other than the Nile, if they are to obtain anything at all like a complete knowledge of Egyptian Birds.

THE GRIFFON VULTURE[2], Gyps fulvus

Arabic, *Rakham*.

Head and neck bare of fine feathers, but covered with short white down. Lower part of the neck surrounded by a ruff of long, thin, lance-shaped feathers, generally but not always white; sometimes it is buffish, sometimes rich rufous; wings at shoulders are light greyish brown, getting darker to nearly black on the large flight feathers. Breast and flanks grey, brown under tail-coverts a brighter burnt-sienna tone. Legs dull grey; base of beak yellow. Young birds are generally duller and lighter coloured than adults.

Length, 48 inches, but individuals vary greatly.

THIS is the Vulture so constantly depicted on the monuments of Egypt, and I do not think that any one has ever raised the slightest doubt of its identity; but the same can hardly be said of all the birds thereon figured.

[2]

EAGLES, VULTURES, HAWKS

Many different arrangements have been made of the order in which birds should be placed, some placing one, others, another family first, and the wise men are even yet not all agreed, so that the old-time method has been adopted of beginning with the birds of prey, since it is probably the order with which the ordinary reader is most familiar.

Eagles are not common, and though in the complete list of Egyptian birds the names of four are given, it is hardly likely to be a bird seen, whilst Vultures and Kites, and certain Hawks, most certainly will be.

GRIFFON VULTURE

Mr. Howard Carter, whose long connection with the work of the Antiquities of Egypt gives him the right to speak with authority, is now preparing for publication a book on this whole subject of the portrayal of animal life by Egyptian art, which is awaited with great interest, as he has given years of study to this one branch; and though I may venture to say something now and again of the present-day birds, and their pictured presentments in temples or tombs, the reader will do well to wait till Mr. Carter's book is published before coming to too positive a conclusion on a rather vexed subject. Of the Vulture there is no doubt, but of which of the existing hawks was the model of the Hawk almost as frequently depicted as the Vulture few are agreed, and personally I can arrive at no very satisfactory conclusion.

The Griffon Vulture is common now, and probably always has been. Its usefulness is undeniable, and it practically does no harm. It takes no toll of lambs or kids, and I never have heard of it snatching up the smallest of chickens. Its food is entirely carrion with the addition, possibly, of an occasional lizard or small snake. Vultures and Kites together are the very best of workmen, for the work they undertake they do absolutely thoroughly. No one has to go after them and clear up what they leave half-done, for they never leave anything half-done, be it a dead camel, or ten dead donkeys, or a mass of putrid offal from the shambles. They come; they see; they swallow; and not one speck or scrap of flesh or sinew will be left to-morrow on all those snow-white bones, and not the slightest sign of anything that can putrefy will even stain the ground; all is cleared away, and all corrupting danger gone by the time they have flown. They will remain all night through and the next day, if the job is a big one, and never dream of charging overtime! It is doubtless this that makes the natives of Eastern countries so unspeakably careless, as we think, of all sanitary precautions. They know that they need take no trouble; in a matter of hours, days at most, these winged scavengers will come, save them all bother and trouble, and clear the mess away. It is also this, one is disposed to think, and this alone, that is at the bottom of what to us seems an amazing fact, that they never destroy birds, so that even birds whose travels take them out of Egypt for a season, returning, know that here anyhow they will not be molested, and show themselves familiarly where in other countries they would exhibit the very opposite tendency.

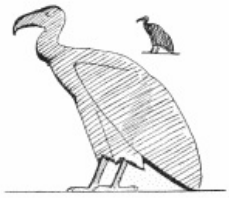


Fig. 1.
GYPS FULVUS—GRIFFON VULTURE. From a monument of Nectanebo in the Louvre.

Of late years a change has undoubtedly taken place in some birds owing to the ever-increasing number of

visitors, many of whom come with guns determined to get specimens. Birds are not fools, and the great Griffon in particular seems to have learnt that it behoves him to have a care, and distrust the too near approach of the white man who may desire to possess his great wings to mount as trophies: and one has heard of its becoming quite a difficult matter to get within range of these grand birds. Grand birds they are indeed when seen on the wing fairly near. When far up in mid-air they strike your imagination as mysterious, marvellous masters of the air, but see them close enough to make out their very feathers, and then no other word comes to your lips but, “What grand birds!” All the sleepy, dull, heavy look that they have when clumsily walking, half hopping, on the ground, or when sitting huddled up, at once disappears, and you acclaim the Griffon the king of flying things. A sea-gull, a swallow, an eagle, and many another, are all splendid in their graceful mastery over, and use of, the air we live in, but for sheer majesty of dominion I know no equal to the great Griffon Vulture.

One has often seen it on the sand-banks by the river’s side, sitting perhaps, either dozing after a gorge or waiting for the late lamented to reach just that nice point which means dinner-time. Sometimes they mildly squabble amongst themselves; sometimes they advance open-mouthed on some late arrival who comes swooping down with feet and legs stretched out well in front of him. But on the whole, I think, after its flight, its one outstanding virtue is its sociability. We none of us quite like that person who shuns his fellows, and was never known to have any gathering of friends even in simplest social fashion, and with birds there are some of those selfish kinds who prefer to live alone and feed alone, and absolutely resent any attempted sociability. But the Vulture, in spite of his rather forbidding face, is a downright sociable creature. On many a time one has seen Egyptian Vultures feeding with a dozen of their bigger cousins, who, when themselves well fed, have allowed even the despised crows to have some pickings from the feast.

Being tied up to a bank for two or three days during the Hamseen wind, which was blowing a perfect gale right in our teeth, I saw a curious sight of Vultures turning themselves into a sort of coroner’s jury on a dead buffalo. In the centre of a little sheltered bay was the “dear departed,” who was being closely examined and overhauled by a gaunt, sandy-coloured native dog. There he sat like a coroner growling out his observations, whilst the twelve—there were just a dozen Vultures—sat placidly waiting their turn for a closer study of the remains. They sat so long and patiently that one was surprised they did not end the matter in force, drive away the presiding officer, and get to real business, but we left them still waiting and seemingly discussing what was to be the verdict.

Whenever one has been taken to see a Vulture in captivity, either in hotel or other gardens, it has usually been this, the Griffon Vulture, that has been the unhappy captive.

THE EGYPTIAN VULTURE

Neophron percnopterus

Racham, Arabic

White all over body, wings black, a curious fringe of long feathers round the head; these sometimes get stained a more or less strong yellow; bare parts round eye and beak, yellow. Legs pinky, eyes carmine red, but Shelley says they do not get the full red eye till their fourth year.

Entire length, 27 inches.

THIS vulture, as shown by the above description, is markedly different from the great Griffon Vulture, and there can be no possible mistake in recognising it. From the tail-piece, which is taken from a painting of one on the inside of a wooden outside coffin casing, one can easily see the peculiarities of this bird; and at Deir-el-Bahari there are many painted examples showing the bird more or less in its natural colours, the bright yellow of the bill is shown, and the dark wings are rendered in a dull green. Why they should render one colour by another seems strange, but here again we must wait till Mr. Howard Carter gives us his explanation of this and the many other points he is still patiently working out. The wonderful way in

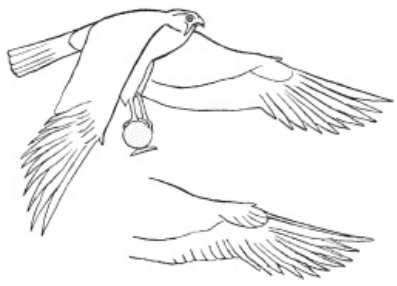
EGYPTIAN VULTURE

which the vultures assemble directly there is anything in the way of carrion has been often noticed: they will appear where a moment before there was not one to be seen either on the earth or in the blue vault. And this was at one time regarded as one of the wonders of the bird world; but as is so often the case, more exact knowledge rather reduces the marvellous. The habit of vultures is to fly at a very great height and to keep circling round; each bird practically keeps to one area, another takes a great sweeping circle adjoining; and others all the way round are in the same fashion, ever circling on the look-out. The moment one discerns anything down he swoops; this is instantly observed by the bird on the adjoining beat, and down he rushes; this again is repeated indefinitely, and so in a few minutes a dozen or more vultures may be there at the find where before were none. The circles that each make are frequently very large, perhaps many miles; it can easily be imagined, therefore, what a large area can be covered, and covered most minutely, by, say, half a dozen birds. The young are very different in plumage, being a rather dirty grey-brown all over, with brown eyes, and they retain this peculiarity till their fourth year, when they get the white and black plumage. But they somehow always look untidy birds. This perhaps holds good of all vultures when sitting in repose; their wings seem to be too loose jointed, and they hang their feathers so as to give the impression that they are not firmly fixed in and might fall out, but the moment they spring into the air their wings gain at once a sort of rigidity, and all the sloppy, untidy effect disappears. This bird is certainly more often seen than the preceding, since it is not afraid of the haunts of man; but one is not at all certain that it is really commoner. In all the representations of this as of other birds, the old Egyptian artists have a curious habit of depicting their birds with their legs stretched out too far in front, and looking as if the bird were in danger of falling over backwards.

Once as we were drifting by a bit of sandbank, the river being very low, I remember well an awful-looking, unrecognisable object, dirty, dishevelled, and, as children say, “very bluggy,” coming towards us over the skyline. It more resembled some poor drunk man who had been fighting and had got fearfully knocked about, and what bird it was, if bird at all, we knew not. Well, this dilapidated-looking thing walked slowly down the slope to the water’s edge; then we saw it had been having a real gorge; it was hideously rotund, and had apparently been living inside “the joint” until, sick with repletion, unable to fly, its very feathers clogged with gore, it made its way down to refreshen and clean itself, which when done, to our surprise it turned out to be just a common Egyptian Vulture.

Why the Vultures are featherless on neck and head is told in an old story in Curzon’s *Monasteries of the*

Levant. King Solomon, according to this account, was journeying in the heat of the day. “The fiery beams were beginning to scorch his neck and shoulders when he saw a flock of vultures flying past. ‘O Vultures!’ cried King Solomon, ‘come and fly between me and the sun, and make a shadow with your wings to protect me, for its rays are scorching my neck and face.’ But the Vultures would not, so the King lifted up his voice and cursed them, and told them that as they would not obey, ‘The feathers of your neck shall fall off, and the heat of the sun, and the cold of the winter, and the keenness of the wind, and the beating of the rain, shall fall upon your rebellious necks, which shall not be protected like other birds. And whereas you have hitherto fared delicately, henceforth ye shall eat carrion and feed upon offal; and your race shall be impure till the end of the world.’ And it was done unto the Vultures as King Solomon had said.”



Figs. 3 and 4.
Drawing from a painting of a Hawk at Karnak, to show the overlap of the wing feathers.

THE KESTREL

Falco tinnunculus

The male has the upper plumage of head, back, and wings red-brown, spotted and barred with black; under-parts buff with black spots on flanks, and which on breast are smaller and closer together, making long lines. Rump and tail blue-grey, barred with black, one broad bar at end of tail tipped with pure white, base of bill and legs yellow, eyes brown. The female is without the blue-grey, and is more evenly brown all over, with spots and bars on the tail.

Length, 13·5 inches.

THIS is the commonest Hawk, and nests in nearly all the ruins of temples and old buildings up and down the land, and, as already stated, the young are often to be heard when they cannot be seen, calling with their incessant squeaky voice for their devoted parents. The parents are to be seen searching for food, hovering over the fields in the same way that they do at home, for this bird is the familiar Windhover (see Plate II.). The quantity of mice that it consumes is enormous, and of lizards, beetles, and particularly locusts, it also takes toll. So that though it does not do the useful work that the Kites are doing day by day, it still clears the land of what would otherwise be grave scourges.

The Kestrel is one of the birds of which large quantities of mummies have been found, and it was clearly treated with quite sacred rites, lending colour to the views of some that this is the original of the Hawk so frequently pictured and sculptured. This question is one, however, that as doctors disagree upon, it is not for a layman to venture judgment; but several of the best preserved specimens of wall-paintings at Deir-el-Bahari in their drawing suggest much more the shape of a long-legged Sparrow Hawk than the compact Kestrel. The colouring of these pictures is so different, sometimes one part of a bird will be in red, in others it will be green. We are told, however, that this is all right and they both are right; this is something of a mystery and passes my own comprehension. The view is certainly possible that these ancient artists never thought any future race of mankind would come worrying round to know what particular specific kind of bird was meant, they alone desiring to give a rendering of a typical Hawk.

Honestly admiring the fine work of these old artists, I yet retain my own liberty to point out what is wrong, and the accompanying illustrations show a very glaring error which is repeated over and over again, a thousand times, throughout the temples and tombs of the country. Fig. 3 shows the two wings of a painted hawk at Karnak; the right wing shows the outside, the left the inside of the wing. In the right wing the feathers are shown with their front edge lapping over the hind edge of the feather next in front. This gives a certain strength to the whole surface of the wing-area needed for flight, and if that be an accurate representation of the outside of a Hawk’s wing in nature, and it is, then it follows that the inside surface would show the reverse; that is to say, the free edge of each feather would show over-lapping the feather next behind it, as shown in figures Nos. 4 and 5. But Fig. 3 shows how the ancients thought birds should have their feathers placed, back and front, both identical. In all humility, I have once or twice pointed this out to devout Egyptologists, but they pass it over. “A mere convention,” they say; “they always render wings so; worship, worship!”

Fig. 5.

Drawing of the primary quills of a Hawk, from Nature. Seen from the under surface to show the overlap of the feathers.

Mr. J. H. Gurney says that Egyptian Kestrels are certainly bolder than the British, and that he has “seen one swoop at a Booted Eagle,” and another “feather a Hooded Crow which ventured too near its nest.” He also draws attention to its size, and I think that it is certainly frequently of smaller dimensions than those at home; indeed, on the score of size, it is not easy to distinguish it from the Lesser Kestrel.

There are two Kestrels in Egypt: the one we have already described, and the Lesser Kestrel, which is like a small edition of the former, with the exception that his back and wings of bright red-brown are without spots, and the breast is only marked with small black spots, while the claws are yellowish white. Its length is 11.5 inches. When seen flying it is well-nigh impossible to identify it from the larger species, and I have heard of cases of men having shot what they thought was the Common Kestrel, and finding to their astonishment that it was the much rarer Lesser Kestrel. Its food consists mainly of insects and beetles, but it varies this stock diet with mice. I have seen it sitting in a cleft of the wall of the Ramaseum and other temples, but it is by no means a common bird. It nests commonly in the ruins and temples, and on the high cliffs, and its young can be oftener heard than seen, as they utter a very penetrating squeak, squeak, squeak call.

THE PARASITIC KITE OR EGYPTIAN KITE

Milvus aegyptius

Arabic, *Hiddayer*

Plumage—Head and neck grey; back and wings dark brown, under parts a rufous brown, the edges of the feathers lighter than the centres, which have a dusky streak, whilst the tail is broadly barred. Cere and legs yellow.

THIS Kite, which is seen everywhere, is not the Kite which we have accounts of as being once common in England, and which could be seen long years ago flying round St. Paul's Cathedral; but it is a true Egyptian native. I have it from men who have lived long in Egypt, through summer as well as winter, that in the really hot months this bird is practically the only feathered fowl one ever does see during those glaring months. There may be other birds left in the country, but you do not see them; they wisely keep out of sight in whatever isolated shaded place they can find. The Kite alone bears the full glare of that broiling sun, ever on the look out for every chance of a mouthful of any decaying nastiness it can secure, and

EGYPTIAN KITE

in this is the secret of its privileged position; unmolested even in the busiest haunts of men, secure in crowded city or up-country village, its services as scavenger are invaluable, and when every other bird has fled it never for a day quits its post or ceases its labours.

We will spare the reader a detailed menu of this omnivorous bird, but all who visit Egypt ought to bless it, as until some enlightened system of sanitation is adopted, this bird, almost unaided, makes the land possible to live in, or to be visited with any safety or pleasure. If it were exterminated as the Kites have been in Great Britain, it is almost impossible to exaggerate what would be the dire results to the health of the newcomers to this old Eastern country. Mercifully there seems no sort of chance of its numbers decreasing. Indeed, in 1908 I saw behind the New Winter Palace Hotel at Luxor, a flock which certainly ran into hundreds; two dead donkeys thrown out behind the walls of the Hotel grounds were the cause of this vast congregation. They never leave a shred of anything more than the bones, picked as clean and white as the paper this is printed on; they tidy it all up, and for days after the main body of birds have left, a stray bird or two comes sweeping down to see if there is any tiny scrap of flesh, or skin, or sinew left hidden away under stone or sand. On several occasions I have seen Kites bathing in the water, so presumably, although they are called unclean birds, they are in reality as cleanly as most. As far as personal observation goes I should call the Swifts and Swallows the dirtiest birds; anyhow they are more infested with odious parasites than any other birds I have handled. Kites build untidy, clumsy nests of sticks; rubbish, rags, and even bits of newspapers are to be sometimes found hanging on the outside: they are generally placed in the upper boughs of some high tree, and in many of the gardens in the centre of squares in Cairo you can watch them bringing food to their squealing young. They breed very early, and often they have a brood hatched by the end of January.

There is something very fascinating in watching their flight, it seems so easy and strong, and from its complete fearlessness it approaches so near the spectator that the movement of the tail as it turns to right or left can be seen acting as a well-directed rudder. As already stated, Pliny says it was observing this that gave man his first idea of how to steer his boats and ships. And

KITES IN FLIGHT

the frequent stooping of the head down to the food it holds in its feet is another interesting action that can be watched clearly without the aid of field-glasses, as it passes close overhead. The tail of the young is not so forked as in the adult, and the general plumage duller coloured all over.

The Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*, is said to be a very rare bird in Egypt, but I certainly think it is commoner than some imagine. It is very similar in general appearance to the last, and unless seen very near is hard to identify. On 13th January 1908 I was fortunate, however, in seeing some three or four at the river-side at Karnak, beaten down low by a high wind, with completely black beaks and very dark rich black-brown plumage. Mr. Erskine Nicol, who was with me, also noted them. Shelley says, “The general shade of the plumage is blacker. The dark streaks down the centres of feathers on throat and crop are broader than in the Egyptian Kite, and the bill is entirely black.”

Length, 23·3 inches.

WHITE OWL, SCREECH OWL

Strix flammea

Arabic, *Boma buda*

Plumage of upper-parts a tawny yellow, mottled, speckled, and pencilled with delicate grey, black and white; face white, as are the under-parts; individuals vary in being lighter or darker; buffish-white on chest, feet pinkish, beak yellowish. Entire length, 13·5 inches.

EITHER of the two last English names are perhaps in this case more suitable than the first, as barns in Egypt are scarce, whilst this owl is common, and is met with in temples and tombs fairly frequently.

In the past it must always have been a common bird, as it is one of the few quite easily identified birds used in hieroglyphics (in spite of which, to my astonishment, in a recent work on Egypt this owl is called the Horned Owl).

The Barn Owl has practically a world-wide range, being found not only in Europe but Africa, Asia, Australia, and America, and though examples from certain localities do show some variation in plumage, it is still always unmistakably the Barn Owl. It

BARN-OWL

is, however, not met with within the Arctic Circle. At home its food is nearly entirely mice, but in Egypt it has no hedgerows to hunt, no large farmyards and rich granaries, and though it does get some mice it has to take lizards, an occasional small bird, and sometimes fish, or even scraps of carrion.

Of all the owls this has the softest, most silent flight, and this in itself is somewhat uncanny as it quite quietly passes close to you, and then disappears in the gloom, from which a little later may come a terrifying screech as of a strangled infant. There is little room for wonder, then, that all simple folk should have regarded this bird as evil-omened: and the old Scriptures have many references in this spirit when describing places haunted, desolated, the “abode of owls and dragons.” To this day, in our own country, the feeling is evinced most strangely in spite of all our modern education. Very cleverly the early Egyptians caught the most salient feature—the extraordinary large mask-like face—and in some of the wall decorations at Deir-el-Bahari, which are in perfect preservation, it would be well-nigh impossible to improve on them as exact portraits of the Barn Owl. A possible cause of the choice of this bird is that it is one of the best-known species: for of all the owls this one is quite peculiar in its habit of rather courting than flying from the haunts of man; for though it is in the ruins of temples it is also to be found in the thick foliage near villages and towns, and has even been noticed flying about in the very heart of Cairo in the Ezbekeir Gardens, as recorded by Mr. J. H. Gurney in his *Rambles of a Naturalist*—and the habit of attaching itself to human habitations is universal wherever it is met the world round.

The Barn Owl has a custom which those who suffer from indigestion may well envy, and that is its power of disgorging, after every meal, all the indigestible portions of its dinner in a compact, round, hard pellet, about the size of a nut: and from under some of its roosting-places great basketsfull of these pellets have been collected, and men of science analyzing these have obtained therefrom the most precise information as to the diet of this much-persecuted bird. From such observations the value of its services in our own country were rather tardily recognised. But now that it is established that nine-tenths of its food consists of mice and rats, the law of the land has been invoked to protect it. Lord Lilford writes on the extraordinary appetite of young owls, that “I have seen a young Barn Owl take down nine full-grown mice one after another till the tail of the ninth stuck out of his mouth, and in three hours’ time the young ‘gourmand’ was crying out for more.”

Fig. 6.
From Deir-el-Bahari.

THE LITTLE OWL

Carine meridionalis

Plumage—A plain greyish-brown with dark markings and spots on the breast; eyes yellow. Entire length, 8·5 inches.

THE Little Owl is a common bird, but it is not, when flying, very owl-like in appearance; and doubtless it is very often seen and not recognised as an owl at all, especially as it flies freely in the daytime, and I have even seen it sitting facing the sun on some wooden trellis-work in a garden at mid-day; and not only once, but morning after morning it could be seen enjoying the warmth. This peculiarity, the very opposite of what we find in most owls, has led to an awkward position in some parts of England—for in certain of the Midland counties this owl is rapidly becoming a perfect scourge. Some distinguished naturalists in Northamptonshire and other counties thought it would be good to introduce this undoubtedly rather fascinating bird from the Continent—where it is common—into the British Isles—where it was very rare—so year after year

LITTLE OWL

they obtained large numbers of these owls, and liberated them in the hope that they would breed and multiply. Their hopes have been more than justified, for they did at once settle down and increase; they passed first from the county they were liberated in to the adjoining county of Huntingdon; then, spreading over that, they extended their area into Cambridgeshire, then on into Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk. Every one was at first delighted, and keepers were given strict injunctions on no account to worry the newcomers; but gradually the keepers' faces began to get long, and first one and then another reported strange stories of depleted coops shortly after the foster-hen was put out into the open with her family of ten or more young birds. Ornithologists were scandalised at these stories—an owl take a young game-bird: impossible!—but what is impossible in the eyes of men of science has turned out to be a fact, and this charming-looking Little Owl is found to be one of the worst vermin on the whole list which vexes the soul of the game preserver. For it is just this, that at the very time the young pheasants or hand-reared partridges are put out, the Little Owl has its own little family to feed; the foster-mother, the hen, being always kept shut in the coop, the little puff-balls of pheasants, as they are in those early days, run in and out between the bars, and once outside are, of course, without protection. The Owl has noticed this fact, and it may be seen sitting on the top of the coop watching till one of the little birds is conveniently near, and down it swoops and carries it away for its own family's dinner; this it will repeat time after time till it has cleared off the whole lot. This can only happen, of course, when the young pheasants are very very small—a few days old—and hand-reared, for if they were out and about with their own mother—or in the case of partridges their own father—they would be safe, as neither would allow such an impudent attack to be made without going for the murderous marauder. It has only been after years and years of persistent effort that gamekeepers have been induced to learn that all ordinary owls flying at night-time—when all young birds are safe under their mothers' wings—are harmless, and that from the good they do in clearing off hundreds of mice and young rats, should be, and must be, protected. They are now protected; but this newcomer arrives—not an ordinary night owl at all—and the whole position is changed, and years of teaching will be thrown to the winds, as it will be hard indeed to persuade the average thick-headed keeper that he was not right all along, and that every owl of every sort ought to be shot at sight and nailed to the pole. So much for benevolent intentions of increasing the variety of a country's fauna. Nearly always it is best not to interfere with Nature's order, and the rabbit pest in Australia, and the sparrows in America, are already known to most as illustrations of this fact.

The Little Owl makes a quaint pet, and thrives well in confinement; its antics and poses are really droll, and the big eyes look at you with a seeming deep intelligence. This is the owl, by the way, that by the ancient Greeks, was made sacred to Pallas Athene and used as a symbol of wisdom; furthermore, it was engraved on many of their coins.

In Egypt it is everywhere—in town and country, in ruined temples, dismal tombs, and gardens bright with flowers and sunshine. I have seen it sitting on the upright poles of shadoofs, and on the tops of high stalks of growing maize, and once I saw it, in broad daylight, on the back of a recumbent buffalo.

EGYPTIAN EAGLE OWL

Bubo ascalaphus

Arabic, *Buma*

Plumage a rich buff-brown, with darker markings of black, brown, and grey. Large wing-feathers and tail broadly barred with blackish brown; chin and upper throat white; under-plumage bright golden buff, with blotches and streaks on the flanks; beak black; eyes of most intense flame-like orange. Total length, 20 inches.

THIS name Eagle Owl is almost more imposing than the bird itself, as, though large, it is much smaller than the Eagle Owl of Europe.

It is to be found in some of the very largest of the temples, ruined or otherwise, but, as far as my own knowledge goes, not in many of the smaller buildings. Its principal haunts are the steep cliff-like sides of the hills and mountains.

When staying in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, every night regularly as the sun sank behind the ridge, the first weird “Booom” rang out, soon to be answered by another similar call from another part of the hills, and then, soon and silently, there floated past the big dull brown form. Sailing away to the opposite side, with my glasses

EGYPTIAN EAGLE OWL

I could see it stretch out its legs forward as it settled on to some favourite ledge of rock, and turning its great head round, so that I could see its glorious coloured eyes, would utter a still louder booming challenge. This was so absolutely regular that when working I knew exactly where certain purple-blue shadows would be across the face of the otherwise golden cliff-side, when I heard its first call. Twice I had one in captivity; one died, but the other seemed to recover so well from a damaged wing, that as soon as I had finished the studies needed, I decided to let it go free, and let it out; but, stupefied by confinement, or else because the wing was not really strong enough to make flight easy, it only hopped and walked about in a rather aimless way, and was in danger of being attacked by the dogs of our camp. So I had to catch, and in my arms carry my captive right high up the Deir-el-Bahari cliffs—and any that have been there know what that means—and at a safe place near a cleft I had often seen them at, set it free; neither then, nor during my toil up that cliff was I rewarded by the slightest sign of gratitude; on the contrary, hissing viciously and clawing right and left with its big talons, intent on doing me serious damage, my prisoner strove with me. That was in the evening; very early the next day I went right up the same place, and as there were no feathers or other marks of murder, I sincerely hope the poor bird got safely away to some sheltering cave, there to be welcomed by wife or husband, as the case might be, and regaled with great store of such food as Eagle Owls love. When with me, sardines, scraps of meat, and bits of bony chicken were readily eaten, but a great dislike was shown to being watched at meals.

THE HOOPOE

Upupa epops

Arabic, *Hud Hud*

Head and crest rich rusty orange; the tips of feathers of crest black; the neck and chest rufous changing to a pink hue on breast; wings and tail black with broad white parallel bars; under-parts buff to white; legs brown; beak black; eyes brown. Length, 12 inches.

THE hoop-hoop-hoop cry of this bird is almost as curiously attractive as its varied plumage and magnificent crest. You see it everywhere, and it loves the haunts of man. It is not well to know too much of one's heroes, and it certainly is well not to know too much of the habits of some of the wild children of the earth and air. The repulsiveness of the menu of the Hoopoe is enough to make one put one's pen through its name and never mention it. But it is not always feeding, and when walking about in stately fashion on some mud wall, lifting its great circular crown of feathers ever and again, whilst it utters its call-name hoop-hoop-hoopoe, it is so picturesque and charming one has to pass its nasty little peculiarities by. We have to do this frequently with our own unfeathered friends for the good we presume they possess, and there is much that is good in this perky little bird.

Time was, it is said, when the Hoopoe had no crest, and he only got one granted by royal favour. The king of those days was importing a new bride from Asia, and decided to have her met at the port on the Red Sea where she landed, with unusual pomp. His army was to go down and escort her to the royal city, and all the birds of the air were instructed also to wait her arrival and form a flying sunshade with their wings, and fan the air with their pinions, whilst all should fill the heavens with their sweet songs—and thus she should come. The birds agreed, all but the Hoopoe. He objected, he knew something about the lady, and he wouldn't consent to go. Saying he would rather not, he flew away to a cave in some far-away mountain in the desert. When the king heard of this he was very wroth. Anyhow, he had the culprit sent for, and now the poor Hoopoe is brought before his enraged majesty, but so bravely did he comport himself, and so well did he defend his position, showing that if he did that for which he had conscientious objections, he would suffer grave moral and intellectual damage, and therefore it was with all respect he begged to be excused. His Majesty was so amazed

HOOPOE
On the house-tops.

with his bravery and intelligence that he took from off his own head the royal crown and placed it on the Hoopoe's, saying, truly thou art a very king amongst birds, and shall for ever be crowned. To show the truth of this story, it is only necessary to come to Egypt, when the most sceptical will be at once converted, as he will see that every single Hoopoe to this day is indeed right royally crowned as no other bird is.[3]

[3] A variation of this story is given by the Hon. Robert Curzon, in his *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*. There the Hoopoe was told by the king to go home and consult his spouse, as to what should be the royal gift, and she, like a true feminine, on being questioned, said, "Let us ask for crowns of gold on our heads, that we may be superior to all other birds." The request was granted, but the king forewarned them that they would see the folly of their request; and all Hoopoes of both sexes strutted about with solid gold crowns, and "the queen of the Hoopoes gave herself airs, and sat upon a twig, and refused to speak to the Merops, her cousin" (bee-eater), but a certain fowler, who set traps and nets for birds, put a broken mirror into his traps. The queen of course went to look into it to the better see herself and her golden crown, and got caught. The value of these solid gold crowns soon led to every man's hand being against the vain Hoopoes. "Not a Hoopoe could show its head, but it was slain or taken captive, and the days of the Hoopoes were numbered; then their minds were filled with sorrow and dismay." The king of the Hoopoes went back to the monarch and related their piteous plight, and Solomon said, "Behold, did I not warn thee of thy folly, in desiring to have crowns of gold? Vanity and pride have been thy ruin. But now, that a memorial may remain of the service which thou didst

render unto me, your crowns of gold shall be changed into crowns of feathers, that ye may walk unharmed upon the earth.”

The Cairo Zoological Gardens report it as “a fairly numerous visitor in spring and autumn” to the gardens, and of course most know that it is a casual visitor to the British Isles; but there it is at once shot, as soon as seen, and is then mounted by the local taxidermist. Few collections of stuffed birds, however modest, are without examples of British-killed Hoopoes. That it will ever therefore become common with us is impossible, but that it might be a regular visitor is certain, for, as long as there have been any records kept, its appearance in the summer has been noted, and no farther than the Continent it is a regular and honoured visitor. The last Hoopoe I saw in Egypt was on April 6, on Lake Menzaleh; it rose from a mere scrap of an island all soft sand, and headed to the dunes that separate the lake from the Mediterranean, and the last I saw of it, was it still flying with its head pointed to European shores.

THE KINGFISHER

Alcedo ispida

General plumage a metallic blue; the under parts, lores, and ear coverts are bright chestnut; throat, white; the top of the head is a greenish turquoise with darker markings; the back is a brilliant cobalt blue shading into darker ultramarine blue on rump and tail; legs, red; eyes, brown. Length 7 inches, but individuals vary much.

In Egypt this bird is common, and would be commoner if it were not in some parts relentlessly pursued for its brilliant plumes. When at Matariya on Lake Menzaleh I heard that the regular price was a half piastre (or a penny farthing) per skin, and that at that price hundreds were obtained. As we at home are not entirely blameless on this point much must not be said, but it is nevertheless to be regretted, as its brilliant plumage is such a valuable addition to the frequently colourless river scenery. Wherever there is water both in Upper and Lower Egypt this bird will be met with, and in the Luxor district it is really common. It is a bird that loves some particular spot, and clings to some one reach or another, so that where once seen it is highly probable to be seen again. It is said to breed in Egypt, and probably does in localities suited to it.

The food is chiefly fish, and it has often been noted that it swallows such prey, after one or two preparatory blows, head foremost. In flight it hardly seems to move its wings, or they are moved so quickly that the eye does not catch the movement, it seems to pass along smoothly, literally like an arrow. This bird, like so many bright plumaged ones, is no songster, and has only a sort of shrill call note. Both male and female are alike in plumage, but the female has more red on the lower bill.

There is one other Kingfisher that may be met with, the Little Indian Kingfisher, very similar in plumage to the last, but it is a smaller bird and its bill is longer. I do not think I have ever seen it, though I know those who say they have noticed it several times on the rushing water in the Assoan district.

COMMON KINGFISHER

BLACK AND WHITE KINGFISHER

Ceryle rudis

The whole plumage black and white; feathers on top of head form crest; under surface white. In the male two dark bands cross the upper breast, in the female only one; both have some thin lance-shaped black markings on the sides; beak and legs black; eyes brown. Length, 11·5 inches.

THIS is a bird few know till they have been up the Nile; but when they have, they know it well, for it is not at all of a retiring nature, but boldly shows itself, and is very fond of sitting in conspicuous places, on the tops of poles, or on the dahabeah chains. Many seem to find it difficult to understand this is a Kingfisher, since they have a preconceived idea that Kingfishers must all necessarily be bright-plumaged birds, like the preceding species; but the Kingfishers are a very large family, and very various in size and colour. The Australian "Laughing Jackass" is a Kingfisher, and there are many others that possess no very special brilliance of plumage.

This Black and White Kingfisher is a true resident in Egypt, and just about the time we all leave for our homes it sets to work to make one, and digs out a hole in the soft sides of the Nile bank. In some cases it burrows back two to three feet before it widens out the chamber in which the nest is made. I do not know that the bird is in any way persecuted, but it is not beloved of the people, as they accuse it of eating too many of their young fish. Visitors who do not like their muddy Nile fish do not see any great offence in this, but I can quite see the matter from the native's point of view, and am a little astonished that it has been allowed to increase and multiply as it has. Last year, each evening, something like thirty used to roost on the chain cable of Mr. Davis's dahabeah, moored just opposite Luxor. Where they all came from was something of a mystery, as, though you would see one now and again on that reach of river, you would never be able to see anything like that number; yet every evening in they used to come, and after a rather excited noisy discussion settled down to roost for the night.

A most interesting thing in this bird is its singular habit of hanging in mid-air, above the water, on the look-out for fish. Although I have said fish, it is certain it must take other creatures than fish, for I have often seen it, not

BLACK AND WHITE KINGFISHER

only hovering over the Sacred Lake at Karnak, but also plunging head foremost down into its waters, and securing some food or other, with which it has at once flown away to some convenient perch and there swallowed it. Now there are no fish in the Karnak Lake, and it is clear that what the Kingfisher goes for must be some variety of its ordinary fishy food, and must be some larvæ or fine fat water-beetle. When hanging thus in mid-air it reminds me a little of our own Windhover or Kestrel, in its quick clapping stroke of wings, whilst its body and tail hang nearly perpendicularly down, till it sees what it wants; then the position of its body alters in a flash, and down it plunges, and is lost for a moment in the splash and spray that it raises by the impact with the water.

THE LITTLE GREEN BEE-EATER

Merops viridis

The plumage throughout is green, with a black eye-stripe and a black marking in front on chest; legs brown, beak black, eyes crimson, two centre tail-feathers very elongated. Total length, 11 inches.

THERE are three species of Bee-eaters, but this, the Little Green Bee-eater, is chosen because it is resident, and because it must be seen by every one in Upper Egypt. The other two species are both birds of passage through Egypt, and are seldom seen or heard till April or May, when most people have left. This bird is well called the Green Bee-eater since it is green right over every part of its upper plumage, but owing to the shading of parts not in the full light of the sun it often appears as if its head were of burnished gold, and again when it flies, if the light be at all behind it, the transparent outstretched wings look a brilliant orange owing to the under-sides being of that rich warm colour. In habits it will remind any observer of our Fly-catchers at home, for it sits rather humped up on a dead twig, wall, or post till, suddenly observing some passing bee or fly, it

LITTLE GREEN BEE-EATER

swoops down on its prey and then back again to its perch to enjoy its food. This it will continue to do by the hour together, till, first stretching out one wing and leg, and then the other, it decides to set out for pastures new, and with an easy, long, sweeping flight, rising and then falling, it disappears from view. It is a very tame little bird, and is met with literally everywhere; but it is undoubtedly most fond of the wells with a few trees growing round them, or the gardens or palm-groves. I do not remember to have seen one actually on the ground, in which matter it is similar to all very short-legged birds, and its legs are very short.

It is a melancholy fact to have to record that it is far too often shot by visitors; and worse, sometimes now native boys catch it for the delectation of tourists, and, tying a bit of string round its legs, hold it as if it were perching naturally on their hands. They then offer it to tourists as a tame, pet bird, and I fear the tourist too often buys of them, for otherwise these utterly mercenary little rascals would not indulge in this traffic. Needless to say the poor bird always dies—indeed, is more often than not half-dead when in the boy's hand, as its half-glazed eye only too plainly shows. One hardly knows how to cure this cruelty, for the humane nearly always rebuke the boy, give him a piastre or two, and liberate the bird, and pass on thinking they have done a good deed. The bird can only flutter feebly away, and the boy of course re-catches it and goes through the same performance with the next kind-hearted, foolish visitor. It is with regret I write it, but I do not in the least now believe in the Egyptian's love for birds, or anything other than backsheesh. Why the birds are or were so universally tame is not because of their kindliness, but simply because of their apathy. The moment it dawns on them that there is anything to be made out of birds or any other lovely thing they are as brutal as the very worst British hooligan.

I have sometimes seen Bee-eaters in the ruins and temples, and in this connection it is interesting to recall that there is a very good representation of one flying, in the celebrated series of pictures of the expedition to Punt at Deir-el-Bahari, the only case I can remember of a Bee-eater being so represented. It is entirely insectivorous, and is one of the many birds which ought, in this insect-infested country, to be strictly preserved, for it is appalling to think what an unbearable land this would be for us thin-skinned people if the teeming clouds of flies and mosquitoes were not held in some check by these industrious birds, which are all day long steadily trying to reduce their numbers.

By modern naturalists the Common Swift is not placed along with the Swallow, but comes near the Bee-eaters and Nightjars, and I therefore place my notes on this bird at this point.

When I arrived early in October 1907 at Deir-el-Bahari, I saw thousands upon thousands of Swifts flying

round in never-ending circles, and all, as far as I was able to identify them, the same Swift that goes shrieking its weird song down every town and village in rural England. Night after night, in the wonderful glow that follows the actual sunset, I used to go to the top of the great cliffs that overhang Queen Hatashu's temple, where round me raced here, there, and everywhere, these great clouds of birds, sometimes so near me, as I sat quietly hidden in a niche of the rocks, that I could easily have knocked them down with a stick; whilst others were high, high up, circling round. Every now and then so close they came, shrilly shrieking and screaming, one after another, in follow-my-leader fashion, that I felt the cool fanning of the air from their beating wings. In the early morning they were out again, but during the middle of the day they were rarely if ever to be seen. By the end of November there were but few, and when I returned after Christmas there was hardly one to be seen. About the middle of January I saw flocks of them again at Karnak, which is only just on the other side of the river.

Shelley seems to speak of the Common Swift as rare, and he is most probably right, but I have no doubt whatever of the identity of those I saw in the neighbourhood of Thebes at that particular time. The Swift that really breeds here is the Pale Swift, which, instead of being almost black all over like the Common Swift, has a more or less uniform greyish-brown plumage, and is considerably smaller; Shelley says two inches.

In the report of the Giza Zoological Society on the wild birds that have been observed in the gardens, both species of Swifts are noticed as having occurred there, and it is probable that both kinds are spread over the whole of Egypt. Why it is not generally noticed is because, as has been said, it flies out rather late, and keeps to great heights, never within my own experience flying as at home a foot or so above the ground.

The Pale Swift I have often seen, and so close to me that the main difference in plumage to the Common Swift has been definitely noted. I myself have never heard it make the wild shrieking note our own bird makes, but then I have only seen it in the mid-winter months.

THE SWALLOWS

Hirundo rustica — *European Common Chimney Swallow*

Hirundo savignii — *Egyptian*

Upper plumage from forehead to tail, deep metallic steel blue-black; forehead and throat, rich red-brown; a band of the blue borders the red on throat; underparts creamy-white; beak very short and black; eyes, dark brown. Length, 8 inches.

THE above description is of the Common or Chimney Swallow, and if for the creamy-white underparts, you read red-brown underparts, length 7 inches, you have an accurate description of the Egyptian or Oriental Chimney Swallow. As the Egyptian Swallow and our own Common Swallow are so similar in appearance and habits, both are dealt with in this article. With so little difference between the two species, it is not strange that persons seem to find it hard to distinguish the one from the other; but really, if one watches at all carefully, he will soon note if the individual bird has the creamy-white underparts or no, as it is seldom that any swallow flies long without that sideway swerve which shows the wing lifted free above the body. The first date I have noted as

COMMON SWALLOW AND EGYPTIAN SWALLOW

seeing the Common Swallow was February 1, 1908, at the Mût Lake, Karnak; but I have no doubt that at some parts up or down the river they can be seen all the winter through. After February, day by day, the great hosts of them, all flying with earnest intent due north, makes one of the most interesting sights to English eyes in all Egypt, as one can well believe that some of those very birds will be the first to greet one on his return home in April or May. I have often seen them hawking about over the waters of some small insect-haunted pool in friendly company with their Oriental cousins, and have always marvelled at their leaving a land with its constant sun and amazing wealth of flies and insects, for our own comparatively inclement clime and poor food-supply. In a room I slept in, at the hut at Deir-el-Bahari, there was a swallow's nest just over my bed, and though it was too early when I was there in January for them to start breeding, on several occasions the Egyptian Swallows came fluttering in through the unglazed windows, just to take a look round and see that all was right for later on. On February 14 I saw two, which were clearly mated birds, on the ground, picking up scraps of twigs and straw, and then rapidly fly away. In a few minutes both were back again, and one seemed to be taking mud, whilst the other kept searching for just the right-sized bit of dry grass or straw; it took up many bits, but they did not seem to satisfy the requirements and were dropped, till just the right-sized piece was forthcoming. So it is clear they must start nesting very early, and pretty certainly will have, as our British bird does, two broods in the season. There is practically little or no difference in the habits of either of these two Swallows—the one might be the other—and though I have watched them long and carefully, I am unable to recall any single peculiarity that our Swallow has from the Egyptian. Both alike have that habit of dipping momentarily into the water, then rising for a short distance, and again fluttering down on to the surface with a slight splash, and both kinds seem to have boundless energy and strength, tearing up and down incessantly by the hour together. So many birds rest in flight by making long sweeping curves with rigidly outstretched wings. Kites and Vultures are great exponents of this power, but the Swallows, though they can do it of course, are nearly all the day careering in headlong flight with restless energy, and the

PALE CRAG SWALLOW

long journey they take in migration is probably, under fair climatic conditions, nothing at all formidable to them. If, however, they get caught in some storm or blizzard-like gale, it is an altogether different matter, and there are many records of the Mediterranean coast being littered with hundreds of dead bodies of the Swallows that have succumbed and fallen helplessly into the sea. Watching them flying about the river, or above the growing crops, one finds it difficult to picture a more perfectly happy existence—food in abundance, sunshine all day long, and a kindly welcome at roosting time in every house or rough mud-hut—and cheery and grateful it seems for it all, if one may judge by its lively twittering song. No wonder every country has made a special favourite of the Swallow. It is entirely insectivorous, and, as has been said of several other birds, the use that they are in this land of plagues of flies is enormous.

Swallows' nests, as is well known, are generally placed on some horizontal beam or masonry. Martin's nests are placed on the perpendicular sides of buildings, and by choice close under the eaves of our broad-roofed houses. Both are built of mud, and the mud is very generally obtained from roadsides or by the river's edge, but if any of my readers will endeavour to build up a nest with such mud against an upright wall, they will attempt an all but impossible task, for as the curve begins to grow outwards it will with its own weight fall away from the wall. What is it, then, that the Swallows and Martins do to make their nests adhere? If you examine an old last year's nest and try and break the outer shell, you will find it very tough considering the material it is made of, and the toughening matter is a secretion of saliva. In the case of some species of Swallows this secretion is so great that the whole of the nest is made of that substance alone, with the lining of a few feathers. And it is this nest, cleaned of all foreign matter which is the base of the much-esteemed delicacy known as birdnest soup. Few who have partaken of this luxury are perhaps aware that it is simply solidified saliva.

Of Martins there are two—the House-Martin and the Sand-Martin, both birds common to Great Britain. Of the latter, literally thousands and thousands will be seen nesting in colonies in the mud banks by all who go up and down the river; restless and cheerful, they are one of the welcome sights of the Nile trip, and often for miles at a stretch the whole banks are honeycombed with their nesting holes, and ever and again, moved by some common impulse, hundreds come rushing out and over the boat with noisy twitterings, and then scattering, gradually return in ones and twos to their homes again.

WHITE WAGTAIL

Motacilla alba

Crown of head and nape dark grey or black, upper plumage delicate grey, wings brownish, some of the feathers edged with white; tail dark-brownish, two outer feathers on each side white; forehead, most of the cheek and under-parts white, black collar, legs and bill black, eyes brown. Length, 7 inches.

I HAVE pictured this particular Wagtail as it is perhaps the commonest of all, but there are several other kinds that at certain seasons might dispute the point and run it very close. It is very similar, superficially, to the familiar Pied Wagtail, but is greyer, less positively black and white, and might well be called the Grey rather than the White Wagtail. In the winter months, in Egypt, at whatever part of the country, north or south, you may be, you will see Wagtails of some sort or another busily chasing flies with ever-restless activity, and the numbers that there must be of this most useful bird is past all computation. Wagtails are peculiar in that they are about the smallest birds that really walk and run. All other

WHITE WAGTAIL

small birds—finches, warblers, and the rest—move by hopping; but Wagtails all run, and hardly ever make any semblance of a hop unless the sudden bound into the air after some passing fly be called a hop. No bird is neater or more graceful in line than this, and I am sadly conscious of how little of its real beauty the drawing gives; the daintiness with which it does everything is singularly beautiful. Though many pass the winter in Egypt some must go farther south, as when the time comes for their return to their northern breeding-places in February and March there is a notable increase in their numbers, and I remember one particular evening in March when the whole cultivated ground round the Ramaseum, Thebes, was literally covered with them, and as darkness came on even more seemed to be dropping in on every side. The next day, when I went to the same place, the bulk had already gone, and there were hardly more than you could see at any time.

The Yellow Wagtail is a smaller bird than the White. Ornithologists record no less than three species as found in Egypt, all having yellow breasts. The Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail is the one most abundant, and for beauty is unsurpassed. Its tail is notably shorter than in other Wagtails, and from my own observation I should say it is a more timid little bird than others of its kindred.

THE CRESTED LARK

Galerita cristata

All upper plumage brown; the large feathers of wings and tail edged with a lighter buffish tone; crest of narrow dark-brown feathers with light edges; back of crest, as one sees under it when raised, tells very rich dark brown; underparts white spotted and streaked on breast with dark brown. Length, 6·7 inches.

FOR once the name does really describe the bird, so that none may be in any doubt whatever. For the crest is the one thing noticed. I have drawn one with a fine crest, but have been afraid to make it as big as I have in one or two cases seen it. Early in February I saw some that I really think had the crest a full eighth of an inch higher than my drawing shows. In each case they were undoubtedly showing off to their lady-love. The crest can be, and often is, raised at an absolute right angle as to a line horizontal with the beak. The bird is so tame that frequently it sits on the path so that you fear your donkey will tread on it, and so common that no one, however unobservant, but must notice it; it is particularly in evidence on the great Thebes plain across which all go to the Tombs of the Kings. Its song, as far as I have heard it, is distinctly pleasant; Captain Shelley calls it “but an indifferent song,” which is severe, as it is a happy little rippling series of true lark-like notes. It has a good mixed diet, animal and vegetable, hard grain and soft blade of growing things. When the weather begins to get warm you will often see this lark, as you may many other birds, sitting with its mouth open as if gasping for breath; that this is a sign they do feel the heat is certain, but I do not think that it shows they are suffering from thirst, for in the cultivation they always have water all round them in the little canals that run everywhere through the crops, and if they were thirsty they could very soon quench it. When on Lake Menzaleh, just on the very limit of Egyptian soil and Mediterranean Sea, I came across many taking a last rest on the sandbanks before migrating, and was very struck with their altered bearing. They were shy and timid, never allowed a close inspection, and flew away in hurried fashion. This was in the early weeks of April.

CRESTED LARK

THE WHITE-RUMPED CHAT

Saxicola leucopygia

General plumage, black with slae-blue reflections; rump, white; tail, black; outside feathers, white; beak and legs, black; eyes, brown. Length varying from 6½ to 7 inches.

I CONFESS to finding the Chats a puzzling order of birds to identify when seen in the open. In the case of some, not only is the female larger, but of such a different aspect and dull sandy colour that it is really difficult to believe that it is in any way related to the startlingly plumaged black and white male bird. All the Chats love the desert more than the cultivated ground, and I myself have never seen this Chat save on rocks or sand. The visitor going to the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes, or around the Pyramids, should certainly see this bird, as it is there common, and owing to its way of flitting sharply from one point to another, and sitting high up on the top of some boulder, with its strongly contrasted black and white plumage, is always a very conspicuous object. What it gets to live on in these desert places is hard to see, but it does manage to pick up a living on grass or other seeds and small insects.

Two other Chats very closely related are the Hooded Chat and the Mourning Chat. The former is very similarly marked on the body, but has a white top or hood on its head, whilst the latter has the top of its head a delicate dull grey, and a buffish tone over the under tail-coverts.

ROSY-VENTED CHAT

Saxicola moesta

Black on sides of face; wings, a blackish brown with lighter margins; under parts a warm white gradating into a pinkish rufous as it nears tail; tail, dark at end, white at base; eyes, brown. Length, 6·2 inches.

THIS is not so common a bird as the preceding, but still if a sharp look-out be kept it ought to be seen. It inhabits the desert, but I have twice seen it on the edge of cultivation, and the particular bird I made my drawing from got up from stubble just by the river-side. Both this bird and the White-rumped are closely related to our own Wheatear on one side and to our Stone-chat on the other. All these birds are alike in the continued restlessness

WHITE-RUMPED CHAT AND ROSY CHAT

of their movements, and their habit of flying on in advance as one approaches, and then settling again on some prominent point till a nearer approach sends it on again with a flick of its tail till it finds another suitable perching spot. In the most out-of-the-way desolate places, where not one blade of vegetation shows itself, and all is yellow sand and hard grey rock baking in the sun, there you will as likely as not find Chats of one kind or another, the only living thing, seemingly, in this great dreary expanse; the dreariness never, however, seems to affect them. No one has ever seen a Chat in low spirits; it is always happy and lively, a very Mark Tapley amongst birds.

THE BLUE-THROATED WARBLER

Cyanecula suecica

Plumage of back and top of head dull grey-brown; a light buff stripe above eye; throat and breast brilliant cobalt-blue, with a white spot at the top of breast, a bright rufous bar edges the blue on the lower breast, this red bar sometimes being separated from the blue by a thin white stripe; under-parts white. The hen bird is a dull edition of the above, with a buffish-coloured throat, and more black than blue showing on the breast; legs, beak, and eyes brown. Total length, 5·5 inches.

THIS is a common bird throughout Egypt, where it winters. It is related to our common Robin, to which it bears some resemblance; but it is rather longer in shape and higher on the leg than the Redbreast.

The Bluethroat is well named, and having once seen this charming little warbler, it is by its blue throat it will be remembered. The first time I came across this bird was long ago; but I remember, as if it were to-day, my delight when the little bird, which had been flitting about—now on the ground, now in the lower branches and twigs of a bushy osier—turned so that I saw

BLUE-THROATED WARBLER

its brilliant ultramarine-blue gorget fringed with a rust-red band. It had been for some minutes feeding and moving about in the bush and on the ground, and yet, during the whole of that time, it had never once turned right head on, and that which was my first experience is, one finds, a quite usual peculiarity. It always seems to give you a back view, and from that view you might be justified in thinking it was a Redstart, as it has the same habit of flitting its tail up and down, and showing the very orange-red under-parts. Whether it was an accidental visitation I do not know, but early in the year 1908 the gardens of the old Luxor Hotel were full of Bluethroats—as soon, pretty well, as you passed one you came on another. The little water-channels running about these well-kept grounds seemed to be the point of attraction, as they were busily hopping about and sometimes into them, and splashing merrily—hardly serious washing, but a sort of childlike abandon of pleasure in pleasant surroundings; but even with so many visible, and seen under such familiar conditions, it was astonishing how seldom any gave one a front face view. There is a point of great interest in the two races of Bluethroat, one having a red, the other a white spot on the blue shield: and this because the red-spotted species goes for its breeding quarters to the most northern parts of Scandinavia, whilst its white-spotted cousin goes no farther north than Germany. And we are told that in spite of Germany's numerous and well-instructed ornithologists no case has been observed of the red-spotted form ever having stopped in its transit from Africa, although it must pass right over the country, till it reaches its nearly Arctic home. This seems to show that this delicately built, tender little bird probably makes its journey by night, and so high up that it escapes all observation; and when you consider the vast distance from Egypt's shores to the far-away mosses of Scandinavia, it is about as marvellous a journey without a halt as one can conceive of. Flies, insects, caterpillars, and, when it can get it, fruit of any kind, form its diet.

The Bluethroat is on the list of British birds, but is one more case of a bird being so included that really hardly should be, for it is but an accidental visitor; probably it never meant to come to Britain and only got there by mistake, when it is generally shot at sight. It is particularly upright in its carriage and sprightly in its movements; so quick that eyes unaccustomed to observing birds find it difficult to see it at all, as with a series of running hops it darts under the shade of overhanging bush or shrub. In the winter months it hardly utters more than a simple call-note, but as spring approaches it breaks into song, and at the end of March I have several times heard it singing most enchantingly. It seems to sing when on the ground, and not when perched amongst the bushy undergrowth; and I remember watching one, singing as lustily as any nightingale, as it stood on a bare bit of stony, sandy soil, bordering a little pool, fully exposed to view, while I sat quietly not three yards away.

THE REED WARBLER

Acrocephalus streperus

General plumage a greyish brown; a warmer brown on the wings, and brighter brown on rump; under parts a delicate white, shading into buff on the flanks and under tail coverts; a faint light stripe above eye; legs and beak, brown; eyes, hazel brown. Length, 5¼ inches.

THE song of any bird is one of the most certain methods, when really known, of identification. In the case of Warblers and other small birds that flit about rapidly, and always half-sheltered by vegetation, it is often exceedingly difficult to get a near and clear view, and very hard to know exactly to what species it belongs. This is particularly the case with the Reed and the Sedge Warblers; they stick so close to their beloved shelter that you rarely get a complete view of them, but if you will wait quietly and patiently you are sure to hear them burst out into a shorter or longer song—then is your chance—and if you have the very slightest sense of music, you will catch the notes peculiar to that bird and that bird alone. The Reed Warbler's song is very peculiar; it is a running trill of notes given out exceedingly quickly, and in

REED WARBLER

an exceedingly loud, noisy, boisterous voice, as if the bird were in the highest possible spirits. Very unlike that of many of the singers; the Nightingale, for instance, to every one sounds sad, plaintive, beautiful, but distinctly not cheerful. I have heard the Reed Warbler very often at many points on the Nile where there were no reed beds, but only stunted tamarisk or other shrubs, but in the great reed beds on and outside Lake Menzaleh I have both seen and heard it in great numbers, and the quite extraordinary penetrating noise that a number make when together is most remarkable. It is a most charming active little bird, a perfect acrobat, and it sings as blithely upside down as it does right side up. But the most attractive thing about its life-history is its nest; this it builds in the very heart of some thick clump of reeds. The accompanying picture shows how when the wind blows the cradle does rock; but it matters not how much it rocks, the wise bird builds the nest so deep that the eggs lying snug at the bottom never get tilted out. In Egypt the bird is, like the bulk of visitors, but a winter migrant. As it is insectivorous it is of some use in keeping down the host of flies great and small, and it is said to be partial to mosquitoes, which should make every one look with favour on this cheery little songster. I often think it is a mercy that practically all the song birds are small, for consider what it would mean if the large birds made noise in the same proportion to their size that the Reed Warbler does to his,—the world would be a veritable Babel.

THE SPARROW

Passer domesticus

Top of head a bluish-grey, margined with deep chestnut band over the eye and ear-coverts; black chin and collar; a white spot behind the eye; under-parts a silvery grey; wing chestnut with black spots, with a white bar across it; tail-feathers brown with lighter edges; eyes hazel; legs and beak pale brown. Entire length, 5·5 inches.

Mr. M. J. Nicoll thinks that the Egyptian Sparrow is a separate local variety, being always lighter and brighter coloured on the back. Sparrows here, as elsewhere, distinctly follow man. Where no men are, you will find no Sparrows. Get only half a mile into the sandy plain that fringes the cultivation and you will look in vain, or go up the steep hills, and you may walk for miles and miles and never see one. But if you come across some of the old-time caravan roads, or a place where there has been an encampment, then, however wild the surroundings and otherwise far away from civilized life, you will very likely find a Sparrow or two looking after some of the droppings from the nose-bags.

In winter they get spread about and are not very noticeable, but when the corn ripens then they all seem to multiply in extraordinary fashion. Clouds of them rise up and fly round, startled by the loud cry or stone slung by the ragged urchin of a bird scarer. I remember well Leighton's picture of a bird scarer, showing an athletic young fellow, stripped to the waist, poised on one foot, body bent back, hurling the stone as David did at Goliath. But in the years I have known Egypt I have never seen in real life anything approaching that picture, for it is generally a blear-eyed small boy, half-clothed and hideously dirty, who, standing on the pathway, yells discordantly and purposely just as you pass him, sometimes accompanying the cry with a mild little jerky underhand throw of some clot of hardened soil which possibly breaks in mid-air before reaching the birds. So no lives are lost, and the birds just fly away contemptuously to another part of the field. In Nubia it is different, and there girls as well as boys do really sling stones, and with some effect. I do not think there is any peculiarity of the life-history of the Sparrow in Egypt that is

SPARROW
In the Temple at Deir-el-Bahari.

not equally noticeable wherever it is met with, but whereas at home it becomes almost a pest from its numbers, here it is not so noticeable, and its jaunty, sprightly air and carriage are often in agreeable contrast to the depressing squalor and monochrome, dismal surroundings. So here it gets blessings and not cursings poured on its head, and no one calls it "Avian Rat," or any other rude name. I have pictured it as I often saw it, playing in and out of the decorated temple walls, in a cleft of which possibly it was born, and the pictures of which it can honestly say it has been familiar with from earliest childhood. One cannot help but speculating, does the Sparrow recognize in the painting its arch-enemy, for the pictured Hawk shown may well, as far as form is concerned, be meant for a Sparrow Hawk; which Hawk, true to its name, takes daily toll of all small birds and of Sparrows in particular. I remember well one day at the Ramaseum where I was painting—the quick passing shadow and the instant silencing of the cheery chattering of a host of Sparrows that were all sitting on a small bush just near me, and looking up, I saw a Sparrow Hawk dash away with a Sparrow in its talons, whilst the others were flying precipitately away in all directions. The Sparrow is an omnivorous feeder here, in Egypt, as it is at home, where nothing that grows comes amiss to it, not even the early crocuses of our gardens.

THE DESERT BULLFINCH OR TRUMPETER FINCH

Erythrospiza githaginea

General Plumage—Sandy-grey, darker on wings, the larger feathers of which are edged with bright pink; rump and upper tail-coverts bright pink, under-parts all creamy pink with the ends of the feathers carmine, beak large and bright red, legs pinkish flesh-colour, eyes brown. Total length, 5 inches.

THE above description, as are all these descriptions, is of the adult male bird in full plumage, but the reader must remember that this full, brilliant plumage is generally worn only during the spring months, and that if any bird is observed in November or December, it naturally will not be then wearing its wedding-garment. This is especially true of the present species; in the winter months it is a quiet-coloured little bird, hardly to be noticed as it hops about on the cleared ground, to which its colour is very similar, its red beak alone showing brightly; and it is only in January that it begins to show any alteration, and not till the end of February does it look the brilliant pink bird described above; then it is almost impossible to over-describe its beauties, and one is in some danger of over-painting it. Shelley says that the young have the bill pale yellowish-brown, but I have seen little flocks together, which I take were families, in November, and every member of the party had brilliant red beaks, though otherwise they were all dull sandy colour. This bird has a peculiar song or call-note that is absurdly like that of a little tin trumpet, and this call it continually utters, especially as it flits about, so that it can thus often be identified even when too distant to be accurately seen. It is really a very common bird, but on account of its inconspicuous winter plumage, is not always noticed. In December 1908, in walking across the cultivated Thebes valley up to the Tombs of the Kings, I must have seen many hundreds in those few miles, and when I did not see them I could frequently hear them. Most people really do not give themselves much chance of seeing any of the details of bird-life, as they go everywhere on donkey back, with chattering, ill-behaved boys as retinue, and though the birds are tame, they naturally fly away at the approach of these noisy cavalcades.

DESERT BULLFINCH OR TRUMPETER FINCH

But if only people would walk—and I can see no earthly reason why they shouldn’t, they probably would at home—they would see such a wealth of charming pictures of bird-life that they would be well rewarded. As it is I have sometimes asked friends if they had noticed the extraordinary number of Wagtails, or whatever bird was passing by on its migration at the time, and have been astonished to find they had seen none, when sometimes the ground has been literally covered with them. But no, they go clanging and jolting along, and I suppose do really see nothing.

At Assuan among the sand and rocks I have seen quite wonderfully brilliant male birds sitting singing something almost worthy to be called a song,—the ordinary sound is this rather monotonous single note-call. Its food is distinctly hard food, as we say of a cage-bird, and it spares no growing crop—maize, grass, mustard, corn, all come alike to it—but with this bird, as with many others, one does wonder how they support existence in the arid, plantless deserts, for you see them quite commonly there, as well as on cultivated ground. I have seen them in English bird-fanciers’ shops, but have no knowledge as to whether they are good cage-birds; the one thing, however, which might make them such is of course in their love of hard grain food, and if they can be kept in health, they would certainly be most engaging pets, as they are very lively in their movements, and always seem to be bright and cheery.

HOODED CROW

Corvus cornix

Head, throat, wings, tail, beak, and legs black, with a gloss of purple or green on most of the feathers; remainder of plumage grey, eyes dark-brown. Total length, 18 inches.

A VERY common bird throughout Egypt. It seems strange that this should be the only Crow—the pure black one has never been noticed—and if any black crow-like bird is noticed it will probably be found to be the Raven. Shelley says, "It begins breeding towards the end of February, when its nest may be procured in every clump of sont trees,"[4] but I have seen young ones with their parents flying about in early February, which would mean they must have been hatched much earlier, and it would therefore seem certain that they rear two broods in the year. It does not seem here to have quite the same character that it has elsewhere—it is less aggressive, tamer, not such a highwayman-robber sort of bird—and though it is so common I cannot ever remember to have seen a flock of them together in the real open country, they seem to go in pairs generally; but in towns and such places as the Zoological Gardens of Cairo they do foregather in large numbers. Its food is generally carrion, but it will take any living thing—lizards, mice, and even beetles—that comes in its way, and I have no doubt rob the nests of small birds, not only of eggs but also of the unfledged young. It is distinctly a handsome bird and it walks well, holding its head high, whilst its flight is strong and easy.

[4] The term "sont trees" in Egypt is applied to acacia trees.

It was entirely owing to a certain Crow, we are told, that Cairo got its name, for it seems that when the architect was planning out the city, he arranged that the first stone of the great surrounding wall should be laid at a particular moment dictated by the astrologers. This moment was to be made known to the architect by the pulling of a cord extending from where he was to the place where the astrologers were assembled. The momentous day arrived, the architect awaited the signal, and suddenly the cord was shaken, and the stone was laid. But a horrid mistake had been made. The astrologers had not pulled the cord; a wretched old Crow had heavily perched upon it, and shaken by his weight, the unlucky signal was given! From the vexation caused by this incident

HOODED CROW

the city was called Kahira[5] (the "vexatious" or "unlucky"). Kahira softened, soon became Cairo.

[5] Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant*.

The Raven, as already stated, is to be seen from time to time, and especially where the cliffs come down close to the river. It is so similar to the ordinary Raven that it is only after the feathers of the head and neck have been worn for some time that the brown look appears which has given rise to the specific name of the Brown-necked Raven. Shelley says it nests in date-palm trees, but the only nests I myself have seen have been in the lofty cliffs of Deir-el-Bahari and Abu Fêada, and again in some of the ruins of temples, at Karnak for instance. There is, further, one more Raven, the Abyssinian, which is smaller by some three inches than the Brown-necked, but it is very similar in all other respects.

EGYPTIAN TURTLE-DOVE OR PALM DOVE

Turtur senegalensis

General plumage a dull pinky light brown, brighter on head and breast, which gradually shades off into white under the tail; wings, warm tones of dull umber brown, which colour also is on the tail coverts and two central tail feathers; the rest of the tail is blue-grey with broad white tips, a part of the wing coverts a bright blue-grey; it has a not very pronounced collar of black and bright golden brown feathers on the sides and front of neck, eyes crimson, legs and feet pink. Total length, 11 inches.

THE Doves have all had a sort of saintly character thrust on them, which they hardly deserve, as they are about the most pugnacious of birds, which is hardly a saintly qualification! It is true a pair of Doves by themselves, kept in semi-domestication, do show a sort of maudlin affection, but many of the smaller birds—Wrens, Tits, Warblers, and Swallows, and many others—all show equal, if not greater true affection to each other and absolute self-abnegation in their untiring devotion to their offspring. Why, therefore, the Dove has been peculiarly ticketed as

EGYPTIAN PALM DOVES

a model of connubial affection I really do not know, but it has, and I suppose it will be treated as a sort of sacred symbol to the end of time.

This particular Egyptian Turtle-dove is also sometimes called the Palm-dove; a good name, as it is always to be found wherever there are palm trees; on them it roosts and in their branches it nests. When flying it opens its tail wide, and then shows the broad white and lilac-grey of those side feathers which when sitting are all hidden away under the two central dull brown tail feathers. Its flight through and among trees is very rapid and tortuous, and it is perhaps when in the dense clump of palm trees that it is most interesting, as it is so tame that it allows of a close approach. In any of the palm groves, and palms are everywhere in Egypt, the bird lover will be able to learn something of this very Oriental Dove. The first thing he will note is that clearly some of the many that are flying here and there, and feeding on the ground around him, are quite young birds, even though it may be December or January, and it is certain that this true inhabitant of warm sunny Egypt has two broods at least in the year.

SENEGAL SAND-GROUSE

Pterocles senegallus

Arabic, *Gutta*

Back and general tone of feathers sandy, top of head and breast a delicate pinkish-lilac, cheeks and throat a strong brilliant orange-yellow, wings spotted with chocolate-brown markings, legs feathered, centre of chest and stomach dark dull brown, two centre tail-feathers elongated, black at points, barred at base. The female is not nearly so brightly marked, indeed, is mainly sand-coloured; eyes brown, beak dull grey. Total length, 12 inches.

THERE are three different varieties of Sand-grouse in Egypt—the Singed, the Coroneted, and the Senegal. The last has been selected as it is the one with which I am best acquainted, but either of the others have an equal claim, since, though occupying different localities, they are to be met with throughout the area covered by this book. All the Sand-grouse are very similar in their habits, they are all children of the desert, but come down, either to feed or to water, to the cultivated ground at morning and evening. Captain Shelley gives absolute localities where they might be found (he was writing in 1872), and ever since he gave

SAND-GROUSE

that information there has been each winter a regular invasion of British and other ardent sportsmen, to each of the places named, to have "a little Sand-grouse shooting." Result: at those places there are now none whatever, and no one living there seems to know anything more about Sand-grouse than that annually large numbers of men come with shooting equipment ready to make record bags, and go away without firing a shot. This being so, the present author thinks it best not to give localities, for though there is no danger of Sand-grouse ever being exterminated, as if persecuted they have the whole of these great African deserts to fall back and back upon, yet the hunger of the modern man to go out and kill something bearing the least resemblance to a game-bird is such, that if it were told that at certain places near the river they could be got, in a single season or two that place would be absolutely cleared. It seems rather churlish perhaps, but this book is not written to aid men to shoot Egyptian birds, but simply to recognise the birds seen; and the first essential is that there should be birds to see. Sand-grouse seem to be pleasant sociable birds, happy in their family life; at the non-breeding season they foregather into large companies, in which order they fly great distances to and fro to whatever pools or water they customarily visit each evening, and it is at these places that the most deadly shooting can take place, for they are very regular in their "flighting." Captain Tindall Lucas tells me that the Coroneted Sand-grouse drinks later in the evening and earlier in the morning than the other forms and practically when all light has gone; the more usual time being just before the sun sets. The freedom with which they fly is extraordinary, it is more with the power of the Swallow than any game-bird; they mount very high up into the air, and go wheeling round and round, now mounting nearly out of sight, then rushing headlong down in a long swooping curve till near the earth, when, perhaps, they will turn off sharp at some angle and go tearing away in some opposite direction. This is when they are in flocks, and out on the wide open desert; when coming down to water, or near cultivation, or among the coarse Halfa grass, they fly with direct intent, and waste no time about it.

Their cry must be heard to be appreciated; it is usually written as "gutta, gutta, gutta," but no description of birds' notes ever seems to be of much value; it is, however, so very individual that once heard would never be forgotten, and it has, as all Nature's notes have, an entire suitability to the surroundings, and like the boundless, yellow, dry, herbless desert it is wild and weird, yet beautiful.

I remember once a quite intelligent Scotch keeper answering an inquiry, as to what Ptarmigan found to eat amongst the barren hilltops where they live with the amazing statement, delivered in the most solemn manner, "that they just lived on the little stones," and when doubt was thrown on his information, declared that he had often cut them open to see, and had never found anything in their crops "but just the wee stones." And the inquiry might well be made as to the source of food of the Sand-grouse when one sees a large flock in the desert places that they love to be in during the day, if one did not know of their wondrous powers of flight, which make nothing of flying scores of miles to the far-distant edges of cultivated ground.

I have watched Sand-grouse quite close at hand, and when on the ground they are rather dumpy-shaped and uninteresting; if disturbed, they pull themselves together a bit and run off to a short distance, and settle down again in a crouching position; if again disturbed they probably rise altogether, with their "gutta, gutta"

cry and fly miles away. In running they go like clockwork mice; you hardly see their legs or feet, and they rise and fall over the varying contours of the ground just like a little running wave.

From Alexandria to Assoan and beyond right to the Soudan, Sand-grouse are to be met with, and though every one may not see this typical desert bird, it is there if only they know where to look for it.

SAND PARTRIDGE

Ammoperdix heyi

The colour of the upper plumage on body is so delicate in quality that it is hard to say if it should be called a lilac grey or pinky grey, whilst in certain lights it might be called a sandy brown; the head is, with the cheeks, neck, and breast, a pearly pink; the flanks are barred with rich chestnut and black on a warm white breast; white on the ear coverts and a white spot in front of the eye in the variety known as Cholmondely; legs yellow; eyes brown; beak a brilliant orange. The hen bird is without the bright chestnut bars on the flanks, and is altogether a paler-coloured greyish-buff, and without white on the face. Total length, 9 inches.

THIS is a resident Egyptian bird, and I include it in my list because, though the traveller up the Nile may not see it, any who go across the desert around the Pyramid district, and even those who journey only a little out of Assoan, ought quite certainly to come across it. It is a most charming, lively little bird, bustling about; you rarely see it quiet for long, even in January it still keeps in coveys, and they go running along in and out of the boulders, and, if on a hillside, they are very quick and agile in hopping high up on to the rocks above them. They very seldom fly if they can possibly get out of your way by running. I very well remember seeing them on the old-time road from Kennah to Kosseir on the Red Sea. I saw them first before reaching Wady Hammamat, and then more frequently as we passed through the ancient quarries. They seem to use this old roadway as their regular feeding-ground, for there, owing to the passage of caravans backwards and forwards, they find a perpetual source of food from the frequent droppings. Their movements were so quick and their little bodies so round and plump that, even with my glass on them, I could not settle the colour of their legs, till I got a closer inspection of those in the Cairo Zoological Gardens. As they run they utter a little cheery sort of “cheep, cheep” call, and the whole party seem always happy, if not in boisterous spirits, which, when one considers the hardness of their life in these sterile wastes, seems somewhat remarkable. Grain and seeds are their staple food, but I distinctly saw one once and again make a dart at some passing insect, and no doubt here, as at home, they love the ants’ eggs that must exist, as ants are ever present with you in this hot desert country. As far as my own notes go, I do not think they ever come down even to the outskirts

HEY’S SAND-PARTRIDGE

of the cultivation, but keep exclusively to the sand (possibly in spring or summer they may approach nearer to the haunts of man, but I have no evidence), which makes the fact of their being, as it is alleged they are, exceedingly good eating, very remarkable, for one would be disposed to think they would be thin, tough, and tasteless. I have it on good authority, that as a game-bird for the table, they are far to be preferred to our own Partridge, being, though small, very plump and of a fine game flavour. All Partridges seem peculiar in doing well on very little—at home one often wonders during a hard winter at their surviving at all—for they are never fed like the pampered Pheasants, and not only do they survive, but they seem to carry as much flesh when shot in a hard winter as they do in September when grain lies scattered in profusion on every stubble. Although one has praised its seeming happy way of living, no account of this bird would be complete without some notice of its extraordinary pugnacity. This is confined admittedly to the males, but with them it is, as with all so-called game-birds, a ruling passion, of which our game-cocks are of course well-known examples; but it may not be so generally known that in many countries—Greece, amongst others—Partridges are kept for this special purpose of fighting for the delectation of their owners, and though I am not aware of this little sportsman, the Sand Partridge, having been kept for this purpose, I am sure if it was it would not disgrace the traditions of its family, for a more pugnacious little bird than it never walked. The males have a peculiar habit of standing ever and anon quite upright puffing out all their breast feathers, so that they display all the beauty of their rich chestnut and black-barred plumage. The naturalists have discovered that in certain districts the birds all have a white spot over the beak on the forehead, and to this variety is given the name of Cholmondely’s Sand Partridge, whilst the other type, with only one white spot behind the eye on the cheeks, is known as Hey’s Sand Partridge. Here, as in the case of most birds, the description of the plumage is taken from the male bird, the female nearly always being very much more sober coloured. This cannot too often be repeated, as not recognizing this fact often leads to mistake; and again, in the matter of the measurements of the birds, the size given is that of the average bird, for in almost all birds you get larger or smaller individuals, and that veteran naturalist Wallace has just lately drawn attention to the quite extraordinary variations in the different parts of the Common Redwing, showing that even in twenty birds the dimensions varied considerably.

THE QUAIL

Coturnix communis

Arabic, *Salwa*

Plumage—Upper parts brown marked with grey, rufous, and black, a buff line over eye and on crown of head, a semicircular collar of dark brown on throat; lower parts lighter, streaked with black down centre of feathers, beak brown, legs pale warm brown, eyes hazel. Total length, 7·5 inches.

THE call of the male Quail is one of those strange sounds that have around it much of the halo that the song of the Cuckoo has at home, because it marks a definite date—the passing of winter and the coming of summer. For the ordinary traveller this call, which by some has been rendered as sounding like "What we whee," is all that he will ever know of the bird's presence, as it is curiously skulking in habits, and never rises unless suddenly alarmed by one's walking through the cover in which it hides. Personally I agree with a friend who said the sound was identical with the sort of cheeping call of a young turkey poult, but all descriptions of birds' songs I hold to be rather vain. Each one for himself

QUAIL
Flying over growing corn.

must notice and learn from actual experience, and the various calls and notes are so individual that when once really noted are never forgotten, and to at all a good ear these aids to identification are as sure as if the very bird were placed in his hands. Quail pass through Egypt when on their way to their more northerly breeding quarters early in March and April. Some few may remain the year through, but they are a small minority. The return to Egypt is from September to November, and it is during these journeyings that the vast quantities are caught in nets, which later are sent to every European city for the tables of the rich. Mr. C. D. Burnett-Stuart very kindly has given me the following notes:—

"From Alexandria to Port Said the whole length of coast is practically hung with nets; but Government lately has forbidden the placing of the nets on the actual foreshore which it controls, which were the most killing positions, and the nets can now only be placed farther back on private and cultivated ground. The numbers of Quail which must migrate passes belief, for it is recorded that in Coronation Year five million were ordered and supplied for the English market alone."

"The route which they take leaving Egypt seems to be roughly the great valley of the Nile right to its entrances to the Mediterranean; but on the return journey from Europe they seem to reach the shores of Egypt, then turn eastwards and follow the line of the Suez Canal and Red Sea to about Kosseir and the old river-bed, then across the desert to the Nile, and away spreading themselves over the heart of Africa."

"On their arrival in Egypt they are so dog-tired that they can sometimes be caught by hand, and have been actually so caught in houses that they have entered in a sort of dazed condition. The poor Quail are also caught in large numbers by a drop-net whilst on passage down the river, in clover, or any other suitable crop, the fowler calling them up to his net by a reed whistle. Quail shooting used to be a more favourite sport than it is now since Denshawie days, and two guns have on one occasion obtained 252 birds in the day at Ayat, fifty miles south of Cairo."

After this one is not disposed to say "liar" even to the ancient historian who recorded the sinking of certain vessels in the ocean, because of the innumerable Quail that settled on them; and one readily accepts the story of the Israelites' camp being covered all over two cubits high by falling Quails. Canon Tristam has a note on this incident and "the fully satisfied hungry people," that the very "Hebrew name *selav*, in its Arabic form *salwa*, signifies fat, very descriptive of the round plump form and fat flesh of the Quail."

Ten is said to be the average of the clutch of eggs laid, which number partly explains the enormous flocks which come year after year in spite of the incessant raids made upon them. If by chance you do see Quails rise from the crops you are instantly reminded of partridges; but they never rise as high as the latter birds, and though I have heard of their answering to being "driven," I should think they give very unsatisfactory shooting, as they are rarely more than a foot or two above the crops, whether they be clover or young corn.

CREAM-COLOURED COURSER

Cursorius gallicus

General plumage a bright clear yellowish sand colour; forehead a bright burnt sienna; crown of head a light lilac-grey; eyebrows white; eyes brown; legs white. Length, 10 inches.

THIS is one of the birds commonly selected as an illustration of “protective coloration.” It lives in the sandy deserts, and its plumage displays a curiously harmonious blending of the various colours to be found on the dry, stony, sandy soil. The very markedly contrasting colours of the head are just the very same that you see in the pebbles or stones, and the smoother passages of delicate buff and greyish-yellow are the counterpart of the curving slopes of pure sand; whilst even the startling enamel-like white of the legs resembles the bleached, hard, dry stalks of the desert vegetation. When the bird crouches down it is practically invisible, though, as the phrase is, it may be “right under your nose,” but as a matter of fact it seems most often to perversely upset the whole value of what we men deem its valuable

CREAM-COLOURED COURSER

protective asset by running about, and drawing attention to itself by continually uttering its peculiar cry. And when it rises and flies off, as it frequently does, in little bands or parties, all utter the same note with incessant, noisy reiteration. I first saw this bird when riding across the desert towards Kosseir on the Red Sea, and I well remember my surprise at seeing how completely different was the position assumed by the birds to that which all the pictures with which I was familiar had led me to expect. It runs about very high on the legs, and every other moment lifts its body up nearly perpendicularly, looking sharply round right and left before again making another quick little run in search of some speck of food. It struck me as being a peculiarly cheery little bird, and seemed to be of a sociable nature, always being in little parties, and often when they all rose together they would be quickly joined by some others, who had been before out of sight, and together they would go wheeling about in mid-air, mounting high up into the sky, till the eye unaided lost sight of them, but all the time their whereabouts was certain, because of their most musical, reiterated cry, which somewhat resembles that of the Sand Grouse.

It loves the deserts, and as far as I know never leaves them save to come down, as the Sand-grouse do, to some water-hole. Round the Pyramids, and even within sight of the babel of guides and donkey boys, this child of the desert may be seen, but it always keeps, as it were, in touch with the boundless open sandy tracts to which it can beat a safe retreat. In one of the large show-cases in the great Central Hall of the British Museum of Natural History, they are shown in a group with other desert birds and beasts, but it is sad to see how the colours of their plumage get—even with all the care of dust-proof cases—dull, faded and dingy, giving little idea of the brilliantly clear, delicately coloured plumage of the living bird, as seen under the clear blue of an Egyptian sky.

THE GREEN PLOVER OR LAPWING

Vanellus cristatus

Upper plumage dark metallic alternating green and purple; a dark crest of upward curling pointed feathers; under plumage white; black chest; orange under tail coverts; beak black; legs brown; eyes dark brown. Total length, 13 inches.

THIS is the “Lapwing” or “Peewit” of England, and is a rarer bird in Egypt than at home. But if you look sharp out, you ought to see it at least once or twice in a run up the river, in small or larger flocks—I do not ever remember to have seen it singly. Why I have chosen this bird as one of our fifty is, because go where you will, north or south, you see the undoubted counterfeit presentment of this bird engraven on the walls of all the temples.

Many see it, but are misled by the rather mad armlike-looking thing brandished out in front of the bird’s face, and never see the undoubted portrait of a Plover till it is actually pointed out. Why this bird should have been chosen, and why the owl and the vulture should have been selected from the great mass of Egypt’s birds, we cannot explain, but can only draw attention to the fact, and find interest in the thought that just as now this bird may be seen, so in the old far-away dynastic days it must have been a familiar bird, or it would certainly not have been selected for use in picture and hieroglyph. Some few breed in Egypt, it is said; but certainly the bulk all go north and west when spring-time comes. This is the bird that supplies gourmands with their annual dainty of Plovers’ eggs; it lays four in the simplest of nests—a mere slight depression in the ground—and as soon as the young are hatched, within a few hours of actual birth into the outer world, they are running about nimbly on their own little legs, and, at the instigation of their fond parents, catching flies and insects with their own little bills. In this matter of the helplessness, or reverse, of newly-hatched birds, is a most interesting field for research. The proud eagle’s young are, for a long time, as helpless as our own babies, and, it is alleged, have sometimes to be forcibly pushed out of the home; whilst, as we have seen, Plovers’ young are born almost self-supporting. And this precocity, as it seems, is also seen in young ducklings, and in all the so-called game-birds: all they ask for is their mother’s wings to protect them against the weather, and warmly shelter them at night.

GREEN PLOVER OR LAPWING

SPUR-WINGED PLOVER

Hoplopterus spinosus

Arabic, *Zic-zac*

Crown, nape, chin, centre of throat, breast, and tail black; white cheeks, white under and above tail, back and sides of wings a grey-brown, a sharp hard spur on point of shoulder, bill, feet and legs black, eyes rich crimson. Entire length, 12 ins.

WHETHER this or the Black-headed Plover is to have the honour of being the bird Herodotus has made famous will probably ever be a matter for the Schoolmen to argue over, but lately I came across Dr. Leith Adam's note, explaining the reason why he insists that the Spur-winged Plover is the real friend of the crocodile and not the Black-headed,—*i.e.* "Codling not Short." "The crocodile, tired of keeping its jaws wide open, just shuts them, to the everlasting peril of the bird; were it not for those two sharp spurs on his wings he of course would be suffocated and later doubtless swallowed, but by these spurs, when the roof comes down on the top of him, he just reminds his patron of his existence, by jabbing the tenderest parts of the interior of his mouth." This is said invariably to refreshen the sleepy crocodile's faculties, so that he remembers his faithful dentist and immediately opens his jaws and releases the prisoner, to whom one hopes he expresses profound regret.

It is to be seen on the sand-banks in Lower Egypt, but gets noticeably less frequent as one journeys into Upper Egypt, and one is disposed to think is growing less in number year by year, as so many of the pure river-side birds are, by reason of the now continually passing, noisy, wash-producing steamers.

It seems to be distinctly a quarrelsome bird, anyhow when breeding, and both male and female are more often than not to be seen having some row or another with some poor inoffensive bird who has ventured too near their nest. At times it stands up practically perpendicular, and jerks its head and body up and down with clockwork regularity till the cause of its upset has ceased, when it draws in its head and sinks it deep between its shoulders, as is shown in the accompanying drawing. Its nest is a mere depression in the sand, and it lays three or four eggs which are very similar to our common Green Plover or Lapwing.

Von Heuglin relates a Mohammedan legend: That Allah, having asked all things great and small

SPUR-WINGED PLOVER

to come to a great feast, all came except this Plover. Allah rebuked him. The Plover said he had fallen asleep and forgot all about the fixture. Allah, who knows all things, knew he lied, and answered, "Then from this time forth thou shalt know no sleep," and he made these two spurs to grow on the points of his shoulders so that he shall suffer great pain if he try to sleep by putting his head under his wing.

BLACK-HEADED PLOVER

Pluvianus aegyptius

Arabic, *Ter el timsah*

Top of head black, as also is a band through eye which meets the black and across chest; wing and sides of back a very beautiful pale lilac blue-grey, under-parts white, lower throat and flanks a creamy rufous, legs bluish, eye brown. Total length, 8·5 inches.

This is regarded as quite certainly the bird known in ancient days as the Crocodile Bird. It was held to be the faithful attendant of this fearsome reptile, warning it of danger: and when the creature it fed was full, this little bird was supposed to attend to the proper cleaning of the ogre's teeth! For this purpose, we are told, the crocodile would lie quietly with its great mouth wide open whilst this brave little dentist ran about briskly right into the open jaws and deftly removed noisome leech or scrap of food left between those ugly fangs, and never showing the slightest fear. It is a pretty story, but as there are now no crocodiles in Egypt proper, the ordinary traveller has no chance of seeing if this be so or no. But though the crocodiles are gone the Black-headed Plover is

BLACK-HEADED PLOVER

still to be seen by those going up or down by water. Mr. E. Cavendish Taylor, writing in 1867, says, "This bird is abundant all along the Nile above Cairo, wherever the banks of the river are muddy." Captain Shelley in 1870, referring to it, says, "It is plentifully distributed throughout Egypt and Nubia, but it is most abundant in Upper Egypt between Siool and Thebes." I myself saw it many times in 1875, whilst going up and returning, in good quiet-fashioned way, by dahabeah; but when I again went over the same ground in 1908, although going very slowly and stopping every day, I only find, from my notebook, that we saw it three or four times in our six weeks' journey from Thebes to Cairo. All that we saw were wild and anything but the confiding birds one has been taught to regard them. I think by far the most notable thing about this bird is its curious habit of laying its eggs on the sand, and then carefully burying them with the clear purpose of letting the genial sun do the bulk of the work of hatching out. Captain Verner gives a most interesting and detailed account of watching the movements of one of these birds on a sandbank. He went to the place, he writes, "And at the precise spot turned over the sand, and about half an inch below the surface discovered three fresh eggs, which the artful bird had completely buried.... Still I was unable to account in my own mind for the very energetic movements to and from the water which I had witnessed on this occasion, until I received an account from a cousin, Lieutenant George Verner, of the Borderers, who was stationed about forty miles farther down the river than I was, which solved the mystery, as follows:—'On 25th April I was waiting in a boat alongside of a sandbank, and my attention was attracted by a pair of Black-headed Plovers which kept flitting about quite close to me. I noticed that one of them was continually wetting its breast at the water's edge about ten yards below our boat, and then running up the bank to a spot about the same distance inshore of us, when it would squat down and remain about two minutes or so, after which it would get up, and, running down to the water's edge above us, fly round to the spot where it had dabbled previously.... At the spot where the bird had been crouching I found a clutch of eggs half buried in the sand, their tops only being visible; the sand immediately surrounding them was moist, although the bank I was on was an expanse of dry burning sand.'" From this it seems clear, as Captain Verner says, that this plover has learnt that with judicious damping, the sand and the sun will do the hatching, thereby removing the necessity of having to spend long days and nights brooding over the eggs. It is, however, very curious that no other of the large number of birds that lay their eggs on the desert sand or hard dry mud-banks should do this: and especially curious since these birds are first cousins, as one might say, to the Spur-winged Plover—which breeds often within a few hundred yards of where Black-headed ones are—and this bird sits continuously till the young are hatched. The egg resembles that of the Red Grouse and is not very plover-like in character—indeed, some ornithologists will have it this bird is not really a Plover, but is more allied to the Coursers.

LITTLE RINGED-PLOVER

Aegialitis minor

General colour of upper plumage a delicate grey-brown; under plumage white, with a black bar through the eye, and a dark mark on the forehead, bordered at its lower and upper margin with white; and a rich black collar going nearly all round body; legs reddish. Total length, 6·5 inches.

THIS bird no one can fail to see, as, though it is in other countries a shy bird, it is here amazingly tame and familiar. By the river, by canal-side, round every small pool or watercourse, there you will see this cheerful little compact-shaped bird. All last winter, 1907-8, I had seen great numbers in the Thebes district, but in this winter of 1909 I have on Lake Menzaleh seen literally thousands of Ring-Plover. I cannot be sure they were all “the Little Ring-Plover”; that they were Ring-Plovers, I am certain, but as there are three species of Ring-Plover—the Great, the Middle, and the Little (and Captain Shelley strangely gives the dimensions of the Middle form as smaller than the Little)—it is safest not to be too dogmatic, and only call them Ring-Plovers. It is a very active bird, incessantly on the search for food,

RINGED-PLOVER

and the pace that those little legs can go, when they do their best, is amazing. It has a charming way of ever and anon stopping suddenly still and looking steadily at you, with head held very slightly aside, seeming to try to read right through you, and discover if you are friend or foe. When it flies its wings are seen to be very sharp and pointed, and bearing some resemblance to a snipe’s—a bird it is often made to do duty for by those romancers, the native gunners, who tempt the uninitiated to accompany them for snipe-shooting, and assure the new-comer these poor little Plover are Snipe—“Egyptian” Snipe.

THE SNIPE

Gallinago coelestis

Top of head, back, and upper feathers of wings dark brown, in parts nearly black with a bluish gloss, two buff streaks on each side of shoulders; face and chest spotted with dusky brown, whilst the flanks are barred with the same colour; tail bright chestnut, barred with black and tipped with white; legs greenish; bill brown, at base flesh colour; eyes dark brown. Length, 11·5 inches.

THE Snipe in some parts of Upper Egypt are so extraordinarily tame—and hardly behave as Snipe do generally—that I have no doubt they are often seen by many who never recognise them as Snipe at all. At the Sacred Lake at Karnak I have seen veritable processions of visitors, headed by a talking dragoman, walk along the path quite near one which was standing at the water's edge, and if none left the pathway it would remain stolid, but if any boy, or workman, came down to bathe or drink, it just flew across to the other side and at once settled down again. And in the very early morning before the workers arrive, I have stood right on the shore, not screened or hidden in any way, and had Snipe dibbling about in the water not more than five or six yards away. The first time this happened I thought the bird must be wounded or unable to fly, but it was not, and it is only one more proof of the benefit that the Antiquities Department has produced by exercising its authority over the areas it controls. No shooting is allowed on "Antiquities ground," and birds very soon get to know this, gain confidence, and lose all their natural shyness. Needless to say, in those parts where they are shot they behave as warily as Snipe do at home, and are up and away with their curious "scarpe, scarpe" cry. Years ago the Delta was one of the best snipe-grounds in the world, and an old sportsman in Cairo told me of his getting 93 couples in a day, and as late as 1902 a certain five days' shooting gave an average of 72 couple per day. In nearly all such bags some Jack Snipe were obtained; and in Mr. M. J. Nicoll's notes on birds met with at Menzaleh the Jack Snipe is given as the commoner of the two species.

There is nothing to show that Snipe ever breed in Egypt, though there are many localities where it well might, and it is another of the great army of winter migrant visitors that go to the north as spring comes on. It lives entirely on insects and worms, which it procures by probing the soft, black mud with its long, sensitive bill. I have seen Snipe in most unlikely places, and once saw one fly right through an open space at the Ramaseum Temple. From my notes of a night's watching at a pool I borrow the following: "*14th January*, 7.30 P.M.—Snipe are squawking, and can hear them coming in on all sides throughout night, which is a dark one; could hear only faint rippling noise at intervals, as some duck or wader moved about, and the earliest call was at 3 A.M., when a Snipe squawked once or twice, then silence again, and only a faint, far-away dog's bark, and a cricket in the sandbank near my side began churring. At 5 A.M. great splashing at end of pool, and coot began moving. No light showed till after 6, and then one could see duck feeding and moving off, and again little wisps of Snipe went over my head and away."

THE WOODCOCK

Scolopax rusticula

The plumage is grey below, faintly barred on flanks. The head barred on top and spotted on sides. The wings are rich chestnut-brown with transverse bars of black; a narrow stripe of rich yellow triff edged with black runs along the scapulars; tail short and pointed, barred with chestnut and black, is tipped with grey above and pure white beneath. Legs a pale flesh colour; beak reddish at base, brown at tip. Eyes, peculiarly large and of a rich brown, are placed more backward than in most birds. Total length, 14·25 inches.

ACCOUNTS in 1907-8 show that the Woodcock has been obtained fairly frequently, and a case was told me of two being obtained literally by the side of the road from Cairo to the Pyramids in one morning. It is very usual to deplore the existence of “the man with the gun” without in the least really considering the whole matter. That certain men with guns shoot at everything and at all times, breeding season or otherwise, and without any object in killing their victims, is of course deplorable; but the killing of birds in season that can be used as food for man is no offence whatever. Further, from observant good sportsmen has come a full half of all the knowledge of birds that exists, and this cannot be too often dwelt upon, as enthusiasts run riot on this subject, and do damage to a good cause by injudicious condemnation. The accompanying illustration is a small example of what I mean. All know that birds, like ourselves, have eyes and ears, and one knows that the relative positions thereof are as in ourselves—the ear lies behind the eye. No book that I am aware of has any intimation that any other order exists; but one day, a winter or so ago, I shot a Woodcock, and for the purpose of making a minute study of the bird examined it closely, when I found that the ear was in front of the eye. I at once consulted all my bird books, but found no reference to this strange fact. I then examined ten other birds, and though they varied individually, not one but had the ear somewhat in front of the eye.

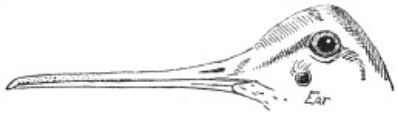


Fig. 7.
Head of Woodcock, to show the position of the Ear.

The woodcock’s food is mainly obtained by

COMMON SNIPE

probing. Its bill is richly supplied with very delicate nerves, and it probes the soft mud and ooze in search of those grubs and insects that live there. It also feeds on worms that it obtains above ground, and indeed has a varied diet.

THE PAINTED SNIPE

Rhynchoea capensis

Head and neck a rich red-brown, darkest on the lower neck or breast; dark streak through eye; buff marking from beak to top of head; back a changing brown with purple and green reflections on the wing, barred with darker markings; the large wing-feathers have rows of bright buff spots on their outer margins; rump a dark slaty grey with darker wavy bars; buff stripes on shoulders; legs greenish; beak reddish-brown; eyes brown. Length, 9·3 inches.

THIS name is unfortunate, for some people seem to imagine that the bird will be found to have paint on it, like a painted Sparrow! Though a handsomely marked bird, those who have shot much say that as a sporting bird it is not to be compared with the common Snipe, as it rises slowly, it does not twist or zig-zag about, and is content with a very short flight. It is a resident bird, and breeds in May in Lower Egypt. I met with it at Lake Menzaleh when there in April, and it possibly is more common throughout the country than is imagined, as it lies very close in cover, and rarely shows itself unless compelled to by being almost trodden upon.

PAINTED SNIPE

THE AVOCET

Recurvirostra avocetta

Whole plumage white, excepting the following parts, which are black—top of head and back of neck, a band between the shoulders, inner part of scapulars, wing-coverts, and primaries; beak long and slender, and turned upwards; legs, slaty-blue-green colour. Total length, 17 inches.

I HAVE included this bird because it is like the Spoonbill, so singular in the form of its bill, and so interesting to us, because at one time it was fairly common in Great Britain. If it is seen it ought to be easily identified, not only because of its black and white plumage, but also because of the curious sweeping movement it makes with its bill as it searches the water for its prey, something suggestive of a mower with a scythe. Captain Shelley says it is met with in large flocks on the Nile, but I have only seen it in very small parties, six being the largest number that I have seen together on the river, but at Lake Menzaleh I have seen hundreds together. Von Heuglin says they are very abundant on the shores of the Red Sea, but on the two occasions I was on those shores—the last time at Kosseir—I was not fortunate enough to observe it. On the sandbanks—those that are very low, with wet spots and little pools—it can be seen better than when they are in big flocks on the salt lakes. Those who travel up and down the Nile in the only way one should do the river journey, namely, by sailing dababeah, should keep a good look-out for this beautiful bird; but I fear that those who pass by in great steamers have less chance, as I have often noticed when my boat has been moored to the bank that on the approach of these monsters pouring out their black clouds of smoke, every bird, great and small, hurries off in disgust if not in absolute alarm. The Avocet is not a permanent resident in Egypt, but comes from a northern home to winter here. It is entirely dependent on the water for its food, obtaining therefrom endless minute specks of life by means of its bill, moved from side to side on the top, or just under the surface of the muddy pools. When at Lake Menzaleh in March and April I saw great flocks of many hundreds just near the last sandbank that separates the lake from the Mediterranean, and Mr. M. J. Nicoll has seen it there in January. They are web-footed, a peculiarity that they share with the Flamingo, another very long-legged wading bird, but whereas the latter is really in form rather an ugly, ungainly bird, the Avocet is peculiarly elegant and graceful in all its movements.

AVOCET

THE SACRED IBIS

Ibis aethiopica

General plumage white; a mass of almost hair-like feathers falls over the wings and tail—these feathers are a rich metallic black with deep blue reflections; head and neck bare of all feathers, showing black wrinkled skin; beak and legs black; eyes brown. Length, 28 inches.

THIS is one of the birds the selection of which I fully expect to get criticism on. But I have chosen it for two reasons that, I think, justify its inclusion. The first is, that from one cause or another the Sacred Ibis is a bird so wrapped up with all our ideas of Egypt, and almost representative of the birds of Egypt, that most, although they do not know the bird, are interested in its existence. The second is one that follows this known interest, namely, the exposing of the dragoman's oft-repeated impudent lie, that he can, and does, show the newcomer Sacred Ibises, whereas he does not and cannot.

Why, exactly, this bird was treated with reverence in its lifetime as a sacred being, and embalmed and mummified when dead, is not known. That it was is certain; and most museums can show many many examples. Then again, it was taken and placed on the body of a man, and made a symbol of the god Thoth, who presided over arts, inventions, writing, and literature. So it has come to pass that all of us, before even our first visit to the Nile, know of this bird, anyhow by name, and being here, very naturally desire to see it. The dragoman, being asked so frequently to point out Sacred Ibises, long ago settled that it would be best to please and humour his patrons, and determined to call all Egrets, Spoonbills, and Buff-backed Herons, being white birds with long necks and legs, Sacred Ibises. Time after time I have been solemnly informed that four or five, or a round dozen, Ibises had been seen at such a place. On inquiry I have been told there could be no mistake, as dear So-and-so, the dragoman, had pointed them out and assured all and sundry that they were "genuine Sacred Ibis." And though strange, it is true, people prefer to believe a lie if it confirms what they wish, than the truth if it does not. The sad truth is, there are no Sacred Ibises in Egypt at all, and the dragomans—anyhow, most of them—know this elementary bit of ornithology perfectly well, but they prefer to lie, and live in the perpetual atmosphere of mild

SACRED IBIS AND PAPYRUS

admiration and interest that follows their every utterance. No, the first place that you can at all safely look for Ibis in is south of Kartoom. It needs the great jungle-like brakes of papyrus that grow rampantly along the river-course, and which help to constitute the dread "sudd" of those waters. Immense masses of it, we are told, get torn off and detached when the new year's flood comes rushing down, and along with other masses go floating onwards till they meet with some stoppage and then they form a dam, new masses coming down and down, till there may be miles of this floating jungle, which can, and does, get so packed and compressed by the weight behind it that it becomes nearly solid. In country like that the Ibis lives, and that is, all will see at once, not the country that Egypt is like, and therefore the Ibis is an absentee from the big, gently-flowing Nile from Assoan to Alexandria. Was it ever common in ancient Egypt? Not unless the conditions of those days were markedly different to these. The river rose each year then as now, and then as now by its rise and rush of waters must have kept the channel clear and the banks bare; but it is possible that there may have been at certain points big swamps where the papyrus grew, which have now become cultivated ground. This view might be taken from the extensive use of papyrus in dynastic days, almost implying that it grew commonly near at hand. What is certain, however, is that it does not do so now; and Ibis and papyrus are so joined together that, the one being absent, the other is also. In the plate I have therefore shown Ibis in a regular jungle of papyrus.[6] There is something strange, almost weird, about the appearance of this bird, with his bald black head; something almost priestly about the black and white drooping wings forming a vestment from which springs the thin, black, naked neck and back. Some will see none of these things, and only find a resemblance to an ugly vulture. It is rather a moody sort of bird, and does not get on over well

with other birds when kept in confinement. It eats nearly anything that comes out of the water, and is especially partial to a nice young fat frog.

[6] It was by M. Legran’s courtesy that I was allowed to make my first drawings of papyrus, from some that was found growing in the garden of his charming house at Karnak.

THE CRANE

Grus communis

The whole of the body a delicate lilac grey, flight feathers dark. Secondary wing-feathers very long, covering with a plume-like mass the wings and tail. Sides of face white, as are the sides of neck, which is black in front; top of head black, the centre of the crown bare of feathers and of a brilliant red; beak greenish-yellow; eyes red-brown. Total length, 46 inches.

Cranes will only be seen flying in flocks high in air, or else resting after a day's flight on some sandbank by the river-side. As soon as they have rested, fed, and refreshed themselves, they are up and away again, and, as far as I know, they do not now remain anywhere in Egypt a day longer than is necessary. They are as rapid in their visits as the most scampering of tourists, who only allot so many days for a whole continent. But owing to the enormous numbers that there are of these birds, some of the migrating armies of them may be seen either in the autumn when they are all going due south, or on the break-up of the winter when they are all going due north. It seems strange that they should get so far north as Lapland and Siberia, but that they do there is abundance of proof; and it must always be remembered that these migrant birds seem to choose the most northerly point of their migration to breed and rear their young, so that when you see flocks wending their way back in the spring-time all up the Nile valley you must picture them as on their way to their northern homes, either in North Germany, Russia, or Scandinavia. They make but a rough nest on the ground in some parts of the great marshes they love, on little islands or tussocks of coarse grass. Only two eggs are laid, of a rich brown colour with dark spots: and the young are especially lively, running about with ease a few days after being hatched. Therein they contrast strongly with the young of the Heron, which remain in the nest for long weeks, and must have every scrap of food brought right up to their nursery.

Cranes' plumage, after the summer's work is over, fades very greatly, and I have seen it stated that the lovely lilac-grey altogether vanishes, leaving but a very dirty, grey-brownish plumage. This is also true of the Heron, and doubtless of all birds whose delicately coloured plumage is put on for the breeding season, for the wear and tear that these delicate

CRANES

feathers have to pass through in all that long nesting period is enough to soil and spoil everything.

Their food is very varied. In captivity they seem as if they could, and would, eat anything, and I remember once seeing one trying to swallow a kid glove that had accidentally been dropped into its enclosure; possibly it thought it was some sort of dried frog! Insects, snails, frogs, and anything it can get from the water, as well as seeds and grasses, are its stock articles of diet.

M. Maspero told me that in his opinion there was a notable diminution of their number and of the time they spend in Egypt every winter—a view I also take most decidedly with my own recollections of twenty-five years ago, when I saw them so frequently that then they were one of the commonest sights on the Nile, whilst in the winters of 1907-1908 I was only once able to make drawings of them on a sandbank near Minieh, and saw but two or three flocks during the whole time flying high in air. This is entirely owing to the great increase of large steamers which, passing up and down, disturb the quiet of the water. If one is fortunate enough to hear them calling one to another as they fly above your head, one will ever afterwards be able to identify them, even though they be mere specks in high heaven, as the sound is peculiarly trumpet-like and sonorous. It carries an enormous distance, and attention may perhaps be drawn to their coming before the faintest sign of them can otherwise be seen.

Most would think, from a general glance at the Crane, that it was a Heron of some sort, but scientists tell us that it is a long way removed from them, and indeed some place it nearer the Bustards. There are many species of Cranes, and they are to be found practically the world over, for not only in Africa and Europe, but Asia, and Australia, and America all have their special Cranes.

In many of the wall-paintings throughout Egypt Cranes are shown, and in none are they in more exact truth than in the temple at Deir-el-Bahari. There they are shown walking in stately fashion between slaves bearing precious burdens; whilst some carry garden produce, rich fruits, and flowers, others are laden with ready trussed fowls and ducks, and amidst them all the graceful bird walks on. One wonders it does not fly away, for these good things do but foreshadow its own end; but if you look closely you will see its bill is tied down close to its neck, for these old-time people knew well the habits of the beasts and birds, and knew that if it could not stretch out head and neck it could not fly. All Cranes, and indeed many other birds, seem

unable to start flight without a certain momentum given by a run forward with wings outspread and stretched-out neck. With head tied down it could get no balance, and would flap and flop, and then fall to the ground. It is in little details such as this that the more you know the more you respect the knowledge of these old artists, and admit the truth and merit of their unrivalled art.

Fig. 8.

THE SPOONBILL

Platalea leucorodea

Plumage white all over, tinged with buff on the lower part of the neck; head crested; beak flattened from above downward, and terminating in a broad spoon-shaped expansion; eye red.

WHEN seen flying the Spoonbill can be readily distinguished from the only other white Egyptian bird, *i.e.* the Egret, because the former flies with its neck extended, whilst the latter, being of the Heron tribe, flies with its neck drawn back close to the body.

I have seen pictures in some of the Gurnah tombs which, though crudely drawn, were undoubtedly meant for the Spoonbill. The old-time artist was apparently so struck with the flat, spoon-shaped beak that he deemed it a worthy subject for the exercise of his art. But though faithfully drawn in so far as its form is concerned, it is wrongly depicted in its relation to the head, since the head is shown in profile, while the beak is drawn as though it were seen from above! In no picture that I can recall by these ancient draughtsmen is any bird ever shown in the very slightest degree foreshortened.

SPOONBILLS On a mud-bank.

The use of this very remarkable beak is apparent when the bird is seen feeding; it is held low down on the surface of the water, and pushed along, like a shrimper’s net, in front of the bird, so as to collect the minute organisms which constitute its food. I have also seen this beak driven deep down, and brought to the surface bearing long strings of grass and other water weeds. In February 1909, when walking along the front at Luxor,—with its hotels and shops, crowds of people and noisy donkey-boys,—I was startled by quite a big flock of Spoonbills that were beaten down low by a strong wind. They passed so close over my head that I saw their big flat beaks and long extended necks quite plainly: as they got farther away their general likeness to Swans in flight was most striking.

Like all birds showing any marked peculiarity in the shape or size of the beak, the Spoonbill wears a somewhat melancholy air, and my readers will doubtless recall this appearance in the case of Herons and Storks, Pelicans and Cormorants.

Time was when the Spoonbill was once common in Great Britain; this is now, unhappily, no longer the case, but no farther away than Holland it still lives and breeds.

THE STORKS

THE WHITE STORK

Ciconia alba

The White Stork is white all over, save for all the true wing feathers, which are black. Beak and bare skin round eye, legs and feet, bright red; eyes brown. Total length, 44 inches.

THE BLACK STORK

Ciconia nigra

The Black Stork is a bronzy black with purple and green reflections all over head, neck, back, and wings. The lower parts white, and beak and bare skin, legs and feet, bright red; eyes brown. Total length, 42 inches.

FACING page 1 is shown a White Stork flying, and the fact that all Storks, in distinction to Herons, fly with their heads and their legs stretched out to their fullest extent, has been already pointed out. This Stork is nearly always seen in large flocks, and there must be ten to one of the white to the black species. The white bird is eminently a gregarious bird, sociable with its fellows, and this sociability extends also to mankind; and most have seen the old wheels stuck on poles and rough platforms

BLACK STORK

built on the top of buildings and barns in Holland or Germany to encourage the bird to come and nest. The Stork and the Swallow know their seasons, and people love to have these messengers of the coming summer make their home with them; and in many places there are traditions of the same site having been used by them for nesting in for hundreds of years. Of all this side of their life, however, those seen in Egypt show nothing, as nearly all that come are simply migrating still farther south. A very few do remain throughout the winter in one or two exceptionally favoured feeding-grounds; Lake Menzaleh, for instance, with its great area of shallow water teeming with fish and aquatic insect life, is a favourite haunt. The profusion of life in every pool and puddle throughout Egypt is really astonishing. I have seen isolated spaces hardly exceeding a couple of square yards absolutely teeming and heaving with innumerable beetles and larvæ of flies and insects. I can also recall one little pool in the centre of one of the many small nameless islands in Lake Menzaleh: when I approached it, from its glittering whiteness I took it to be one of those salt-covered basins that are everywhere, but when I looked close the whole floor of what had been a small pool was one solid mass of dead fry, none longer than an inch and a half. The water had been all over the island, but when I was there in April it had gone down, and this mass of imprisoned little fish had died as the water gradually dried up. How long they may have been dead I do not know, but the level mass of them was so untouched that it was clear no gull or heron or stork had been there, and yet the district was full of these birds; but I presume living food being in such profusion round them, they cared not to trouble about dead. The pool looked like a large basin of the most wonderfully silvery whitebait.

Up the Nile when flocks of Storks are seen they are always either heading due north in spring, or due south in autumn. Every now and again they indulge, however, sometimes for hours together, in curious aerial exercises high up in mid-air over one spot—why this is I do not know. This, as is the case with so many of birds' habits, is all that can be done—note the fact. Conclusions drawn from these facts are vain, as too often man reads into these birds' actions the reasons that would occur in his life; and the life of a bird is not as that of a man, and the sooner man throws over all such ideas that he can tell anything of the causes of birds' actions by reading himself into their lives, the sooner he may get at the real truth of the matter. I say this because I have been asked so often the question, Why do the Storks behave in this curious way? I don't know, and at present I don't think any man knows; for if they are on a journey the only stop you would think they would make would be for rest or food, yet for hours, sometimes almost for the best part of a day, they do stop over one spot, and you will see these vast flocks high up, so that they look like mere specks, going round and round, sometimes higher, sometimes lower, but never going far from some unseen centre of attraction till the spirit moves them; and swinging out of the great circle, they one by one take their places in the wake of some chosen leader to the land to which they would go.

The White Stork makes a curious clattering noise with its bill. Its food is mainly derived from the water; and frogs, a plague of which is always over Egypt, are favourite morsels.

If sailing down the river you chance on a large flock resting on some sandbank, you will see a picture which would be exceedingly difficult to surpass in beauty and interest. The white of the great masses of birds comes in fine contrast with the reds of their legs and the golden yellow of the sand, and if on your nearer approach they all simultaneously rise together into mid-air you will be hardly likely to forget the scene for a whole lifetime.

The Black Stork is not so interesting as the above, but it is a remarkably handsome bird in itself. All its

peculiarities are just the opposite of the White Stork. It is not gregarious, but generally rather a solitary bird; it does not love its own species, and it certainly does not court the proximity of man. On the scale that our drawing has had to be reduced to, to suit these pages, it comes very small, but not too small to show the general disposition of the colours of its plumage. We came very early in the morning on this group standing at the end of a long sand-bar, just ten miles south of Sohag, and they never got up as the boat sailed comparatively close by them. The group was a very mixed one, as in addition to the four Black Storks there were two Spoonbills and a Heron; and I find another note that once I saw three Black Storks, one White Stork, and several Herons all in a bunch together, this also in the grey of an early March morning. These two cases of a contradiction of what we are generally told is the ordinary habit of shunning their own species is only another of the endless cases that I have met with of the variation of the individual in absolutely everything. All that can be done is to give what is believed to be the average customary habit, but ever be prepared for individuals contradicting the rule. To dogmatise as to what a child or a bird will do is always March madness. The Black Stork is like his white cousin, of great use in keeping down the Egyptian plague of frogs.

THE SHOEBILL OR WHALE-HEADED STORK

Balaeniceps rex

Arabic name, *Abu-markub*, or Father of a Slipper

The whole plumage is a faded blue-grey running into darker tones on the wing. The primaries and tail being nearly black, eyes light yellow, legs dark brownish-black. Bill, huge, boat-shaped.

THIS bird I have included, though hardly a true Egyptian bird, its home being in the Soudan and south to Uganda, where Sir H. Johnston commonly saw it. It is the greatest show-bird the Cairo Zoological Gardens possesses, and by the ordinary person can be alone seen in Egypt. It is so exceedingly quaint and grotesque, that even when desiring to give an accurate representation of it, one is conscious that one's drawing seems to look rather like a caricature. When it stands still there is something suggestive of a crabbed, disagreeable old person; and when it walks, the slow pedantic gait with the leg shot forward, with distended toes pointing outwards, inevitably suggests the drum-major or the dancing-master. So many people

SHOEBILL STORK

visiting the Cairo Gardens remember only this quaint bird, that it has become one of the most popular birds of the country, and is better known than very many of the true native Egyptian birds.

Captain Stanley S. Flower says "he saw perhaps as many as forty in one day" during a trip on the White Nile. "They were to be seen usually singly, sometimes two or three within a score of yards of each other, standing about on the edges of the marsh, always in the same attitude. In the motionless way in which they stand, their solitariness, and their flight, they are more like a Heron than a Stork. In fact, at a distance, unless you can see the bill, it is impossible to tell them when on the wing from the Goliath Heron."

Mr. A. L. Butler says of it in its native wilds: "They seem of a very sluggish nature, and I seldom observed them on the wing unless put up by our steamer." And as to its food, he writes: "I have never known it attempt to eat shell-fish; the bird is a fisher pure and simple, but doubtless, like a Heron, will eat any small mammal or young water-bird that comes within reach." Heron-like, Balaeniceps, instead of searching for its prey, waits patiently for it to come to it. It is generally to be seen standing motionless on newly-burnt swampy ground, or short grass flooded with an inch or two of water, inside the fringe of papyrus, or "um suf" sudd which separates the channel of the Bahr-el-Ghazal from the plains. I never saw the bird actually wading in water. Its food consists principally of *Polypterus senegalus*, which wanders a great deal into flooded grass-land. Sometimes the bird will perch on the top of a tree, but trees are scarce in its haunts. Its flight is heavy, but powerful; the neck is drawn back like a Heron's. "It seems to be rather a quarrelsome bird; on its first arrival at Khartoum, it seized a fox terrier which approached it so sharply that the dog fairly yelled." Some of its habits are as peculiar as its appearance, for, later on, Mr. Butler tells us, "They have a curious trick of repeatedly bringing up their food before finally swallowing it. This often results in the disgorged fishes being snatched up by Kites"; and every visitor to the Giza Gardens must have noticed its curious habit of rattling its bill as it alternately lifts and lowers its head as a sort of welcome to its keeper. When it stands thus with its head lowered, its bill clattering, and its neck slightly swollen and held straight as a stick, it is about the most curious-looking bird possible. At the date of writing, I believe these three specimens at Giza are the only ones in any zoological gardens in the world, and the authorities are naturally very proud of them; but we do hope that some day we shall have some in our own Zoological Gardens in London, as they are birds that can stand captivity well.

THE COMMON HERON

Ardea cinerea

The top of head, neck, and under-parts white; a stripe above the eye, back of head, and long, thin crest-feathers; spots on breast, and larger wing-feathers black; flanks a very light grey; rest of plumage a delicate slaty-grey shading on the wings to a darker hue; beak yellowish-green; legs greenish-black; eyes yellow. Entire length, 38 inches.

THIS is the common Heron of England, and is evenly distributed over the country. It needs water, and from that cause is more often seen in Lower than Upper Egypt. It seems to be a visitor and not a resident. Mr. M. J. Nicoll tells me that from August to April it is steadily seen either in, or flying over, the Zoological Gardens at Cairo, and if it were a resident bird it would be one of the first to make the Gardens a breeding-place, as the thick trees and quiet pools of water are all to its liking; but I have not heard that it ever occurs there during the summer months. The group I sketched were standing together at the edge of a pool on the river, gazing stolidly at a solitary pelican. At home, it always nests in colonies known as heronries, and I believe that in England

HERONS
At dawn on the Nile.

it is rather increasing than decreasing in numbers. The young birds are peculiarly ugly, and have a rather mad-looking hairy down covering on their heads, which is retained till they have become almost fully fledged. When I have been watching Herons standing, patiently waiting by the hour together, for fish to come within striking distance, I have often wondered if there was any truth in the old homely legend of their legs having some potent fascination by reason of an exuded oil which the fish love, that tempts them to come swimming round and round till they approach too near and are adroitly caught. Anyhow this is certain, it does not walk after them; they come to it. Having chosen its spot, it remains there as quiet as a mouse, and with the true fisherman’s patience bides its time. It is a curious sight to see the way in which it perches on a branch. It drops its long, thin legs and seizes it with its extended toes, but always seems to find it hard to get its balance, and as the branch sways with its weight it bends its body this way and that, all the time keeping its wings expanded as if trying to get just the right balance, and you realise then that it is no true “perching bird.” It lends its picturesque form to Egyptian scenery, just as it does to our homely English waters or wilder Scotch lochs; it always, somehow, goes well with the landscape. Shelley says, “It may be seen in considerable numbers in company with Spoonbills, Pelicans, and other waders.” And it is one of the curious facts about bird life here, that so many of the birds that we know only as solitary and not at all given to consorting in flocks, either with their own species or any other, save at their breeding stations, frequently do show a complete difference of habit in this respect in this country. From the boat I remember seeing a singular line of seven birds flying towards us. The first was a Heron, then a Spoonbill, then a Heron followed by two Spoonbills, and the straight line ended with two Herons, all so close together, the bill of one nearly touching the tail of the other, and all keeping time with the utmost precision.

To enumerate all the places I have watched this bird at is unnecessary, as at one time or another I have seen it everywhere. Its food is fish, frogs, and it is particularly fond of eels.

BUFF-BACKED HERON

Ardeola russata

General plumage white, delicately tinged with buff on head, nape, crop, and back; beak and bare skin round eye, yellow; eye, light yellow; legs, olive-black. Total length, 20·5 inches.

THIS is the bird that is most often called the Egret, and it is very similar, as in its winter plumage it is practically white all over—just a line of buff on the crown. It is of the greatest service to the cattle when feeding or resting, as it seems to know no fear, and settles on their backs, one or two at a time, and diligently searches for flies and ticks and all those parasitic things that infest the poor brutes. I have seen them walk right up to one of the recumbent buffaloes, and go solemnly picking things off it all the way round its face, even off its eyes, whilst the creature never ceased chewing the cud, and one saw its jaw going solemnly round and round whilst the bird did its best to free it from the pests. What Egypt would be without all these birds, who are ceaselessly at work clearing the air of insect life, it is appalling to contemplate, for with them the clouds of flies, midges, mosquitoes and the rest render life in some places intolerable. No one quite knows what flies are till one tries sketching out of doors here. With your palette on one hand and brushes in the other, you are an easy prey to them, and they take every advantage of the fact. They will cluster by the dozen on your face, walk in brigades over the ridge of your nose, sting you on the hand, at the back where your palette hides them from your view, and even if you have a boy with a fly-wisp they will never leave you. I have found them at their worst at the edges of the cultivated land, where trees are often growing picturesquely, tempting the artist to sit in their seductive shade; with most dire results, as one is almost eaten alive, and one envies the cattle who are being so assiduously attended to by these kindly fly-catchers.

The Egret is one of the many birds that the dragoman makes the tourist happy by calling “the Ibis,” and the number that return to their friends gleefully telling how they saw a flock of Ibises grows every season. In the article on the Ibis it is shown how ludicrously untrustworthy is the dragoman’s Natural History information.

The Buff-backed Heron may often be seen flying up or down the river in little parties of

BUFF-BACKED HERON

five or six. They look snow-white, and are then hard to tell from Spoonbill or Egret; but they ought not to be mistaken for the first-named bird, for, being Herons, they fly as all Herons do, with head tucked in, whilst the Spoonbill flies with extended neck. This is a real resident bird. Captain Shelley says it breeds in August in large colonies in the sont trees, and that, in addition to being useful to the poor cattle, it is of the greatest use to Egypt, as it wages war on the locusts that would otherwise devastate the green crops and all growing things.

I regret, however, that every year, according to the best evidence, this bird is less and less seen. Twenty-five years ago it was to be met with, off and on, everywhere, and in the Delta it was absolutely one of the commonest of birds. The cause of its lessening numbers is not certain, but when it is recalled that it is a form of Egret, and that from Egrets come “aigrettes,” one solution is apparent. Against that view, however, in common justice, I must say that I have no scrap of evidence that these birds are at all largely persecuted in Egypt, and they are, as already said, a resident bird. Some undoubtedly migrate north; it may be they never return, and so the annual decrease. Of the decrease there is no doubt, and I have been told that now the natives—the men who till the soil and benefit by its products—openly say that certain insect pests the much-valued cotton suffers from nowadays is due, in their opinion, to the reduced number of “little white birds” who used to come in flocks, by hundreds, and search and find and devour these same insect pests.

THE NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax griseus

Upper plumage dark to black, with blue-green reflections; two long plumes from head; white wings and tail grey; under-parts a grey buff-white; eyes crimson; young are dull grey and brown, mottled and spotted. Total length, 21 inches.

THIS is a really common bird, but being nocturnal it is not very often noticed. Many a sont or palm tree that people walk under may have four or five sitting so quietly among the branches that they are not observed; but towards evening—before the sun has actually dropped behind the horizon—they begin to waken up; and curious “squawk, squawk” calls, then flappings about as they move from branch to branch, will be heard, till, as the afterglow begins, they all start mounting into the air and taking great circles round and round, or away in a bee-line to some favourite feeding-ground, where they remain all night, and return at dawn to their roosting-places. In some trees in the garden of the old Luxor Hotel, there is, as I write in 1909, a colony—two of the trees they roost in hang over the very carriage roadway up to the station,—noisy and bustling for three months of the year, yet they remain in this old-time haunt undisturbed by all the changes that have taken place in this ancient town. Twenty-seven years ago I saw them there, but I have met people who declare there never was a time known when Night Herons did not frequent this spot. There is a certain seat on the front where one enters the hotel grounds, that is under some Lebekh trees these Herons love, and I was early in the season horrified to hear that the order had gone out to shoot all those that were there, as they sometimes soiled the monstrous hats that the ladies were wearing. I appealed in vain to the management—“They had had so many complaints,” etc.—it must be, and was. I never dared ask how many were shot; and I really do not see why the ladies could not take their hats off, or else put up parasols. Anyhow, just because of women’s hats, an historic colony of these interesting birds in a very remarkable situation has been in danger of being driven away. This Heron is not nearly so big as our own familiar bird, and is rather squat and dumpy in shape, but he is a fascinating, rather weird-looking creature. Occasionally, one or two stray as far as Great Britain; but here in Egypt it

NIGHT HERON

is to be met with, where it establishes a colony, in quite large numbers, and, in the report I have frequently referred to on wild birds that visit the Giza Zoological Gardens, it is stated that “Night Herons begin to arrive during August, winter here, and leave during the spring months. A few individuals, however, are seen throughout the summer. The number of these birds, which spend the daytime in the gardens, has greatly increased during the last ten years. 108 were counted on January 15, 1900; 360 on December 11, 1902. At present it is impossible to count them.”

All day long it sits moped up, out of the direct rays of the sun, in the centre of a mass of overhanging foliage, and only wakes up when most other birds are just falling to sleep. It feeds on fish, frogs, and even water-beetles and insects.

THE FLAMINGO

Phoenicopterus antiquorum

Arabic, *Basharoush*

On the head, neck, and body, in the adult, a delicate coral pink tints all the white: in younger birds these parts are pure white; large wing-feathers black, all the rest various tones of red, from a delicate rose to the deepest crimson; in young birds the wings are of an ashy brown; legs and base of bill in the adult a pink with a somewhat leaden hue; in young birds legs leaden; tip of bill black; eyes, straw-yellow. Total length, 45 inches.

If it were not for zoological collections few of us would be as familiar with the form of this strange bird as we are—for though there are thousands and thousands of them in Egypt, it is generally only seen when flying in great flocks high overhead, and it does not often give a chance of a close inspection. But owing to its peculiarities it is always a favourite, and young as well as old are interested in its extraordinary length of leg and neck, and charmed with its brilliant rosy-red plumage, so that all know something of its appearance if they do not know much of its life-history. The Flamingo loves most of all shallow water, and lives nearly all its days in the great brackish lakes of Lower Egypt.

FLAMINGO

H.H. the Khedive being informed of my desire to visit the Flamingo at its home in Lake Menzaleh, exceedingly kindly granted me special facilities, and I was able to go from end to end of this great lake and from side to side, visiting every place where they were to be found. I was allowed the use of one of the coastguard dahabeahs. These boats are built on the lines of the native fishing-boats; being practically flat-bottomed they draw but little water, which is necessary, as the lake for its size is very shallow. It is this shallowness which makes Menzaleh such a happy hunting-ground for all water-birds. It fairly teems with birds; in February there are literally millions of Duck there, with Cormorants, Pelicans, Herons, Flamingoes, and Waders of every sort. In March they lessen in numbers, many only using it as a place to spend a few weeks at before going north to their summer homes, and by the time April comes there are not an overwhelming number; but the Flamingoes keep there as a feeding-ground nearly all the year round, and it was to see if they had their nesting-quarters there that I went to Menzaleh early this year, 1909.

You cannot be long on the lake before you begin to understand why birds love it so, for as you sail along you frequently see, first here, then there, fish jumping out of the water, and when you look into the shallows in all directions you see shoals of little fishes. Then the number of fishing-boats, with their great nets picturesquely hung up to dry, is another visible evidence of the teeming myriads of fish that this saltish-water lake contains. The first Flamingoes I saw were in the centre of a large flock of tufted Ducks. Leaving the dahabeah I got into the small boat and quickly paddled towards them, but they would not allow of a very near approach before up got the Duck, and then in another moment the Flamingoes, who had up to then been feeding with heads down in the water, were all on the wing—to rise they faced for one minute in my direction, and the great mass of crimson feathers under the wings made a most gorgeous spectacle against the blue sky; then they swung round, and more white than red was visible, and quickly in a long irregular line they were away to some less disturbed place. Only once did I get really close up to one, and I found out afterwards by the hanging leg that it only allowed me to because it was some poor crippled bird. They are so shot at and persecuted generally that they are now exceedingly shy, and in spite of the good feeding they get here it is surprising they still keep to these waters in the numbers they do. At a town called Matariya I visited a great local bird-dealer, one Angelino Tedeschi. His place was on the outskirts of the town, and was a collection of tumble-down shanties made of straw, matting, and boards. Behind his own dwelling, which was literally worse than any Irish cabin, were three enclosures made of tall reeds and split palm branches about eight feet high, with more open lattice-work on the top; in these enclosures were fully fifty to sixty Flamingoes. I walked right in, and the birds did not stampede or dash themselves about, yet Angelino said they had not long been caught. They were all in surprisingly good condition, considering their numbers and cramped space. A door at one end was opened and they filed out into the adjoining enclosure to have their bath—a very dirty, muddy hole in the sodden ground, but they seemed to enjoy it; one after the other, and sometimes two or three at a time, all went in, and drank and splashed about, trumpeting a little, and then they were driven back. I bought a particularly brilliant-coloured one which had died that day, for the price the man asked, three shillings, which seemed to me very cheap, as it was in perfect order. I wanted one to make detailed studies of, and I

took it back to the boat with me, and worked from this poor bird till all the crew covered their noses with their hands as they came near my model, and I myself could stand it no longer, and it was tossed over as food for the fishes, who later again would be food for others of its own kindred. Scattered about Angelino's quarters were curious high crates made of split palm branches and lined with canvas. Asking what they were for, I was told they were the cages for the poor birds to be sent away—"to America," he said—and I could get no more out of him. We learned this man comes every winter from Alexandria, settles down in these remarkable quarters, and buys his Flamingoes from the local fishermen, who vary their ordinary pursuit by catching duck and any wildfowl that they can net, and the result is that, though years ago Flamingoes did nest on the lake, now not one does.

The form of the bill in the Flamingo always suggests a man with a broken nose. The angular fall-back of the bill is nearly as singular as the upturned one of the Avocet. As the Flamingo obtains its insect and other food from the water, and the inside of its peculiar-shaped bill with which it has to obtain this food is provided with a tooth-like serrated margin like a duck's, it follows that to get the water into its mouth it has to walk as shown in the illustration with its bill turned backwards. This position I do not think is adopted by any other living bird, and is the one outstanding individual peculiarity the Flamingo possesses. When seen thus feeding it is far from graceful; the long neck is straightened out, and the top of the head is to the front in the direction of which it is moving, and the bill is pointed backwards towards the tail.

Fig. 9.

GREEN-BACKED GALLINULE

Porphyrio Madagascariensis

Arabic, *Digmeh*

Whole plumage ultramarine blue shading into black, and on the back shading into bluish-green; white under-tail; frontal and bill blood-red, as are legs and feet; claws black; eye, deep crimson-brown. Total length, 18 inches.

We have included this bird, as it is perhaps as handsome as any in all Egypt, but it may be questioned whether many of our readers will come across it, for it lives in dense reed beds which grow in the large lakes of the Delta and Fayoom, and rarely quits them for the waters of the Nile. Our own Waterhen, or Moorhen, is a sort of near cousin of this bird, but whereas our bird always gives the impression of being animated and cheery, this Egyptian Gallinule somehow looks depressed in spite of its brilliant plumage; and when it walks, it does so with no indecent haste, but slowly lifts one leg whilst the long toes hang loosely, and then gently places it down on the ground, all the while holding its head and body nearly perpendicularly, whilst, when not taking this strenuous exercise, it

STUDIES OF GALLINULE

sits with rounded shoulders on some stump or dead herbage by the hour together. As its food seems to consist almost entirely of the inner and soft parts of the shoots of reeds and other water-plants amongst which it lives all its days, it does not have to make any special effort to obtain food, and conceivably it may be one of those birds which are on a slow downward grade towards extinction. There can be little doubt but that the matter of food-supply has led many birds to alter their methods of life. In some cases, finding an abundance of food ever ready to hand, the use of the wings was abandoned, and with the inevitable result that just as they ceased to fly so the wings ceased growing, till at last they became flightless birds and at the mercy of each and every enemy that might attack them. It may be that thinking on these things has made the bird melancholy and depressed; but nothing can save it but “bucking up” and using its powers. Mr. Erskine Nicol told me how once, when out shooting, he saw one in a cornfield near a stack; he went towards it and the bird ran behind the stack; when he followed, it would not leave the friendly shelter, but by simply running round and round always kept safe. Mr. Nicol at last got tired of this useless chase and thought out a plan of campaign. Starting faster than ever, he ran round after the bird, and then suddenly turned and ran round the opposite way, when he met the melancholy Gallinule full face; and so flustered it that it left the stack and flew at right angles away, giving a possible shot, which was taken advantage of. On another occasion one was seen swimming in a miserable little duck-pond outside a village, tenanted by tame ducks, and the Gallinule absolutely refused to leave the sheltering society of these farmyard birds. Both these incidents seem to point to the same sort of method of life: “just sit tight, don’t fly into the open, risk nothing in the outside world, there are unknown dangers”: so it may be that this bird will sit, and sit, all humped up in its reed jungle till at last it loses the power of flight altogether; and then, before long, it will certainly fall a prey to some force or enemy which it has no power of resisting or escaping from. Mr. J. H. Gurney has also written of this bird, that just in the early morning or towards sunset he has seen it leave the shelter of these great reed-beds, but keeping quite close thereto, and at the least sign of danger running back to them. Seldom or never has he seen it take even a flight of a few yards. Along with its vegetable food it takes a certain number of small aquatic insects, and when this food cannot be obtained it is not averse to good hard grain of any kind. It lays six to eight eggs, which are ruddy-brown spotted with dark purple-brown.

THE COOT

Fulica atra

General plumage a dark grey, almost sooty, but which in the sunlight shows a delicate, almost lilac sheen; head black; and the neck graduates from black into the general grey of body; beak, white with a tinge of warm colour in it; the frontal shield is pure ivory white; legs, greenish-grey; eyes, reddish-brown. Length, 16 inches.

THIS is a common bird, and though nearly all migrate, I believe a few remain to breed in exceptionally favourable places, as I have heard that it has been observed throughout the summer months on certain waters.

It is the same bird we get in Britain, and behaves in identically the same way. On preserved waters, as for instance the Sacred Lake at Karnak, where every one may see it, it is, as it is at home, very tame, and rarely takes wing more than from one side to the other of the lake, and if you move quietly, or remain sitting for any length of time, they allow of a very near approach, and come swimming quite close up. Sometimes I have had them walk on to the bank within a few yards of me and start to preen their feathers. If at such a time the sun is shining brightly on them, this bird, which is generally described as being "black with a white bill," is seen to be a most delightful, almost dove-like coloured creature with jet black glossy head, and the neck with a blue or purple sheen. It is sociable, and though sometimes it has some small squabble with a neighbour, it is in the main seemingly a cheery, good-tempered bird. Although it is not often seen to fly far, it can and does fly enormous distances and at a very great pace. The Coot does not belong to the Duck tribe; it has not true webbed feet, but the web follows the line of the toes on each side. Sometimes it goes in very large flocks, running into thousands, and I have heard of large bags being made; but it seems rather a useless performance, as it is not a good bird for the table by any means, being very fishy flavoured, so fishy that it used to be allowed to be eaten as "fish" on holy days in French convents and monasteries. Its food seems to consist principally of aquatic weeds and grasses, and small fish and water creatures, and when it comes on shore it searches for insects and small slugs and snails, as it grazes goose-like on the young tender blades of grass.

The nest and eggs of the Coot are very like those of the common Moorhen.

THE EGYPTIAN GOOSE

Chenalopex aegyptiacus

Centre of head light brown; upper part of throat and cheeks white, shading into brown; forehead, round the eye, and neck, a chestnut bright brown; upper parts of back, chest, and flanks, reddish buff, with dusky bars; large wing-feathers black; a metallic green bar crosses wing; lower half of back and tail black; a deep chocolate patch on centre of breast; centre of abdomen white; under-tail coverts buff; legs, dark pink; beak, dull flesh colour; eyes brown. Total length, 26 inches.

THE Egyptian Goose is a handsomely coloured bird, and when seen sunning itself on some sandbank it makes a brilliant picture. It is a real native of the Nile, and breeds in the early spring—March and April; and sportsmen's records tell of its being a quite shootable bird in the first weeks of May. In 1907, only a quarter of a mile from the busiest part of Luxor, there might have been seen daily a charming little flotilla of the parents and four young ones swimming about round the promontory of land that there juts out. They had nested in the cultivation that at that point comes down to the very water's edge. This is the ideal position they love, as they can, on the approach of danger, slip at once into the water, where they are

EGYPTIAN GEESE

comparatively safe. Many, who may not see this bird on the river, have probably often seen it at home, as it is frequently kept with other water-fowl on the ornamental waters of our parks. It is not a lively bird, and seems to spend a large part of the day standing in a hunched-up attitude on some sandbank, well in the middle of the stream, from which position it can see the approach of any enemy. In captivity it is rather morose, and fierce with any smaller fowl it can safely bully. It lives on all sorts of water-insects and weeds, and makes excursions at night-time to the fields and cultivated grounds for grass and corn.

Fig. 10.

Probably no single work of art in all Egypt has been more widely copied than the picture of geese which is now in the Museum at Cairo. It came from the tomb of Ne fer maāt at Mêdûm, and is universally known as "the oldest picture in the world," for it is ascribed to the earliest dynasty, and approximately about 4400 B.C. To a naturalist it is peculiarly interesting, but the interest is linked with sadness, as the subject of the picture being entirely of bird-life, one would have thought that bird-life would be a subject of continued interest; but the reverse is very much the case, so much so, that though this very picture is known to thousands who have never been to Egypt, and many thousands more who have been to Egypt and gone to see this very picture, and bought photographs or copies of it, few or any have really interest enough in it even to learn or inquire what are the names of the geese depicted. In the very rough little sketch on p. 175 the two geese at the extreme right and left are Bean Geese, birds that one might expect the old-time artist to be familiar with, and the same is true of the two geese in the left-hand group, which are White-fronted Geese, as both are winter migrants to Egypt, remaining till March. Of the two remaining birds, from their markings the naturalist will have no doubt but that they are Red-breasted Geese; and there is a mystery, as they never come to Egypt, and being a northern bird, one is utterly at a loss to explain why the artist of that long-distant date should depict that special Goose. That he did see the bird, and with fidelity drew it, are facts, and one can only conclude that zoological collections are no new thing, but that men, nearly six thousand years ago, must have kept rare birds in captivity for the pleasure of their beauty, and that artists went to their zoological gardens or collections, and drew pictures of the inhabitants of far-distant climes for the walls of their temples or tombs. As a realistic study of bird-life this little picture is admirable, the set of the head and peculiar curve of the Feeding Geese is singularly true, whilst the whole is carried through in a broad decorative spirit. It is curious that in a country where the earliest art took subjects from Nature, there should now be such absolute apathy that in many cases the people have no separate names for the birds around them. Egypt has other geese that visit it, but none others native to it. The White-fronted Goose is said to be the most abundant of all, the Brent Goose and the Bean Goose, all three visiting the Nile and Delta in the winter months.

Fig. 11.

PINTAIL-DUCK

Dafila acuta

Plumage of back and flanks grey; the large scapulars are long-pointed and edged with buff; brilliant metallic green bar on wing; head brown; neck and under-parts white; the tail long, and two centre feathers very narrow and longer than the rest; beak slate-grey; legs black; eyes brown. The female is a plain, mottled brown bird, tail pointed but not so long as the drake. Entire length, 23 inches.

At different times of the year different birds come in gigantic flocks. Thus at one time, owing to the vast migration of these Pintail-Ducks, it might well be said they were far and away the commonest; but a little later you hardly see one, and wherever you go it is the Shoveller Duck that is met with, whilst at another time it would be the Teal, or the Pochard. So that to settle the point exactly—What is the commonest duck of the country?—is not altogether an easy one, and I do not intend to speak dogmatically; but I have placed this duck first on the list, because not only do you meet with it in enormous numbers, but you also see it represented more frequently on the walls of temples and tombs. The well-known hieroglyph

PINTAIL, TEAL, AND SHOVELLER DUCK

of a duck under a circle, which is translated as the Son of the Sun, was doubtless meant to represent this particular bird. Very often—not always—where the workmanship is of the finest and of a good period, the characteristics are exact, and the long pintail feathers are most plainly shown. Now, no duck that comes to this country has a long tail, other than the Pintail, therefore there can be no question that these old-time artists, for some reason best known to themselves, selected from all the various ducks they have, just this particular one to symbolize this royal conception. It is also shown on many wall-paintings in the tombs, flying with the tail spread, and the two long central feathers well marked. Going up the Nile sometimes you pass great high bare sandbanks which have on the other side of them long narrow strips of shallow pools; here, at certain times, is the place to see duck in their thousands—literally thousands. There they sit secure; the high bank screens them from the river-way with its great sailing-boats and modern steamers; they can see the tops of the spars and masts and the black smoke from the steamers' funnels, but neither boat nor steamer can see them. If you attempt an approach by land you can rarely surprise them, as they always have sentinels well posted up and down the reach of water, and a warning quack and all heads are up on a flash; and if the quack has had a certain intonation they are all up and away at once. Then it is, if you are shooting, that you may, if you keep quiet, get a shot as they return sweeping down and round the water, which they will not completely leave unless very frightened. I have looked on to pools of this sort which have been absolutely black with birds, and amongst the whole, nine-tenths would be Pintail. Later it might be, at that same pool, all would be Shovellers or Pochard. The Pintail is what is known as a surface-feeding duck, and is placed near the common Wild Duck, the Mallard of English waters. It is distinctly peculiar in form; the neck is long, and when alarmed the head is held high, and the whole neck looks very thin. These characters, as well as the long pintail, are well shown at Deir-el-Bahari and other temples, where the wall-painting is of a really good period, and from the frequency of its pictures one can only suppose that it was as common all those years ago as it is to-day. The Zoological Gardens at Cairo are visited nearly every winter by a few Pintails. They feed on grass and water-weeds, and all the teeming larva of flies and other insects that haunt shallow pools and puddles.

THE SHOVELLER DUCK

Spatula clypeata

Plumage of back brown, becoming black as it approaches the tail, which is also black with white edging to outer feathers; head and neck black with green metallic lustre; chest and lower parts white; the scapulars, long and pointed, are blue and black and white; wing has a metallic green bar, the small covert feathers are a very delicate blue-grey, and the flight feathers are dark brown; the breast and flanks are a brilliant chestnut; legs orange; beak black; eyes brown. The female is a dull brown colour with dark spots, and its bill often has looked to me even larger than the male's. Length, 20·5 inches.

THE outstanding peculiarity of the Shoveller, male and female, is the large bill. Seen very near at hand it looks both large and clumsy, but it is a bill not made for ornament but for business, and carried low so that it just sweeps the water. As it swims along, a never-ending flow of insect-laden water enters it, and filtering through the plate-like serrations of the sides, leaves a rich deposit of food in the duck's mouth, and clearly the bigger the bill the more the water that can be filtered and dealt with, and the greater the consequent food-supply for the duck.

It is a really handsome bird in colour, the peculiar mass of light lilac blue-grey feathers of the wing contrasting vividly with the chestnut of the sides. Indeed, I do not know any duck that is superior to it in its vividly contrasting coloration. Although it is in form clumsy-looking, it is anything but clumsy or slow in getting up and on the wing, and I own to having been beaten often at pools similar to those described in reference to the Pintail, by the quickness and pace of its flight. The last visit I paid to the Cairo Zoological Gardens in March 1909, the ornamental waters there were crowded with duck, nearly all Shovellers. All had come in of their own accord, flew freely, and would, so Mr. Nicoll informed me, shortly all be up and away till another season came round. And in the most interesting report of the *Wild Birds of the Giza Gardens* just published, figures are given. "A few Shovellers arrive, in some years, as early as August, and they become more and more numerous during the autumn and winter. Some leave here in March, but the majority do so in April." "Up to 1902 twenty was the largest number of Shovellers seen, at one time, on our lake. On the 18th of January 1903, 171 were counted; on the 6th of March 1905, 443. Since then it is estimated that over 500 Shovellers take up their winter quarters with us."

THE TEAL

Querquedula crecca

Arabic, *Sharshare*

Head and neck chestnut-brown; a patch of green encircles the eyes and cheeks, a light buff streak divides the green from the brown; neck, back, and flanks grey, composed of delicate alternate black and white wavy lines. Scapulars white with rich black on their outer webs; green metallic bar on wing; under-parts white; breast spotted with buffish-black; under-tail coverts a clear, brilliant yellow-buff; beak and legs black; eyes brown. The female looks smaller than the male, and is a sober-coloured brown bird, with darker, almost black, markings. Length, 15·5 inches.

As far as my own experience goes, I have never seen any really large flock of duck, of whatever kind, but there have been Teal among them. I do not care to say that I think this is the very commonest of all the duck tribe. It is certainly met with very frequently, but Captain Shelley holds that it is absolutely "the most abundant species of water-fowl throughout Egypt," and possibly he is right. It is the same smart little bird we have at home, and the male has, when showing off, a most attractive appearance, of which it is fully aware, as is shown by its jaunty carriage. Of all duck, this is the quickest off the mark; how it does it one can hardly see, but it leaves the water in one second, apparently at top speed, as if it had been going for some minutes. As with the Shoveller this duck comes in great numbers to the Cairo Zoological Gardens, and the ready intelligence it shows in remaining in full sight of men and flying close over their heads whilst in the Gardens, and the wary care it shows the moment it is outside the sanctuary, is most interesting. On wall-paintings I am told it is depicted, but I am not certain that I have ever seen its small form shown; in the matter of relative size of living and other objects, these old craftsmen were curiously capricious. A notable illustration of this is in the way they portrayed the wives of the heroic Rameses statues, where you will find the lady shown coming up only to the knee-joint of her gigantic lord and master. When they treated royal ladies in this way, it is useless to expect great accuracy in the matter of rendering the various relative sizes of humble water-fowl! Teal may be seen in nearly all the winter months amongst the Coot at the Sacred Lake at Karnak, and at many other places guarded by the Antiquities Department. Mr. Nicoll writes: "Several hundred Teal winter on the lake in the Gardens (Zoological). In some years a few of them arrive as early as the latter part of August, and they have been known to stay as late as the 8th of May."

THE WHITE PELICAN

Pelecanus Onocrotalus

General colour of plumage a rosy white; the larger flight-feathers of wing, black; beak grey; pouch, a bright yellow; eyes red. Entire length, 60 inches.

THE Pelican has the honour of being, in Egypt, as far as sheer length of wing goes, the largest bird that flies; for the span of wings from tip to tip has been recorded as twelve feet. I believe the span of the Griffon Vulture is only about eight feet. Thirty years ago Pelicans were more often seen than they are to-day. This does not necessarily mean that they are less numerous, but only that, from some cause or another, they do not come within range of observation. I think the traffic on the river having so altered is the probable explanation. I can only recall one case of late, of seeing Pelican on a sandbank, and that was very early in the morning, practically daybreak. Years ago it was not an uncommon thing to see hundreds resting and recruiting on some lonely reach of the river. Captain Shelley says that in "April 1870, below Edfoo, we met with an immense flock of several

WHITE PELICANS

thousands, passing low along the river on their way north, and although fired at several times they still kept streaming onwards in one continuous flock." Nowadays you will quite possibly see immense flocks going south in November, or north in the spring, but they will all be flying high and well out of gun-shot. The largest flock I ever saw was in December of 1907 when living at Deir-el-Bahari. I was working outside the hut there, when some noise made me look up, and I saw an amazing sight, hundreds and hundreds of these great birds flying round and round in circles high above the chalk cliff. This was about 2 P.M., and they remained thus slowly circling round and round till nearly 5 P.M., when gradually in small detachments they dwindled away, flying in a southerly direction. At times they came sufficiently low for me to see distinctly the yellow pouch hanging from the under-bill, but then again they would rise in great spiral curves to such a height that even with my pet glass they were almost invisible. With every new curve they showed some alteration of colour, so that sometimes they seemed a coral pink all over, and then again with some altered angle in relation to the sun they were a pure snow white. The two hours or more that they were over just this one spot where Queen Hatshepsut's temple stands, I worked hard at trying to sketch them till my eyes got blinded by staring up into the blue, and aching with trying to follow some individual bird sweeping right above my head. None but those who have tried it knows what an exhausting thing this is; every bird is changing its place continually, one after another comes sweeping by, turning, rising, falling, interlacing, till one has to absolutely cease looking and close one's weary eyes. I heard later the rumour that this great flock rested the night on the top of one of the hills a mile farther back, and at dawn were all away south.

Where, however, they can be still seen throughout the winter months and comparatively close at hand is on Lake Menzaleh. I saw them there in March, but by the 12th of April I could not see a single bird. The wonderful colour, a pale coral pink, that they show under the bright Egyptian sky, is something of a surprise to those who have only seen faded stuffed specimens in a museum, or the woebegone individuals in a menagerie. No one interested in birds should neglect the Cairo Zoological Gardens at Giza; there you will see all sorts of hot climate beasts and birds in the perfection of condition that they never show in our colder climes. And the colour that the Pelican displays under these perfect conditions is a revelation. To the most casual it appears pinkish, but to the artistic and observant the brilliance of the carmine-pink revealed in the shadows, and the shell-like delicacy of colour of the feathers seen in full sunlight, is simply charming. I regret, however, that no amount of artistic enthusiasm can ever find anything else to praise in its personal appearance, as it really is most desperately ugly. It is said, however, to be virtuous, and is to this day used as a symbol of beautiful self-sacrifice, and as an ecclesiastical emblem of the feeding of the Holy Catholic Church.[7]

[7] I regret, however, to have to write that this idea of self-sacrifice is really all bunkum. The tradition is, that when hard up, and the offspring were calling out for the food that was not, the mother bird would lacerate her own bosom and with her own life-blood feed and save her loved ones. Ages ago some poor, short-sighted man got this extraordinary notion from apparently watching the way the young are fed. The Pelican belongs to an order of birds that disgorges the food it has caught, in this case fish, into the upturned mouths of the young. Had this first short-sighted

one only known that the Pelican's Hebrew name Kâath means "to vomit," this bird would hardly have been accredited with virtues it does not possess, or been painted, sculptured, and enshrined in thousands of holy places.

As a child I was much troubled with "the Pelican in the wilderness," but recently have been greatly relieved to hear, on the best authority, that though it says "wilderness" quite distinctly, it doesn't, you know, mean wilderness at all; the ordinary wilderness means a sandy, deserty sort of place, but this wilderness, we are told, means a wet sort of watery place. How nice it is to have these clear explanations from the best authorities of all those mysteries that darkened our early years! The Pelican lives entirely on fish, and is therefore never far from water. Considering its rather clumsy form it is fairly agile, and it has been noted that it can and does perch freely on boughs that bend and swing with its weight when at large, and that in captivity at the London Zoological Gardens one habitually used to perch on the thin corrugated wire fence that bisects their small enclosure, an almost acrobatic feat one would not have expected it capable of performing.

In books the statement has been made and often repeated that the Pelican breeds in Egypt, and my visit to Lake Menzaleh was very much taken just to settle whether it and Flamingoes did or did not breed there. I found they did not, and I should think it is very unlikely that they ever did, as though the lake is large the fact that fishermen's boats go all over it would hardly make it a safe place for these big birds ever to nest in.

THE CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax carbo

Arabic, *Agag*

Plumage dark bluish-black over head, breast, body; dull greenish-brown on wings, each feather margined with a darker tone; a pure white patch on cheeks, and another on the flanks; feathers on top of head elongated and edged with white; beak black at tip, yellow at base; part of the pouch which is without feathers, blue; legs black; eyes green. Length, 36 inches.

THIS is not a bird one would expect to see far away from the salt water, but there is anyhow one colony of them up the Nile at Gebel Abû Fêada—and any one going up the Nile must pass right by their breeding-place—and the birds in general seem to work rather south of that point than to the north. In March 1908 I saw them twice; once, near Manfalût, a string of six flew low over the water in single file so near that one could with the glass see the very hook at the end of their long bills. Perhaps no point on the river is quite so magnificent as these cliffs of Abû Fêada—the water rushes by their very feet, and their tops tower high in beautifully broken forms. The limestones of which they are formed seem to have weathered and perished more than in other parts, and honeycombed masses, and caves large and small, are visible everywhere on its nearly perpendicular sides. It is in these caves that birds have found a happy nesting-ground, and the extent of the deposit of guano in them shows that they have inhabited them for centuries.

The guide-books tell of these high cliffs—“sudden gusts of wind from the mountain often render great precaution necessary in sailing beneath them”; and on the last occasion of passing there was evidence of this, as a regular gale came on us just as we were passing and drove us along at a great pace. This wildness is similar to the wild windiness of the sea-coast, and the Cormorants may in this fact find some attraction to this inland home. But I should think it is far more likely still, that the founders of that colony were birds that had been reared in some of the other breeding-places that exist in the great Salt Lakes of Lower Egypt, and that by some chance taking to the river, which at Menzaleh would not be more than a mile or two away, found that the river fish were excellent, that life was pleasant, and the cliffs suitable for safely nesting in. “Stomach rules the world” is

CORMORANTS
On the Nile at Gebel Aboofayda.

as true of bird life as any other. Elsewhere I have referred to the beauty and charm of Lake Menzaleh to all naturalists, and I do really think that to get anything like a complete view of Egyptian bird life a visit ought to be paid to some one or other of the lakes, and of course Menzaleh is far and away the best and biggest. But though I suggest a visit, I would not care to have it understood I recommend it as a health resort or place to live in. I write this here, because there are two considerable Cormorant rookeries or breeding-stations that I visited on Lake Menzaleh—there may be others I did not find, but these two I did find, and they will ever live in my memory as the most poisonous plots of earth I have ever stood on. I have been to Cormorant rookeries before, and well know that they don’t smell like rose-gardens. The peculiarity of this great lake is, that it is, and always has been, a great drainage-bed for the whole of Egypt. The result of having been a drainage-bed for all these untold years is that when you stick a pole, or your oar, into the mud and then pull it out, you seem to all at once take the cork out of a bottle containing the most appalling stinks and gases that ever were engendered. One day I was stalking Cormorants on a long flat island of irregular shape, and came to a point where I had to cross about ten or fifteen yards of water. The island was in the middle of the lake, and far away from town or village, and without thinking of consequences I took my boots off and started to wade across. The first step or two was on the shallow shelly shore, but three or four feet and I sank into mud, and as at each step I lifted my feet I let loose ten thousand legions of ancient stinks, the water bubbled and fizzled with them, and even slimy, blear-eyed, unwholesome fish slunk hurriedly away. Reaching the other side, I looked for some clean water to wash my feet, and did so; but it was awkward, as I had to hold my boots and socks in one hand and my nose in the other; but wash as I would the atrocious smell would not go, and I declined to put those evil-smelling things into my boots, and I couldn’t take my feet off; so there I was—the whole island was a swamp, couldn’t sit down anywhere, all puddles and wet, and the more I dabbled and washed the more it seemed to stir up new combinations of flavours never before conceived. So I shouted and shouted, and at last one of the crew heard, and brought out the small boat and rescued me; most mercifully I had carbolic soap with me, and so managed to at last get clean. The lake is nowhere very deep, but is

absolutely full of fish; you constantly see them jumping out of the water for a breath of fresh air, and I don't blame them. The pools have crowds of small fry, and the larvæ of thousands of insects; indeed, it is "a heaven for mosquitoes and a damp hell for men." It is this extraordinary profusion of life bred in the water that causes it to be such a fine feeding-ground for the birds, but everything that comes out of that lake is slimy and smelling. In April, when I was at Menzaleh, the birds had not begun nesting, but there was every sign of quite a big Cormorant colony. I counted the sites of more than twenty nests on one island alone, and I saw Cormorants off and on nearly every day of my two weeks' stay.

Needless to say, the Cormorant is entirely a fish-feeding bird, and usually lives on or near the sea. The fact that a colony has been for so long now established up the river is certainly interesting, and it will be curious to see if these new great water-works do cause any further extension of their area. Mr. Erskine Nicol told me he saw two Cormorants flying down the river in February of this year (1909), at Luxor—one was an adult bird showing a very white head,—and that within his seventeen years of residence he did not think he had ever seen them so far up as Luxor before. The young birds have no pure white on the head, and have the breast a more or less dull greyish-white.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus

Back and wings dark slaty blackish grey; primaries black, with a large white spot on first primary near the point; rest of plumage pure white; legs and gill yellow, latter with a red spot on lower mandible; eyes yellow, eyelids red. Length, 23 inches.

In all probability whenever a gull is seen it is most likely to be this one, as in my experience throughout Egypt it is, I think, the commonest of all. The next in order is the Black-headed Gull, but, unfortunately, in the winter months it is without its black cap, which causes it to escape notice.

The Gulls do on the water what the Kites do on the land—they act as scavengers; and it matters not whether you are arriving at Alexandria or on board a steamer at Assoan, you will, alike from end to end of Egypt, find these birds busy, searching for every scrap of waste thrown into the river, which river is the main drain of the country. The use that these birds are is therefore enormous, and they, in common with Vultures and Kites, ought to be protected and on no account shot. This year of 1909 I have seen more of these three species shot than ever before. The wily native who stalks up and down outside hotels with a gun slung over his shoulder, and seizes on unwary newcomers with great promises of apocryphal quail- and snipe-shooting, frequently—so that his patron shall not come home without any bag at all—suggests shooting every poor inoffensive bird within range. That done, the poor Kite or Gull is borne home, and laid out on the hotel steps for the further honour, glory, and kudos of the native shekarry.

It should always be remembered that the immature birds of most species differ materially from the adult: this is the case with all the Gulls, and, I own, makes their identification a matter of considerable difficulty. In the young there is no pure white and pearly grey plumage, but they are dirty-coloured, brown-spotted, rather uninteresting-looking birds, but as they have just as ravenous an appetite as their parents, and as they satisfy that appetite with the filth that is thrown out of a scavenger’s basket, they are fully as useful as the more attractively plumaged adults. Where they can get it, they like fish before anything, be it the sprat of the clear ocean water, or the sweepings of the fish-market. At Damietta, where there is a great

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL AND BLACK-HEADED GULL
On the river at Cairo.

fish-market and salted fish is sent away all over Egypt, the offal from the gutted fish is simply thrown out on to the shore, and work as hard as the Gulls do, they cannot clear all away that is daily added to this pestilential heap. Wherever Gulls come into a scene they add a sort of lightness and brightness to it. This is often felt at sea, where, after days and days of dreary water, at last some Gulls appear and give the needed brightening touch, and wherever they are seen their white wings make a charming point of contrast. Those who know London know what a boon they are to the leaden Thames, and even in sunny Egypt they are a welcome addition to river scenery.

THE BLACK-HEADED GULL

Larus ridibundus

General plumage white below, wings a delicate lavender grey, the large flight-feathers black and white at their tips; head and throat in breeding dress, a dark brown, in winter white; legs and beak red; eyes brown. Length, 15 inches.

THIS ought to be called the Brown-headed Gull, as the colour is never black. In winter the whole head is practically white, and it is in that plumage that most visitors to Egypt will alone see it.

It is a very lively little Gull; its flight is much lighter than the preceding, and when several are together they can hardly ever keep quiet for long, but from time to time give vent to their peculiar cry, which by some has been likened to the sound of laughter.

Captain Shelley says that, in a year where there was a terrible scourge of locusts, these Gulls were present in large flocks busily engaged in devouring these mischievous insects. In that way, and in the ordinary scavenger work that they share with all other Gulls, they are of great use to the country and should be protected.

I have seen them in ones and twos everywhere up and down the river, but the larger flocks are only to be seen at the great lakes of the Fayoum or along the coast, and I particularly remember, because of the weirdness of the surroundings, one occasion when I saw large flocks on the shores of the Red Sea. It was at Kosseir, and the coast there is alternately gently shelving sandy shore, and jutting-out, flat-topped rocky reefs. To one of these reefs I went as the tide was leaving them exposed, whilst flocks of Gulls and Waders were waiting for their evening meal.

The rock plateau going right out to sea was a coral reef, and the way in which pools led one into another by tunnels was most strange. Then the depths of some were great, as I found by sounding with a long rod, and some were past all sounding and seemed bottomless. It was evening when I got there, and soon became dark night, and it was then that the peculiar beauty of these pools came out, whilst the great flocks of Gulls and some Duck found new delights in them as the receding sea gave them more feeding-ground. Every pool was lighted up by the strange glowing eyes of some cuttle-fish—ever-moving, these jewel-like blue-green lights went passing round and round, sometimes the one becoming two as a turn of its head permitted my seeing both eyes, and then with another curve the two were one. Sometimes these strange lights were very very faint, but as I stood still they came nearer and nearer, and with my eyes riveted on them a most curious illusion followed. Nearer, nearer, stronger, more strong, these strange weird eyes advanced and crept up farther and farther, till time after time it was hard to believe that these glowing orbs had not left the water and were advancing right up to my own face. All the time the quiet of the place was only broken by the curious laughing-like call of the Gulls, and the shrill piping and whistling of the dark, shadowy shore birds.

Besides Gulls, the visitors to the Nile may see Terns, for there are some seven or eight species, but naturally these birds keep nearer the sea than elsewhere, yet it is pleasant to cherish the hope, founded on frequent reports, that Terns as well as several other birds that love the water are somewhat extending their area. Owing to the new barrage schemes making great permanent inland lakes which never existed before, the birds find a new home suitable to them, and which they have already begun to show they thoroughly appreciate. At home and in many other countries, the great reservoirs which supply the cities have always been favourite bird haunts, and it seems that here is one more benefit bestowed on Egypt consequent on British occupation. When at Lake Menzaleh this last winter, one of the most wonderful sights was the number of Terns, and on one occasion when I was trying to get near to Flamingo, a great flock of many hundreds of the large Caspian Tern came near enough for identification.

LIST OF BIRDS

Although the scope of this work is only to point out, by pictures, to the unlearned what birds he will most likely see during a winter in Egypt, yet I have felt that it would be wise to give a list of all the birds, as far as known; for some, turning to these pages, may desire to learn if some one or other bird which they did not see amongst my necessarily limited selection of pictured birds, was an Egyptian bird or not. In the preparation of this list, it goes without saying, I have been constantly indebted to that book, *A Handbook to the Birds of Egypt*, which, published so long ago as 1872 by Captain C. E. Shelley, still remains the one classic on this subject, and I have adopted, as far as possible, his names for all the birds mentioned. In addition, year after year, some small knowledge has accumulated of new birds, not known in that day to visit this country, and I am particularly indebted to Mr. M. J. Nicoll, assistant-director of the Government Zoological Gardens, Giza, for helping me to make this list as complete as possible.

LIST OF THE BIRDS OF EGYPT

1. The Golden Eagle (*Aquila fulva*). Rare, Upper and Lower Egypt.
2. The Imperial Eagle (*Aquila imperialis*). Lower Egypt.
3. White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaetus albicilla*). Lower Egypt.
4. Tawny Eagle (*Aquila naevoides*). Rare, Upper and Lower Egypt.
5. Spotted Eagle (*Aquila naevia*). Not very uncommon in both.
6. Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila bonelli*). Very rare.
7. Booted Eagle (*Aquila tennata*). A summer visitor.
8. Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*). Rare.
9. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). Fairly common in Nile Valley.
10. Southern Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus nudipes*). Said to breed in Mokattam mountains.
11. Black Vulture (*Vultur monachus*). Fairly common in Nile Valley.
12. Sociable Vulture (*Vultur auricularis*). Fairly common.
13. Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*). Common.
14. Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*). Common.
15. Marsh-Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*). Not uncommon in Lower Egypt.
16. Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). Rare.
17. Pale-chested Harrier (*Circus pallidus*). Not uncommon throughout country.
18. Montagu's Harrier (*Circus cineraceus*). Rare.
19. Little Red-billed Hawk (*Accipiter gabar*). Very rare.
20. Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). Not uncommon through country.
21. Barbary Falcon (*Falco barbarus*). Rare.
22. Lanner Falcon (*Falco lanarius*). Rare.
23. Red-naped Falcon (*Falco Babylonicus*). Rare.
24. Saker Falcon (*Falco saker*). Rare.
25. Merlin (*Falco aesalon*). Common throughout.
26. Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*). Fairly common.
27. Sooty Falcon (*Falco eleonorae*). Rare.
28. Red-legged Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*). Fairly common in Lower Egypt.
29. Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*). Very abundant everywhere.
30. Lesser Kestrel (*Falco cenchris*). Fairly abundant.
31. Common Kite (*Milvus regalis*). Very rare.
32. Parasitic Kite (*Milvus aegyptius*). Very abundant throughout Egypt.
33. Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*). Rare.
34. Black-shouldered Hawk (*Elanus coeruleus*). Fairly common south of Thebes.
35. Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*). Exceedingly rare.
36. Common Buzzard (*Buteo vulgaris*). Not common.
37. African Buzzard (*Buteo desertorum*). Exceedingly rare.
38. Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo ferox*). Fairly common.
39. Barn Owl (*Aluco flammea*). Common.
40. Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*). Not common.
41. Tengmalm's Owl (*Nyctala tengmalmi*). Very rare.
42. Little Owl (*Athene noctua*). Exceedingly abundant.
43. Scops Owl (*Scops giu*). Rare north of Cairo.
44. Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*). Very rare.
45. Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*). Rare.
46. Eagle Owl (*Bubo ignavus*). Very rare.
47. Egyptian Eagle Owl (*Bubo ascalaphus*). Fairly common in Upper Egypt.
48. Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*). A regular visitor in August and returning again in March.
49. Great-spotted Cuckoo (*Coccystes glandarius*). Not uncommon.
50. Lark-heeled Cuckoo (*Centropus aegyptius*). Not uncommon in Fayûm.
51. Wryneck (*Yunx torquilla*). Common on migration.
52. Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). Abundant everywhere.
53. Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo ispida*). Abundant in Delta and common in many parts.
54. Little Indian Kingfisher (*Alcedo bengalensis*). Rare.
55. Black and White Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*). Very common.
56. Blue Roller (*Coracias garrula*). Not common.
57. Common Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*). Common only in April and August.

58. Blue-checked Bee-eater (*Merops aegyptius*). Very common in April and again in autumn.
59. Little Green Bee-eater (*Merops viridis*). Very common in Upper Egypt.
60. Alpine Swift (*Cypselus melba*). Rare.
61. Common Swift (*Cypselus apus*). Not uncommon.
62. Egyptian Swift (*Cypselus pallidus*). Very common.
63. Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*). Common in spring and autumn months.
64. Egyptian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus aegyptius*). Not uncommon in spring and autumn.
65. Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). Common in spring and autumn only.
66. Egyptian Swallow (*Hirundo savignii*). A very common resident.
67. House Martin (*Chelidon urbica*). Seen in small numbers in spring and autumn.
68. Shelley's Sand-Martin (*Cotile riparia shelleyii*). Summer visitor.
69. Sand-Martin (*Cotile riparia*). Abundant in Nile Valley.
70. Lesser Sand-Martin (*Cotile minor*). Common.
71. Rufous Swallow (*Hirundo rufula*). Rare.
72. Crag Swallow (*Cotile rupestris*). Rare.
73. Pale Crag Swallow (*Cotile obsoleta*). Common in parts.
74. White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*). Exceedingly common.
75. White-winged Wagtail (*Motacilla vidua*). Common at Assoan.
76. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla boarula*). Not uncommon.
77. Blue-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*). Not uncommon.
78. Tree-Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*). Occasionally seen in September and April.
79. Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*). Rare.
80. Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*). Abundant everywhere.
81. Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletus*). Rare.
82. Richard's Pipit (*Anthus Richardi*). Rare.
83. African Tawny Pipit (*Anthus raalterri*). Rare.
84. Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*). Common.
85. Bifasciated Lark (*Certhilauda desertorum*). Rare.
86. Desert Lark (*Ammomanes lusitana*). Not uncommon in Upper Egypt.
87. Tristram's Desert Lark (*Ammomanes fraterculus*). Not uncommon in Upper Egypt.
88. Sandy-coloured Desert Lark (*Ammomanes arenicolor*). Rare.
89. Crested Lark (*Galerita cristata*). Nearly the commonest bird.
90. Wood Lark (*Alauda arborea*). Exceedingly rare.
91. Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*). Occurs regularly in Lower Egypt.
92. Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*). Abundant.
93. Algerian Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella reboudia*). Rare.
94. Lesser Lark (*Calandrella minor*). Rare.
95. Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*). Rare.
96. Thick-billed Calandra (*Rhamphocoris clot-bey*). Very rare.
97. Missel Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*). Of very rare occurrence.
98. Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*). A visitant to Lower Egypt.
99. Song Thrush (*Turdus musicus*). Not uncommon.
100. Blackbird (*Turdus merula*). Not uncommon.
101. Ring-Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*). Rare.
102. White-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus arsinoë*). Common, Fayûm.
103. Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus xanthopygius*). Rare.
104. Egyptian Bush-Babbler (*Crateropus acaciae*). Only rare visitor to Upper Egypt.
105. Rock-Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*). Common, Upper Egypt.
106. Blue-rock Thrush (*Monticola cyanea*). Fairly common resident in Upper Egypt.
107. Common Wheatear (*Saxicola oenanthe*). Very common.
108. Ménétries's Wheatear (*Saxicola saltatrix*). Common resident.
109. Eastern Black-eared Wheatear (*Saxicola amphileuca*). Fairly common in March and September.
110. Egyptian Black-throated Wheatear (*Saxicola eurymelana*). Common.
111. Black-throated Wheatear (*Saxicola xanthomeloena*). Common migrant.
112. Desert Chat (*Saxicola deserti*). Common on the desert.
113. White-throated Desert Chat (*Saxicola homochroa*). Not common.
114. Rosy-vented Chat (*Saxicola moesta*). Rare.
115. Mourning Chat (*Saxicola lugens*). Common on the desert throughout.
116. Pied Chat (*Saxicola leucomela*). Exceedingly rare.
117. Hooded Chat (*Saxicola monacha*). Not uncommon on the desert.
118. White-rumped Chat (*Saxicola leucopygia*). Common in deserts of Upper Egypt.
119. Abyssinian Chat (*Saxicola syenitica*). Exceedingly rare.
120. Whin Chat (*Pratincola rubetra*). Not uncommon.
121. Stone Chat (*Pratincola rubicola*). Common in Lower Egypt.
122. Hemprich's Stonechat (*Pratincola hemprichii*). Rare.
123. Redstart (*Ruticilla phoenicura*). Common in September and April.
124. Black Redstart (*Ruticilla titys*). Rare.
125. Palestine Redstart (*Ruticilla semirufa*). Rare.
126. Blue-throated Warbler (*Cyanecula suecica*). Very common.
127. Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*). Common in Lower Egypt in winter.
128. Hedge Sparrow (*Accentor modularis*). Rare.

129. Nightingale (*Philomela luscinia*). Not uncommon.
130. Thrush Nightingale (*Philomela major*). Very rare.
131. Cetti's Warbler (*Bradypterus cettii*). Very rare.
132. Rufous Warbler (*Aëdon galactodes*). Common in summer, breeds in Egypt.
133. Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*). Fairly common.
134. River Warbler (*Locustella fluviatalis*). Very rare.
135. Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus streperus*). Common.
136. Aquatic Warbler (*Calamodyta aquatica*). Fairly common.
137. Moustached Warbler (*Calamodyta*). Common in Delta.
138. Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinacea*). Common in Delta.
139. Marsh Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*). Rare in Lower Egypt.
140. Clamorous Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentorius*). Common in Delta.
141. Great Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus turdoides*). Rare.
142. Arabian Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus arabicus*). Rare.
143. Fan-tailed Warbler (*Cisticola schoenicola*). Abundant everywhere.
144. Graceful Warbler (*Drymoeca gracilis*). Common.
145. Olive-tree Warbler (*Hypolais olivetorum*). Rare.
146. Olivaceous Warbler (*Hypolais elaeica*). Common, breeds.
147. Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sybillator*). Rather rare.
148. Bonelli's Warbler (*Phyllopneuste Bonelli*). Common in Upper Egypt.
149. Chiffchaff Warbler (*Phylloscopus minor*). Common.
150. Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*). Common.
151. Melodious Willow Warbler (*Hypolais hypolais*). Rare.
152. Vieillot's Willow Warbler (*Phyllopneuste eversmanni*). Rare.
153. Garden Warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*). Not uncommon.
154. Orphean Warbler (*Sylvia orpheus*). Rare.
155. Black-cap Warbler (*Sylvia atricapilla*). Rare.
156. Ruppell's Warbler (*Curruca rueppellii*). Fairly common.
157. Black-headed Warbler (*Sylvia momus*). Common.
158. Sardinian Warbler (*Melizophilus sardus*). Rare.
159. Dartford Warbler (*Melizophilus undatus*). Rare.
160. Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia subalpina*). Rare.
161. Spectacled Warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*). Rare.
162. Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*). Common.
163. Whitethroat (*Sylvia cinerea*). Not uncommon.
164. Yellow-breasted Sun-Bird (*Nectarinia metallica*). Occurs only near Assoan.
165. Wall Creeper (*Tichodroma murari*). Very rare.
166. Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*). Very rare.
167. Pallid Shrike (*Lanius lahtora*). Not uncommon.
168. Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*). Rare.
169. Masked Shrike (*Lanius nubicus*). Common in February and March and in autumn.
170. Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius auriculatus*). Fairly common in March.
171. Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*). Not common.
172. Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa grisola*). Rare.
173. Pied Flycatcher (*Muscicapa atricapilla*). Rare.
174. White-collared Flycatcher (*Muscicapa collaris*). Rare.
175. Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa parva*).
176. Common Bunting (*Emberiza milaria*). Common in Lower Egypt.
177. Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*). Rare.
178. Cretzschmar's Bunting (*Emberiza caesia*). Common in Delta.
179. Smaller Reed Bunting (*Emberiza intermedia*). Rare.
180. Common Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). Common everywhere.
181. Italian Sparrow (*Passer Italiae*). Rare.
182. Spanish Sparrow (*Passer salicicola*). Common.
183. Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*). Rare.
184. The Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*). Rare.
185. Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*). Rare, Lower Egypt.
186. Goldfinch (*Carduelis elegans*). Common in Delta.
187. Black-billed Finch (*Estrelda melanorhynoba*). Very rare.
188. Lesser Redpole (*Aegiothus rufescens*). Very rare.
189. Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*). Very rare.
190. Serin (*Serinus hortulanus*). Rare.
191. Linnet (*Linota cannabina*). Common in Lower Egypt.
192. Desert Bullfinch (*Erythrospiza githaginea*). Common on deserts of Upper Egypt.
193. Golden Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*). Common only in April.
194. Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Fairly common throughout.
195. Purple Starling (*Sturnus unicolor*). Exceedingly rare.
196. Rose-coloured Pastor (*Pastor roseus*). Rare.
197. Brown-necked Raven (*Corvus umbrinus*). Common in the deserts.
198. Abyssinian Raven (*Corvus affinis*). Not common in towns.
199. Crow (Hooded) (*Corvus cornix*). Exceedingly common in towns.

200. Rook (*Corvus fruglegus*). Common in Delta.
201. Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*). Not common anywhere.
202. Magpie (*Pica caudata*). Rare.
203. Chough (*Pyrrhocorax alpinus*). Exceedingly rare.
204. Rock Dove (*Columba livia*). Very common.
205. Schimper's Pigeon (*Columba schimperi*). Common.
206. Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*). Very rare.
207. Turtledove (*Turtur auritus*). Very common.
208. Sharpe's Turtledove (*Turtur sharpii*). Common.
209. Isabelline Turtledove (*Turtur isabelinus*). Rare.
210. White-bellied Turtledove (*Turtur albiventris*). Rare.
211. Egyptian Turtledove (*Turtur senegalensis*). Very common everywhere.
212. Singed Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles exustus*). Common in deserts only.
213. Senegal Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles senegallus*). Not common.
214. Coroneted Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles coronatus*). Rare.
215. Francolin (*Francolinus vulgaris*). Very rare.
216. Hey's Sand-Partridge (*Ammoperdix heyi*). Only met on deserts.
217. Cholmley's Sand-Partridge (*Ammoperdix cholmleyi*). Only met with on the desert.
218. Quail (*Coturnix communis*). Very common in March and November.
219. Andalusian Hemipode (*Turnix sylvatica*). Very rare.
220. Houbara Bustard (*Otis houbara*). Met only on desert west of Nile.
221. Little Bustard (*Otis tetrax*). Rare.
222. Arabian Bustard (*Eupodotis arabs*). Rare.
223. Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*). Common in April and October.
224. Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*). Rare.
225. Cream-coloured Courser (*Cursorius gallicus*). Common on deserts.
226. Thick-knee (*Oedicnemus crepitans*). Very common.
227. Lapwing (*Vanellus cristatus*). Very common.
228. Spur-winged Plover (*Hoplopterus spinosus*). Common.
229. Social Plover (*Chettusia gregaria*). Rare.
230. White-tailed Plover (*Chettusia villotaei*). Not common.
231. Black-headed Plover (*Pluvianus aegyptius*). Not common, Upper Egypt.
232. Golden Plover (*Charadrius pluvialis*). Not common.
233. Grey Plover (*Squatarola helvetica*). Rare.
234. Dotterel (*Eudromias morinellus*). Very rare.
235. Asiatic Dotterel (*Eudromias asiaticus*). Very rare.
236. Large Sand-Plover (*Aegialitis geoffroyi*). Met with only on sea-coast.
237. Mongolian Sand-Plover (*Aegialitis mongolicus*). Very rare.
238. African Sand-Plover (*Aegialitis pecuarius*). Not common.
239. Kentish Plover (*Aegialitis cantianus*). Very common everywhere.
240. Greater Ringed Plover (*Aegialitis hiaticula*). Rare.
241. Middle Ringed Plover (*Aegialitis intermedius*). Common in Delta.
242. Little Ringed Plover (*Aegialitis minor*). Very common everywhere.
243. Oyster-Catcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*). Common on sea-coast.
244. Curlew (*Numenius arquata*). Common in Delta.
245. Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). Met with sparingly in Nile Valley.
246. Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*). Rare.
247. Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa aegocephala*). Not uncommon.
248. Ruff (*Machetes pugnax*). Common throughout Egypt.
249. Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*). Now more frequently recorded than formerly.
250. Solitary Snipe (*Gallinago major*). Rare.
251. Common Snipe (*Gallinago media*). Common everywhere.
252. Jack Snipe (*Gallinago gallinula*). Common.
253. Painted Snipe (*Rhynchaea capensis*). Fairly common throughout.
254. Little Stint (*Tringa minuta*). Very abundant.
255. Temminck's Stint (*Tringa temminckii*). Rather rare.
256. Sanderling (*Tringa arenaria*). Not common.
257. Dunlin (*Tringa alpinus*). Not common, and only on coast.
258. Knot (*Tringa canutus*). Not common.
259. Curlew Sandpiper (*Tringa subarquata*). Not common.
260. Redshank (*Totanus calidris*). Common in Delta, rare elsewhere.
261. Dusky Redshank (*Totanus fuscus*). Rare.
262. Greenshank (*Totanus canescens*). Common.
263. Marsh Sandpiper (*Totanus stagnatalis*). Not common.
264. Green Sandpiper (*Totanus ochropus*). Very common everywhere.
265. Wood Sandpiper (*Totanus glareola*). Common in Lower Egypt.
266. Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*). Common.
267. Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus candidus*). Not uncommon.
268. Avocet (*Recurvirostra avocetta*). Common only in Delta.
269. Sacred Ibis (*Ibis aethiopica*). Very rare indeed.
270. Glossy Ibis (*Ibis falcinellus*). Rare.

271. African Wood Ibis (*Tantalus ibis*). Rare.
272. Common Crane (*Grus communis*). Not uncommon in October and March.
273. Demoiselle Crane (*Grus virgo*). Not common.
274. Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*). Common in all parts.
275. White Stork (*Ciconia alba*). Common during migration months, October and March.
276. Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*). Not common.
277. Shoebill or Whale-headed Stork (*Balaeniceps rex*).
278. Common Heron (*Ardea cinerea*). Very common.
279. Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*). Only common in Lower Egypt.
280. Great White Heron (*Herodias alba*). Only common in Delta.
281. Little Egret (*Herodias garzetta*). Not common.
282. Buff-backed Heron (*Ardeola russata*). Commonest in Delta.
283. Squacco Heron (*Ardeola comata*). Rare.
284. Night Heron (*Nycticorax griseus*). Fairly common everywhere.
285. Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*). Not uncommon in Lower Egypt.
286. Little Bittern (*Botaurus minutus*). Common.
287. Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus antiquorum*). Common in Delta.
288. Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*). Common in Lower Egypt.
289. Land Rail (Ortygometra crex). Not common.
290. Spotted Crake (*Porzana maruetta*). Common.
291. Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pygmaea*). Very rare.
292. Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). Common in Lower Egypt.
293. Allen's Gallinule (*Porphyrio Alleni*). Very rare.
294. Violet Gallinule (*Porphyrio hyacinthinus*). Common in Lower Egypt.
295. Green-backed Gallinule (*Porphyrio madagascariensis*). Very rare.
296. Common Coot (*Fulica atra*). Common everywhere.
297. Crested Coot (*Fulica cristata*). Rare.
298. Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*). Rare.
299. Hooper Swan (*Cygnus musicus*). Very rare.
300. Egyptian Goose (*Chenalopex aegyptiacus*). Not common.
301. White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*). Not uncommon.
302. Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*). Rare.
303. Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis*). Very rare.
304. Brent Goose (*Bernicla brenta*). Rare.
305. Sheldrake (*Tadorna vulpanser*). Rare.
306. Ruddy Sheldrake (*Tadorna rutila*). Not uncommon in Lower Egypt.
307. Common Wild Duck (*Anas boschas*). Fairly common everywhere.
308. Gadwall (*Anas strepera*). Not very common.
309. Pintail (*Dafila acuta*). Very common throughout country.
310. Shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*). Exceedingly common.
311. Teal (*Querquedula crecca*). Very common.
312. Garganey Teal (*Querquedula circia*). Not common.
313. Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*). Very common indeed.
314. Ferruginous Duck (*Nyroca leucophtalma*). Rare.
315. Pochard (*Fuligula ferina*). Very common indeed.
316. Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*). Lower Egypt.
317. Scaup Duck (*Fuligula marila*). Not common.
318. Tufted Duck (*Fuligula cristata*). Exceedingly common.
319. White-headed Duck (*Erismatura leucocephala*). Rare.
320. Velvet Scoter (*Oedemia fusca*). Rare.
321. Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). Fairly common.
322. White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*). Fairly common.
323. Lesser Pelican (*Pelecanus minor*). Fairly common.
324. Masked Gannet (*Sula cyanops*). Very rare.
325. Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). Common in Lower Egypt, rare elsewhere.
326. Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaens*). Rare.
327. Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*). Fairly common near sea.
328. Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna anglica*). Common in Lower Egypt.
329. Sandwich Tern (*Sterna cantiaca*). Rare.
330. Allied Tern (*Sterna media*). Common in Lower Egypt.
331. Swift Tern (*Sterna bergii*). Not uncommon in Lower Egypt.
332. Common Tern (*Sterna fluviatilis*). Rare.
333. Arctic Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Rare.
334. Lesser Tern (*Sterna minuta*). Very rare.
335. Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon fissipes*). Rare.
336. White-winged Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*). Rare.
337. Whiskered Tern (*Hydrochelidon leucopareia*). Common on Nile.
338. Scissor-billed Tern (*Rhynchops flavirostris*). Rare.
339. Greater Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). Rare on coast only.
340. Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). Fairly common.
341. Mediterranean Herring Gull (*Larus leucophaeus*). Not uncommon.

342. Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). Fairly common on coast.
343. Common Gull (*Larus canus*). Not common.
344. Slender-billed Gull (*Larus gelastes*). Rare.
345. Great Black-headed Gull (*Larus ichthyaetus*). Rare.
346. White-eyed Gull (*Larus leucopthalmus*). Very rare.
347. Mediterranean Black-headed Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*). Not common.
348. Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Common in Lower Egypt.
349. Little Gull (*Larus minutus*). Rare.
350. Cinereous Shearwater (*Puffinus kuhlii*). Not rare on coast.
351. Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus anglorum*). Rare on coast.
352. Great-crested Grebe (*Podicipides cristatus*). Rare.
353. Eared Grebe (*Podicipides nigricollis*). Rare.
354. Red-necked Grebe (*Podicipides griseigena*). Rare.
355. Little Grebe (*Podicipides minor*). Common.
356. Red-throated Diver (*Colymbus septentrionalis*). Rare.

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Typographical errors corrected by the etext transcriber:

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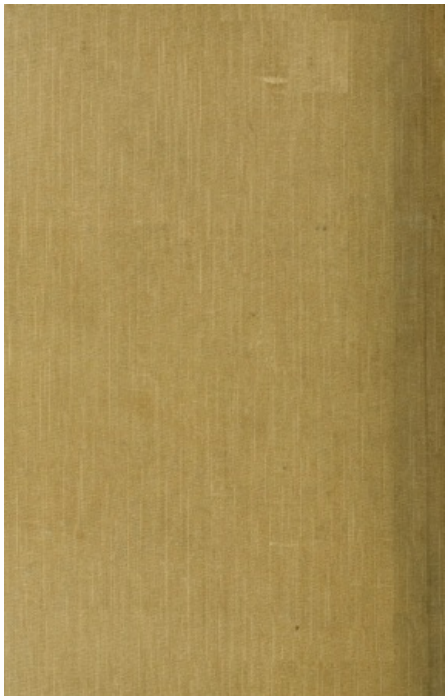
different localties=> different localities {pg 94}

seventeeen years=> seventeen years {pg 196}



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