

in each of the three cells of the ovary : nearly all Blume's species belong to other genera.

17. CITRULLUS (Schräd.). Corolla persistent, 5-parted, subrotate ; anthers tri-adelphous, bilocular ; style trifid ; stigma obcordate, convex ; fruit a fleshy or dry and fibrous, many-seeded pepo-nida. *Africa, East Indies*—*Cucurbita Citrullus* and *Cucumis colocynthis*.
18. ECBALIAM (Rich.). Corolla 5-cleft ; anthers tri-adelphous ; ovules in 2 rows in each cell ; stigmas 3, 2-horned ; fruit an elastically and irregularly bursting peponida. *Europe*—*Momordica Elaterium*.
19. MOMORDICA (Linn.). Petals 5, adnate to the base of the calyx, deciduous ; anthers all cohering ; ovules in a single row* in each cell ; stigma 2-lobed ; fruit a capsular, elastically bursting, 3-valved peponida. *East Indies, South Africa* and *America*.

To this genus seem to belong *Muricia*, Loureiro, and *Neurosperrum*, Raf.

20. LUFFA (Cav.). Petals 5, inserted in the base of the calyx, deciduous ; anthers all distinct or di-tri-adelphous ; style 3-fid ; stigma reniform or bipartite ; fruit a peponida, at length dry and internally fibrous, usually opening by a terminal lid, rarely indehiscent. *East Indies* and *Arabia*. There are three sections of this genus.

1st. Stamens distinct, *Luffa pentandra*, *acutangula*, and *Kleinii*.

2nd. Stamens 3-adelphous. *L. amara*, Roxb., and nearly all the species of *Turia*, Forsk.

3rd. Stamens di-adelphous—*L. tuberosa*, Roxb.

21. BENINCASSA (Sav.). Corolla (yellow) 5-parted, patent ; anthers 3-adelphous ; style undivided, very short ; stigma large, thick, irregularly lobed and plaited ; peponida fleshy, indehiscent. *Asia*.

22. LAGENARIA (Ser.). Corolla (white) 5-petaled ; anthers 3-adelphous ; style almost none ; stigmas 3, thick and 2-lobed ; pepo-nida fleshy and indehiscent. *India, South Africa*.

§ 8. *Filaments* 3-adelphous, inserted on the tube of the corolla ; *connectiva* entire ; anthers 3- or mon-adelphous, posticous, linear, bent upwards and downwards ; calyx long, tubular.

23. TRICHOSANTHES (Linn.). Segments of the corolla lacerated and fringed ; anthers 3-adelphous ? or all united ; style trifid ; stigmas oblong, subulate ; fruit a peponida, many-seeded. *East Indies*.

[In all the species I have had an opportunity of carefully examining, the anthers are mon-adelphous or united. The style is not trifid, nor pro-

* This, though practically correct, is not theoretically so, the carpellary structure being the same here as in others ; each margin has its placenta and ovules : and though at any one section only one row appears, we do not find the ovules always attached to the same line of placenta on slicing the ovary successively from end to end, but sometimes on the one, sometimes on the other side of the cell ; such, at least, I find it in *Momordica Charantia*.

perly speaking the stigmas subulate, as they cohere nearly to the apex by their central face, though the stigmatic surface extends for some distance outwardly, and presents a somewhat subulate outline.]

I reunite *Involucrarea* to this as a mere section depending on the bracteas, the character taken from the anther not holding good, at least *T. cucumerina* has frequently the anthers all united, and I suspect also *T. anguina*; perhaps they only become tri-adelphous after fecundating.

[In *T. anguina* they are never tri-adelphous, the anthers cohere to the last as represented in the accompanying figure. This last species, with *T. globosa* and *trifoliata*, Blume, and *Involucrarea*, Serange (*T. Wallichana*), form a very characteristic section, perhaps a subgenus, distinguished by their curiously bracteated male flowers.—R. W.]

24. *GYMNOPETALUM* (Arn.). Calyx constricted at the mouth; corolla (yellow) 5-parted; segments quite entire; anthers all closely cohering; fruit baccate, ovate, beaked, few-seeded; seeds large, roundish, with a blunt margin. *East Indies*. There are two species:—

1. *G. Ceylanicum* (Arn.). Leaves deeply 5-lobed; perianth glabrous. *Bryonia tubiflora*. W. and A.
2. *G. Wightii* (Arn.). Leaves 3—5, angle-lobed; perianth hairy. *Courtallum*.

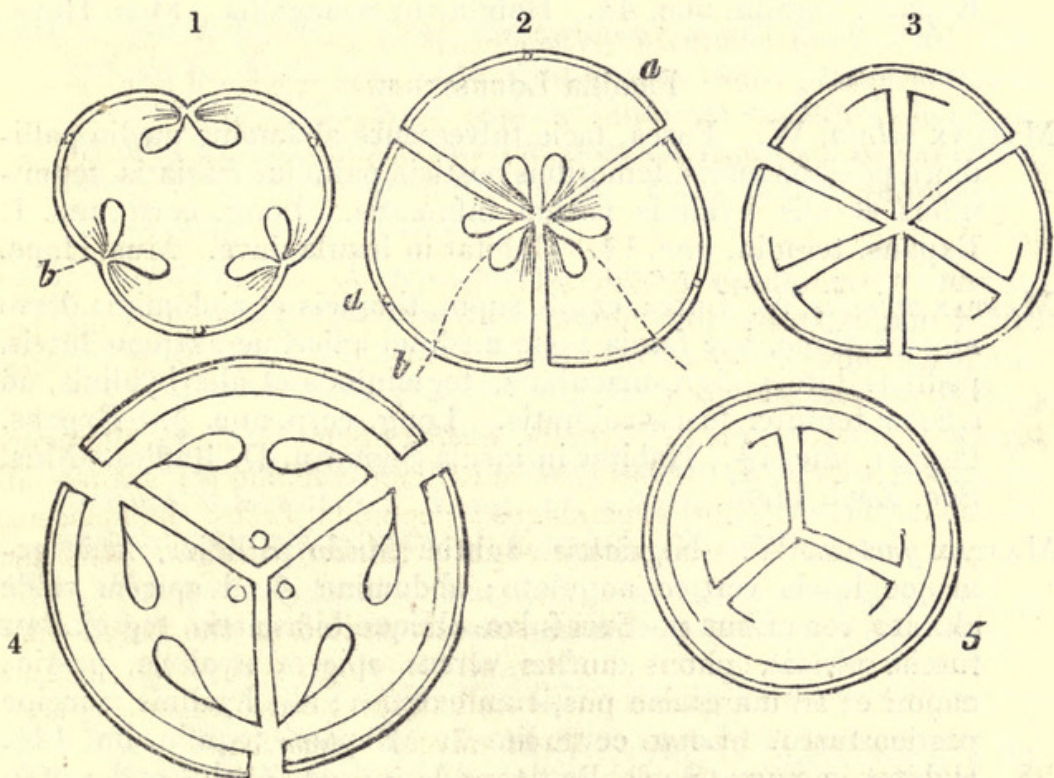
§ 9. *Filaments usually tri-adelphous, inserted at the base of the perianth; connectiva entire, unless when produced into appendages beyond the anthers; anthers linear, posticous, bent upwards and downwards (calyx campanulate or rarely infundibuliform).*

25. *CUCUMIS* (Linn.). Corolla 5-parted; anthers tri-adelphous, or all of them slightly cohering, with appendages at the apex! Peponida fleshy, indehiscent, or rarely irregularly dehiscent, polyspermous; seeds ovate, compressed, sharp-edged. *Asia, Africa and America*.
26. *CUCURBITA* (Linn.). Corolla campanulate, 5-cleft; filaments tri-adelphous at the base, or quite mon-adelphous; anthers all cohering, without appendages; peponida fleshy, indehiscent, polyspermous; seed with a slightly thickened edge. *Asia and America*.
27. *ELATERIUM* (Linn.). Petals scarcely united at the base; filaments mon-adelphous; anthers all cohering; style thick; stigma capitate; fruit a coriaceous, 1-celled, few-seeded capsule, bursting elastically by two or three valves. *America*.
28. *SCHIZOCARPEUM* (Schlch.). Corolla infundibuliform, quite entire; filaments 3-adelphous; anthers all cohering; peponida many-seeded, bursting by several valves that cohere by their apex. *Mexico*.
29. *COCCINIA* (W. and A.). Corolla campanulate; segments acuminate; filaments mon-adelphous; anthers tri-adelphous, conniving, without appendages; peponida somewhat baccate, many-seeded. [Usually of an oblong oval shape, and bright red when ripe.] *East Indies*.

§ 10. *Filaments mon-adelphous, connate into a column, which is capitate at the apex, and then bearing the gyrose posticous anthers.*
 30. CEPHALANDRA (Schräd.). *South Africa.*

EXPLANATION OF THE FIGURES.

- Fig. 1.* A tricarpeillary 1-celled ovary; that is, the placentiferous margins of the carpellary leaves meeting in the circumference, and bearing their ovules on the walls or parietes of the cell.
a. Supposed position of the midrib. *b.* Placentæ parietal.
Fig. 2. A tricarpeillary 3-celled ovary, the laminæ of the carpellary leaves folded inwards until they meet in the axis, and there produce ovules.
a. Supposed position of midribs. *b.* Placentæ axillary.
Fig. 3. An imaginary section of a *pepo* explanatory of Dr. Arnott's theory of its construction; copied, but with some modification, to render it more explanatory, from his figure in the *Encycl. Brit.*
a. Supposed position of the midrib.
b. The placentiferous margins represented introflexed, reaching nearly to the dorsal suture, dividing the carpel into two cells.
Fig. 4. Section of the ovary of *Coccinia indica*; the calyx divided in the line of the partitions of the carpella, by which they are permitted to fall apart.
Fig. 5. Section of the same; the parts *in situ*.



Obs.—The original is also accompanied by dissections of *Momordica Charantia*, *Trichosanthes anguina*, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Coccinia indica*, *Lagenaria vulgaris*, and *Mukia scabrella*, prepared with the view of showing that sections 7 and 9 are not distinguishable by the characters assigned, the anthers being lobed or entire; and that, by taking our characters rather from the form of the anthers than the insertion of the filaments, *Trichosanthes* and *Cucurbita* might be advantageously placed in the same section, leaving the character taken from insertion available as a generic distinction between them.

XXXV.—*Insectorum novorum Centuria, auctore*
J. O. WESTWOOD, F.L.S., &c.

Decadis tertiæ, ex ordine Dermapterorum, DeG., Synopsis.

Familia MANTIDÆ.

VATES (Burm. = *Theoclytes*, Serv.) *Ashmolianus*, W. Fuscus, capitis vertice rotundato, antennis gracillimis, prothorace longissimo angusto, lateribus serrulatis; hemelytris et alis abdomen haud tegentibus, cercis analibus latis foliatis, pedibus 4 posticis brevibus, femoribus ad apicem 3-foliatis tibiisque ante medium supra parùm foliatis. Long. corp. unc. $4\frac{1}{3}$; (prothor. unc. $1\frac{2}{3}$.) Habitat —? In Mus. Ashmol. Oxon.

TOXODERA (Serv.) *tenuipes*, W. Fusca, tegminibus brunneis posticè pallidis, alis infumatis, nigro fasciatis cyaneo-iridescentibus, coxis anticis longis anticè lobatis et spinosis, femoribus anticis basi vix crassioribus, femoribus 4 posticis longis apice subtus foliolis duobus minutis instructis, supra inermibus, cercis analibus latis foliatis, ut videtur 6-articulatis. Long. corp. unc. 5. Expans. tegmin. unc. $4\frac{1}{2}$. Habitat in Senegallia. Mus. Hope.

Familia LOCUSTIDÆ.

MASTAX *vitrea*, W. Fusca, facie fulvescente abdomine medio pallidiori, pedibus fuscis, femoribus posticis pallidius fasciatis, tegminibus et alis hyalinis parùm infumatis. Long. corp. unc. 1. Expans. tegmin. unc. $1\frac{3}{4}$. Habitat in insula Java. Mus. Hope.

MASTAX *apicalis*, W. Lutea, capite supra, thoracis et abdominis dorso nigricantibus, hoc fascia pone medium apiceque extremo luteis, pedibus luteis nigro-maculatis, tegminibus et alis hyalinis, ad apicem tenuiter fusco-coloratis. Long. corp. unc. $\frac{3}{4}$. Expans. tegmin. unc. $1\frac{3}{4}$. Habitat in insula Sumatra, D. Raffles. Mus. Soc. Zool. Lond.

MASTAX *guttata*, W. Nigricans, subtùs paullò pallidior, facie genisque luteis vertice angulato; abdomine ♂ ad apicem valdè clavato, femoribus posticis fulvo oblique bifasciatis, tegminibus fuscis, nitidis, guttis duabus versus apicem hyalinis, postica majori et ad marginem posticum extensa; alis hyalinis margine postico fusco. Long. corp. lin. 7. Expans. tegmin. lin. $14\frac{1}{2}$. Habitat in Sumatra, D. Raffles. Mus. Soc. Zool. Lond.; et in ins. Philipp., D. Cuming. Mus. Britann.

Obs. Genus *Mastax*, antennarum articulis paucis capiteque elevato *Proscopiam* approximatur.

OPSOMALA *gladiator*, W. Luteo-fusca, virescenti parùm tincta, capite anticè in rostrum (prothorace ferè duplo longius) producto, antennis gracilibus, rostro brevioribus, prothorace carina mediana ferè oblitterata, tegminibus pallidè fuscis, angustis, alis hyalinis vix incoloratis, abdomine longissimo, pedibus 4 anticis brevissimis, posticis vix abdomine longioribus. Long. corp. unc. $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Long. capitis ante oculos, unc. $\frac{3}{4}$. Expans. tegmin. unc. $3\frac{3}{4}$.
Habitat in Sierra Leone. Mus. Hope.

TETRIX laticeps, W. Fusca, capite lato, oculis valdè prominentibus, facie carina elevata, antennis longioribus 10-articulatis, nigris, articulo ultimo albo, prothorace abdomine multo longiori apice gracili parùm recurvo, dorso (supra thoracem) in folium membranaceum elevato, lateribus inter pedes 4 anticos in spinam utrinque productis, pedibus posticis scabris, supra dentatis tarsis articulo basali et basi articuli ultimi albis. Long. ad apicem prothoracis, lin. 7. Habitat in Brasilia. Mus. Westwood.

TETRIX ensifer, W. Fusco-ferruginosa opaca, prothorace supra caput in rostrum compressum (dimidii abdominis longitudine) porrectum apice subbifido; dorso longitudinaliter carinato, parte postica abdomine longiore, supra abdomen oblique carinato, apice acuto, femoribus posticis supra tuberculatis. Long. ad apicem prothoracis, lin. 9. Habitat in insulis Philippinensibus, D. Cuming. Mus. Britann. Variat rostro prothoracico subtùs in spinam, faciem impendentem, producto, dorsoque supra abdomen impressionibus variis ovalibus, magnitudine decrescentibus. Long. lin. 10.

TETRIX dimidiata, W. Fusco-ferruginosa opaca, prothorace subcompresso, dorso ferè recto acuto, supra caput parùm porrecto, apice antico deflexo, apice postico dimidium abdominis haud superante, subtruncato, femoribus posticis supra vix tuberculatis. Long. ad apicem abdominis, lin. 9. Habitat cum præcedente, D. Cuming. Mus. Britann.

TETRIX areolata, W. Fusco-arenosa rugosa opaca, setis brevibus fuscis induta, prothorace supra caput cucullato, margine antico biemarginato, dorso acute carinato carina subsinuata, parte postica (supra abdomen in areas angulatas, lineis elevatis divisa; lateribus supra basin pedum posticorum puncto pallido marginali) ad apicem abdominis extensa, extremo apice subbifido, femoribus tuberculatis. Long. ad apicem prothoracis, lin. 8. Habitat cum præcedente, D. Cuming. Mus. Britann.

Obs. Figures and detailed descriptions of the insects described in this Century are already prepared, and will be published hereafter.

XXXVI.—*The Birds of Ireland (Family Fringillidæ)*. By WM. THOMPSON, Esq., Vice-Pres. Nat. Hist. Society of Belfast.

[Continued from vol. i. p. 195.*]

THE SKYLARK, *Alauda arvensis*, Linn.,
Is common throughout Ireland. Judging from works in which this bird is treated of, its song, recommenced in the

* BOHEMIAN WAX-WING. An example of this bird killed in Ireland, is here erroneously stated to be in the collection of Dr. R. Graves, of Dublin.

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autumn, would seem to be continued further into the winter in this island than elsewhere, a result attributable to the humidity and mildness of the climate. Its song may be heard as frequently in fine bright days during the month of October, and in the bird's most elevated haunts in the mountain pastures about Belfast, as at any other season. One note may be given on this subject: under the date of November 7, 1835, the following appears in my journal—I never heard more skylarks singing at any period of the year than in the early part of this day in the high pastures bounded by the heath in the Belfast mountains. The day was very fine and bright; the ground very wet from continued rain throughout the days and nights of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, early part of the 5th, and occasionally since, up to this morning. The skylark is generally noticed by authors as singing merely upon the wing, but it not very unfrequently does so when upon the ground, and an intelligent observer mentions that he has often seen it perched on whins when pouring forth its song. Montagu remarks, that this bird is “rarely seen on the extended moors at a distance from arable land,” and later British authors repeat the observation. This may be of general application to England, but in Ireland the wild mountain pasture is a favourite abode, and there, as mentioned in the following note, the “most sweet voice” of the skylark may occasionally be heard at a rather late hour mingling with the bleating of the snipe:—June 22, 1840. When at half-past seven o'clock this evening on the highest part of the old road from Belfast to Crumlin (perhaps 850 feet above the sea), larks were busily engaged in singing on every side at the same time that snipes (*Scolopax Gallinago*) were bleating and giving utterance to their other calls. The mingling of their notes, which are so very dissimilar, had a singular but very pleasing effect.

In hard winters our indigenous larks congregate in large flocks, which remain with us unless the weather become extraordinarily severe, when they move more or less southwards: even when the winter is mild in the north of Ireland, these birds, generally in small or moderate flocks, migrate hither from Scotland, and have repeatedly been seen crossing the Channel by my friend Capt. Fayrer, R.N., during the several years that he commanded the government mail-packet which plies between Portpatrick and Donaghadee. Although the autumn of the year 1832 had been very fine and mild, so early as the 17th of October I saw a very large flock of larks, which had doubtless migrated to this country. In the winter of 1837–38, larks remained in flocks to a late period—on the 24th of March I remarked not less than sixty congregated.

An observant friend has on different occasions known several circular holes to be made by pairs of these birds, before fixing upon one for their nest. The skylark occasionally exhibits variety in its plumage, though less frequently than some others of our small birds. The collection of my friend Wm. Sinclair, Esq., of Milltown, near Belfast, contains one of a black colour, which was shot in a wild state among a flock, and a white one is reported to me by a correspondent as in his possession. The stomachs of several larks which I examined, especially in winter, contained seeds and the remains of other vegetable matter, with an occasional insect-larva: they all exhibited fragments of stone.

As a sporting friend was shooting upon his moors in Ayrshire in the month of October, a lark pursued by a merlin (*Falco Æsalon*) came from the distance of about a hundred yards directly towards him and his servant, and alighted near their feet, apparently for safety—when it reached the ground, it is represented to have been so exhausted as to be unable to close its wings. A lark which had its liberty within the green-house of a relative, lived eight years there, and was eventually lost to him, by effecting its escape.

Nowhere perhaps is the skylark more sought for as a cage-bird than in Ireland, and the song given forth “right merrilie” from the little patch of green-sward within its prison seems to imply that the bird bears confinement well. Nevertheless, it is always with regret that we see the lark, whose nature is to pierce the clouds when singing, so circumscribed, and we cannot but wish for its own sake that it had the freedom of “fresh fields and pastures new;” yet we do not, like a class of persons in the world, *think only of the skylark*. To the poor artisan in the town this bird is of great service in enlivening him with its song, associated with which in his mind are doubtless scenes in the country, the love of which is instinctive to the human breast. The lark too is generally treated with affectionate care, and the first walk of its master in the very early morning before the day’s task begins, has for its object the providing of a “fresh sod” for his pet bird*.

* The following anecdote, communicated by my venerable friend Dr. McDonnell of Belfast, shows the high value once put upon a skylark:—“A rather poor chandler in Belfast, called Huggart, had a lark remarkable for its song. Mr. Hull, a dancing-master and great bird-fancier, going into his shop one day, said, he came to purchase his bird. ‘Indeed,’ replied the other, ‘I do not think, Mr. Hull, you are likely to get home *that* bird, which delights all my neighbours as well as myself.’ ‘Well, I think I am,’ was the reply: ‘here are five guineas for it.’ The sum was instantly refused, when ten guineas were offered, but also rejected. He was then told, ‘It is now

Late in April in the present year I saw the skylark about Navarino, and at the end of the following month observed it near Smyrna.

THE WOODLARK, *Alauda arborea*, Linn.,

Is one of those unobtrusive species which is little known except to the lover of nature, and by him perhaps valued the more on that account. In flocks it is not at all to be met with, like the skylark. It is so very choice in the place of its abode as to be quite a local species, and in the counties of Down and Antrim frequents districts where the soil is warm, the country well cultivated and wooded, or scenery, which, like its song, is of a sweet, soft character;—cold clay districts, though equally improved and sheltered, cannot, so far as known to me, claim it for a tenant. In its favourite localities here, the Woodlark may be heard singing almost daily, and chiefly in the morning from September to June.

This species is enumerated as one of the birds of Dublin in Rutton's Natural History of that county, and has a similar place in Smith's 'History of Cork.' In the latter county, Mr. R. Ball informs me that it is not unfrequent, and being much prized for its song, is greatly sought after by bird-catchers. A friend living near Belfast kept woodlarks for a year or more in his aviary in company with other birds, but they never sang.

THE SNOW-BUNTING, *Emberiza nivalis*, Linn. (genus *Plectrophanes*, Meyer.),

Is a regular autumnal migrant to the more northern parts of Ireland. Towards the south it becomes gradually scarcer, and in the extreme portions of that quarter, although the highest mountains in the island are situated there, it can only be called a rare and occasional visitant*. Its numbers are stated similarly to decrease from the north to the south of England. The island of Achil should perhaps, from its far western position, be particularized as being regularly visited by this bird—a fact communicated by my friend W. R. Wilde,

the fair-day, and the market full of cattle: go and purchase the best cow there, and I shall pay for her:' but Huggart still declined, and kept his lark."

* In a catalogue of the birds of the south favoured me by Dr. Harvey of Cork, the snow-bunting is noticed merely as having been met with at Dunscombe Wood, near that city. Dr. Burkitt, of Waterford, in a list of the native birds known to him obligingly sent to me since this paper went to press, notices it only as shot in the neighbourhood of that city in January 1832. To Mr. T. F. Neligan of Tralee, it was unknown as a bird of that quarter in 1837, but Mr. Wm. Andrews of Dublin informs me that specimens were obtained near Dingle during the last winter, 1840–41.

Esq. Early in the month of October, snow-buntings make their appearance in the north of Ireland, and occasionally remain until the end of March. Their haunts in mild weather are chiefly the mountain-tops, whence one night's severe frost has been known to drive them to the nearest roads for food. Occasionally in the lower grounds and even on the sea-shore they may be met with when there is neither frost nor snow: to the last they are obliged to resort when the weather sets in very severe. During the great snow-storm of March 1827, flocks appeared in the outskirts of the town of Belfast; and such numbers were killed on the sea-shore in its vicinity, that they were purchased by Mr. Sinclaire as the cheapest food he could procure for his trained peregrine falcons. Although of regular passage to the Belfast range of mountains, snow-buntings are much more numerous in other and less frequented mountainous districts in the county of Antrim, as about Newtown-Crommelin and Clough. At the former of these places, where the Rev. G. M. Black was several years resident, he always observed them during the winter in very large flocks, and in which not more than one in twenty were adult individuals. From the other locality, examples have been brought to me by Mr. James Garret, who also supplied the following note under date of January 4, 1834:—"When shooting today about two miles from Clough, I met with an immense flock of snow-buntings, out of which I killed thirty at one discharge as they flew past me. Their call resembled the chirping of the grey-linnet, and the number of wings made a considerable noise, as the flock consisting of several hundreds swept by: some were nearly white, and others of a dark brown colour." In any of the flocks which have come under my own observation, the adult males bore only a small proportion to the females and immature birds, but, except in very small flocks, were always present throughout the winter*. This species, under the name of Cherry-chirper!, is mentioned in Rutt's 'Natural History of Dublin' as "found on our strand in December 1747 and kept in a cage until December 1748, and fed with oats, hemp-seed and cuttlings."—Vol. i. p. 317.

Wilson, Audubon, and Dr. Richardson give most interesting notes upon this bird from their personal observation in North America, and the last author had the gratification of meeting with it in its breeding-haunt in that continent. Mr.

* In some of the latest works on British ornithology, the adult birds are stated to appear in Great Britain only late in the winter, or when the weather is very severe. On the 23rd of October I once received a fine adult male bird, which was shot on the Belfast mountains.

Selby too gratifies us with the result of his observations on the species in the north of England. The snow-bunting is truly a most attractive bird, not only from its pleasing form and finely-varied plumage, but as one of the very few species met with in the depth of winter on the mountain-top, where, as it flits overhead uttering its pleasingly wild chirp, it brings before the mind the far-distant region within the arctic circle, whence it may have come.

In ascending in the month of July above the perpetual snow-line in the Alps of Switzerland, to the height of 11,000 feet, the greatest elevation I have reached, the snow-finch (*Fringilla nivalis*), a bird which at a little distance, in size, marking, and note, reminded me of the snow-bunting, was almost ever-present; and its little voice, with occasionally that of the Alpine Accentor (*Accentor alpinus*), seemed, in one sense, strangely out of unison with the stern grandeur of the scenery, where rarely any other sound broke upon the ear than the rent of the glacier or the distant fall of the avalanche.

THE COMMON BUNTING, *Emberiza Miliaria*, Linn., Is found throughout the island, and is permanently resident. On reading the opinion expressed by Sir Wm. Jardine some years ago (in his edition of White's 'Selborne'), that there is a migration of buntings to Great Britain in winter, I thought it might be likewise applicable to Ireland; but on subsequent consideration, did not see good reason to believe that there is any increase to the numbers of these birds bred in the country. The change from the summer to the winter haunts of the bunting might lead to such a supposition, as about the time that our winter birds of passage are arriving, flocks of buntings make their appearance in localities—often hedges along road-sides—which frequenting through the winter, they leave on the genial approach of spring: so late as the end of March they occasionally remain congregated. Their song may be heard in the north throughout the greater part of the year, including occasionally the months of November and December.

My observation is quite in accordance with that of White, who in his 'History of Selborne' remarks of the bunting, that—"in our woodland enclosed districts it is a rare bird." It is rather an inhabitant of simply arable than of the rich and wooded parts of the country, and where some little portion of wildness still exists, such as is implied in the common name it bears in the north of Ireland of *Briar-Bunting*. The ditch-bank run wild with "briars" or brambles has more charms for this bird than the "neat trim-hedge," and within the shelter

of such humble underwood it nestles. In severe frost and snow, buntings not only betake themselves to the roads for subsistence, but at such times may be seen in the less-frequented streets and stable-yards of the town of Belfast. The plumage of this species is very liable to be varied with white or cream-colour, and when with the latter, some examples which I have seen were of a very rich and handsome appearance. On opening some of these birds killed in winter, I have generally found them filled with grain;—the species is sometimes called the *Corn-Bunting*.

THE REED OR BLACK-HEADED BUNTING, *Emberiza Schœniculus*, Linn.,

Is a resident species distributed over the island, which from the prevailing humidity is peculiarly well suited to it. The reed-bunting is one of those birds which is nowhere numerous, and owing to the places of its abode—among the shrubby underwood and herbage in moist places and at the edge of waters—is not very commonly or popularly known. It is particularly interesting from being an inhabitant of localities in which comparatively few other birds are to be seen:—it has often been highly pleasing to me to observe a few of these birds gathering in to roost for the night upon the exposed roots of alders or willows that overhung the gently-flowing stream, and in a vicinity unsuitable to any of their congeners. Like them, however, reed-buntings will betake themselves during the snow-storm to the public roads for food.

In different parts of Ireland, the reed-bunting still has the undue reputation of being a sweet songster of the night, and is believed to be the veritable “Irish Nightingale,” a name bestowed on the mysterious bird, be that what it may, which sings through the summer night, but which, in strict justice, may be claimed by the sedge-warbler. Montagu, with his usual acuteness, long since accounted for this error, and in the following words:—“It is somewhat extraordinary that the manners and habits of so common a bird should remain so long in obscurity; even modern authors tell us it is a song-bird, that it sings after sunset; and describe its nest to be suspended over the water, fastened between three or four reeds. There can be no doubt, however, that the nest as well as the song of the sedge-warbler have been taken and confounded for those of this bird; for, as they both frequent the same places in the breeding-season, that elegant little warbler is pouring forth its varied notes concealed in the thickest part of a bush; while this is conspicuously

perched above, whose tune is not deserving the name of song; consisting only of two notes, the first repeated three or four times, the last single and more sharp*." Reed-Sparrow and Black-cap are the names commonly bestowed on this bird in the north of Ireland.

YELLOW BUNTING, *Emberiza Citrinella*, Linn.

This handsome bird, differing from the last-noticed species in being a constant resident about the farm and the precincts of the rural dwelling, is very well known in Ireland, over which it is diffused in suitable localities. Its monotonous, and to my ear, mournful song, is heard in mild weather throughout much the greater part of the year. The nest, from being placed in an open hedge or rather bare grassy ditch-bank, is often easily discovered; but a person who from practical observation is well versed in the sites chosen by birds for their nests, remarks, that he has more frequently found that of the yellow bunting in whins than elsewhere. In a friend's garden near Belfast, a pair of these birds built their nest at the edge of a gravel-walk, and brought out four young, three of which were soon destroyed. In consequence of this, the nest containing the fourth was for greater safety placed in a bank a few feet distant, and the single young one was so well provided by its parents with food as quickly to grow to an extraordinary size. A similar fact in the case of the redbreast is mentioned in one of the preceding papers of this series; but in that instance the young one died, it was presumed, from over-feeding. The stomachs of such of these birds as have come under my observation in winter, generally contained grain. Yellow Yorlin is the common name bestowed on this species in the north of Ireland.

THE CHAFFINCH, *Fringilla Cœlebs*, Linn.,

Is a common resident species throughout the cultivated and wooded parts of Ireland. It frequents the squares and gardens of the town, where occasionally its song is heard. The beauty of the nest of this bird, with lichens and moss intermingled in its formation, has often been commented on, and truly it is a very picturesque object; but the lichen is in many localities of necessity left out, and the moss becomes externally the component material. Particular notes of several nests are before me, all of which, except one that was built in a whin, were placed on the branches of trees: one other only is worthy of special notice. This came under the observation of my friend at Cromac, who reports it to have

* Ornithological Dictionary.

been built against the stem of the common pine, and resting on one of the branches, to which it was bound with a piece of fine whip-cord, both ends of which were firmly interwoven in the material of the nest: the cord was taken but once round the branch.

Chaffinches feed chiefly on seeds and grain through the winter, as testified by my opening many specimens. Early in the month of May, when a choice of food was before them, I have on different occasions remarked these birds suddenly dart from the branches of trees after flies in the manner of the spotted flycatcher. During the winter and early spring, a flock consisting of both sexes was observed by a young friend regularly to frequent a merchant's yard situated on one of the quays of Belfast for the purpose of feeding on flaxseed, of which there was always some scattered about the place. Chaffinches sometimes congregate in large flocks before winter actually sets in: at the end of October I have thus remarked them, and occasionally in company with green-linnets. There has been much written from actual observation both on the Continent and in Great Britain, and from Linnæus to the present time, on the subject of the separation of the sexes of chaffinches in the winter. Montagu, writing from Devonshire, says, the sexes do not separate with us, and Mr. Knapp makes a similar remark with reference to Gloucestershire. In Hampshire, White frequently observed large flocks of females about Selborne. In Northumberland, Mr. Selby has noticed the females as keeping apart from the males, and Sir Wm. Jardine remarks respecting the south of Scotland, that young males are intermixed with the females. In the north of Ireland I have seen very large flocks in which there were no males, and once during frost in the month of December, killed nine out of a flock, all of which proved to be females. Again, I have observed flocks of moderate size consisting of a fair proportion of both sexes, and which I have always believed to be our indigenous birds. The others, from never having met with flocks of male birds, I am disposed to believe have migrated to this island from more northern latitudes and there left their mates behind them:—in the north of Europe, associations consisting of males only have been observed during winter.

In July 1840, Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, forwarded to Belfast, for my inspection, a bird shot in that neighbourhood, which he remarked had been sent him as a white chaffinch. It had frequently been seen in company with this species, along with some of which it had been shot in the preceding month of May. This individual was singu-

larly and beautifully marked : it is thus described in my notes :—"This bird is of the full adult size of the chaffinch in every measurement. The prevailing colour of its plumage is pure white, but the head is tinted with yellow ; the entire back is of the richest canary-yellow ; wing- and tail-coverts are likewise delicately tinted with canary-yellow. A few blackish-gray and cinnamon-brown feathers appear as follows : one or two on the head, some on the back, and some very few on the wings and tail, but altogether they are inconspicuous ; these are the ordinary chaffinch feathers. The primaries and the long tail-feathers, together with their shafts, are pure white. The plumage altogether partakes as much of that of the canary as of the chaffinch."

The description of this species and its propensities, as observed by the author of the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' is admirable.

THE MOUNTAIN FINCH, *Fringilla montifringilla*, Linn.,

Is a species, which, from personal observation, and notes collected from various quarters, I could not have announced as a regular winter visitant to Ireland. The Rev. G. M. Black, however, informs me, that for several winters successively he has remarked a few at least of these birds on the mountains about Newtown-Crommelin, but in mid-winter only ; they were occasionally in company with chaffinches. Almost every winter for many years past I have been aware of their occurrence in the north in very limited numbers, and have learned from correspondents in all quarters of the island that they are everywhere of occasional, but generally unfrequent occurrence, and have been met with in the most southern parts. On the 18th of October I once received a mountain finch which was shot in the neighbourhood of Belfast, and in November the species has been seen here associating with green-linnets and chaffinches, when for some time before and after the weather had been mild. Such birds had evidently come hither in the ordinary course of migration ; but that others have been compelled to visit this island by severity of weather, I in one instance had interesting circumstantial evidence. This was a day or two before the very great snow-storm in the beginning of January 1827, when one of these birds, which was secured and sent to me, alighted on the Chieftain steam-packet when on the passage from Liverpool to Belfast. This had most probably been the forerunner of the many which, during the deep snow immediately following, were seen about the last-named place. The snow-storm as usual had commenced earlier in

an easterly direction than in Ireland, which to birds flying before it westerly would be the last place of resort in its latitude in the eastern hemisphere. In like manner, mountain finches may have crossed the Irish Sea in the very severe weather early in the present year (1841), as Mr. R. Davis, writing to me from Clonmel, states, that a flock of them were seen near that town, and several shot on the 5th of February*—he had not known them as visitants to that neighbourhood before. I have seen specimens of this bird which were shot during frost in the spacious yard of the Royal Society House, Dublin; and by T. W. Warren, Esq., of that city, have been assured, that at the most inclement period of the severe winter of 1837–38, some of these birds took shelter in the houses in the town of Dundalk. A pair of mountain finches kept in a very large cage with other species in a greenhouse attached to the dwelling of a relative near Belfast, screamed so constantly throughout moonlight nights as to disturb the family, and consequently they had to be expelled the place.

THE HOUSE SPARROW, *Fringilla domestica*, Linn.,

Is common in Ireland. This bird is in some places much persecuted by individuals, who, knowing only the injury committed on the grain-crops and in the garden, are yet ignorant of the great benefit it confers by the destruction of caterpillars, &c. A notable illustration of a sparrow-destroying order which was given forth in our juvenile days may here be mentioned. An old soldier, who had been in the Peninsular War, was selected from the farm-labourers as being of course the best shot. With plenary instructions to destroy all sparrows, he spent day after day in going about the corn-fields for the purpose of shooting them. Although reports of the gun were frequently heard, there appeared no testimony to convict him of the shedding of blood. We spent one day with him, and whenever he saw that two or three sparrows had alighted together on the standing corn sufficiently near to him, and this was by no means seldom, he fired at them. Often as he did so, we can attest that not a bird fell, though how much of the grain was thereby sacrificed we cannot take upon ourselves to say, for *it* could not be missed. The shooter would not believe that this was owing to his want of skill, and more

* When lately at Freshwater Bay, in the Isle of Wight, I saw several stuffed specimens of the mountain finch on sale at the "Museum," as it is called. I learned that they had been shot in the vicinity during the frost and excessive cold above noticed, when many of them made their appearance, a circumstance of such rare occurrence that their species was unknown.

than once trampled down the grain to look after the *fallen* birds, which were then rejoicing afar off at their escape. When the wages of this sportsman and the value of ammunition he expended, together with the grain destroyed by him, are considered, there can be little doubt that the amount of damage which the sparrows could have done (and nevertheless did in this case do) must be trivial in comparison. Doubtless there have been similar cases. Many well-attested accounts have been published of the destruction of crops by insects in consequence of small birds, and sparrows in particular, being destroyed for their pilfering propensities; and when lately in France I was made acquainted with a recent instance of this kind. In the fine rich district of Burgundy lying to the south of Auxerre, and chiefly covered with vineyards, small birds had been some time before destroyed in great numbers. An extraordinary increase of caterpillars, &c. soon became apparent, and occasioned such immense damage to the crops, that a law was passed prohibitory of the future destruction of the birds.

The boldness and impudence of sparrows in obtruding themselves everywhere are somewhat redeemed by the comicality of their manners. Every one must have remarked instances of this. I was once much amused by observing a sparrow literally "dancing attendance" on a pet squirrel, during his breakfasting on bread in the wheel of his cage; the sparrow hopping about all the while and eagerly picking up the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

The freedom from all fear on the part of sparrows is particularly manifest in their feeding close to animals of all kinds in zoological gardens. They make themselves quite at home too in the company of the most gorgeous-plumaged birds: I recollect them regularly breaking through the meshes of a net (merely large enough to admit their bodies) covering over an aviary in which a friend kept a number of golden pheasants, that they might feed along with them. Under date of June 27th is a note in my journal to the effect that the cock-sparrow has quite gained on my affections of late by the assiduity with which he feeds his progeny. I have observed several of them on the highway attended by their young, generally three in number, and which, with quivering wings, besought and followed them for food, and never in vain. The parents too, by their fine erect carriage—which even cock-sparrows can assume—evidently showed much pride in their progeny.

The sparrow, though not an early rising bird, is awake sometimes, and as a colony will keep chattering for perhaps an

hour about their roosting-place before retiring for the night, so in the morning do they make known their "whereabouts" by the same means, some time before they show themselves to the day:—I once noted on the 11th of June, and likewise a few mornings previously, that on awakening at ten minutes past three o'clock, a colony of these birds frequenting the ivy which covered a town-house were heard loudly chattering, and that for half an hour afterwards none stirred out.

Loud complaints have been reported to me from the proprietor of the nearest fields of grain to Belfast on one side of the town and a mile distant from it, which are attacked when ripening by hosts of town sparrows that go there early in the morning, and after satisfying their appetites at his expense, return and spend the day in town. In our own garden, these birds were for a number of years very destructive to growing peas, almost living upon and amongst them (perching on the pea-rods), and with their strong bills breaking through the pods to get at the peas, which alone they eat, and just when they were in perfection for the table. I have several times seen sparrows in chase of the large white garden-butterfly (*Pontia brassicæ*), whose caterpillars are so destructive, and once remarked an individual fly against the stem of a dandelion and weigh it to the ground that it might feed upon the seeds.

These birds sometimes prove very annoying, especially in lofty houses, by choosing the spout for their nestling-place, where the base of their domicile stops the course of the rain. From a country-house whence their nests were always torn for this reason, they resorted to the adjacent trees, to erect there, their large and untidy, though domed nests, and preferred for this purpose the branches of the Balm of Gilead and Spruce Firs, which naturally offered a firmer and more compact basement than those of the deciduous trees: when the latter were resorted to, the Larch-Fir was generally chosen. At this place they were much persecuted, and I have more than once known nearly fifty to be killed at a single shot. It need hardly be remarked, that they frequently build in rookeries, as well as occupy the nest of the house marten. This is generally noticed by authors as a very dishonest proceeding; and though it is not my desire to be the apologist of any of the manifold errors of the sparrow, still justice has not been done to the bird; for the "pendent bed" of the marten is generally tenantless when taken possession of, and the sparrow may have no anticipation of the rightful owner coming across the seas to claim his property. In like manner, the sparrow occasionally takes

possession of the burrow of the sand marten before the vernal return of this species to the place of its birth; and certainly the intruder, perched at the entrance of its neighbour's burrow, peers about and chatters with as much confidence as if the domicile were its own by "right of descent." But few writers on natural history would seem to have observed the sparrow in such situations, but I have frequently done so, and when the sand-bank was in the close vicinity of trees and houses.

On account of the propensities heretofore alluded to or illustrated, the sparrows are perhaps the most amusing of our small common birds; but all bounds of propriety seem to be exceeded, when, so out of character with the scene, they, all begrimed, squat and chatter, and take up their abode on the stupendous cathedral of St. Paul's in London, under the canopy of which the ashes only of the mightiest among ourselves find a domicile.

Examples of this bird partly and altogether white sometimes occur; and a friend informs me that he once saw three white individuals in one nest. In his 'Catalogue of the Birds, &c., of Donegal,' Mr. J. V. Stewart remarks—"I have had a milk-white sparrow in confinement for two years; it was taken from the nest, is very sprightly and a female. At its moults there has been no change in the colour of its plumage: it has got the eyes of all albinos*." Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, mentions in a letter, that in February 1841 he "got a singularly deformed female sparrow, in which the upper mandible is slightly twisted to one side, the lower one nearly two inches long and turned down like that of a curlew: the bird was seen to feed by laying the side of its head to the ground."

In his 'Familiar History of Birds,' the Bishop of Norwich treats very pleasantly of the sparrow, as in the 'Journal of a Naturalist' does Mr. Knapp in his usual graphic manner. Bewick too waxes warm and eloquent in its defence against the sweeping denunciation of Buffon†.

THE GROSBKAK OR HAWFINCH, *Fringilla Coccothraustes*,
Linn. (genus *Coccothraustes*, Briss.),

Is an occasional winter visitant to Ireland. A fine example in the collection of my friend, Wm. Sinclair, Esq., of Milltown, near Belfast, was shot some years ago in the neighbourhood of Hillsborough, county of Down. The Rev. G.

* Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. v. p. 583.

† *Fringilla montana* appears in Templeton's 'Catalogue of Irish Vertebrate Animals' as "a doubtful native." To my ornithological friends and myself it is quite unknown.



Wood-Mason, James. 1891. "Phylum Appendiculata. Branch Arthropoda. Class Crustacea." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 8, 269–286.

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LVII.—*The Birds of Ireland.* By WM. THOMPSON, Esq.,
Vice-Pres. Nat. Hist. Society of Belfast.

[Continued from p. 430.]

No. 10.—*Corvidæ (continued); Picidæ; Certhiadae.*

THE ROOK, *Corvus frugilegus*, Linn., is as common throughout the cultivated and wooded parts of Ireland as in any other country*. It is generally looked upon by the farmer as an arch enemy, of which he has ocular demonstration,—“the evil that it does” being very apparent in the headless stalks of grain, while its virtues do not in a direct manner come under his cognizance. I have always been disposed to regard the rook as a bird intended by its CREATOR to check the unwonted increase of the insects most destructive to the vegetation of the field, and keep them within due bounds: both England and the continent furnish us with instances of the almost total destruction of crops in particular districts, consequent on its extirpation.

The good done by this bird is generally admitted by our authors who have written within the last sixty years, greatly to exceed the evil it commits. The only exception to this which I have met with is Sir Wm. Jardine, who speaks of the good as “at least compensating for their destruction or injury to the produce of the fields.” It may be possible that in particular localities the “Dr.” and “Cr.” account will about balance. A gentleman whose extensive farm is situated in the valley of the Lagan, and little more than a mile distant from three extensive rookeries (his place forming, as it were, the centre of the circle), once remarked to me, that he would rather than ten pounds a year that rooks never alighted on his fields. His charges against them comprise about the sum total of the evil propensities of the species. They are as follow:—“When the blade of wheat just shows itself above ground, and the pickle of grain is by frost or otherwise rendered accessible, these birds at daybreak pick it off; when grain is lodged they utterly destroy it, and do serious damage to it when in stooks, not only by eating it, but by carrying away heads of the grain, which are found scattered about the adjacent fields. The potatoe crop too they injure, by picking up the planted ‘sets’ in spring whenever accessible, as likewise in autumn the young potatoes; but only where the crop is thin and poor, as from such bare spots they can have a look-out against approaching enemies: where the foliage is luxuriant they never alight. They sometimes too have attacked the cherries in the garden†.”

* At the more genial period of the year, flocks of rooks occasionally visit the mountain pastures about Belfast.

† Mr. Jesse, who in his ‘Gleanings of Natural History’ treats most agreeably of rooks generally, and particularly of the *Royal* rookeries, remarks, that these birds are “sad depredators on my cherry-trees, attacking them early in the morning and carrying off great quantities.” He is nevertheless satisfied that the good done by the species greatly counterbalances the evil.

The only good here attributed to them is in "picking the grubs off lay ground, when broken up and harrowed." That where very numerous they do much of the harm here alleged is undoubted; but to prove that they do much more good than is imagined, I requested to be allowed to examine any slaughtered birds, that by exhibiting the food they contained, my friend might be convinced of the evil of his ways in destroying them; but though promised they were never sent. The propriety of having boys to guard the lately-sown wheat under the circumstances mentioned, where the depredations are perhaps the most serious, was suggested, but the very early hour was said to be an insuperable obstacle. They could however be watched* and frightened away by boys at this time, and when the grain is lodged, at a trifling expense, and then very little harm indeed would be done by them. One of the inimitable tail-pieces to Bewick's Birds (ed. 1832, vol. i. p. 93) points to the inutility of one kind of scarecrow, where a rook is represented peering curiously, but without the least fear, at the wretched effigy of humanity erected to frighten the species from its vicinity. Every person may have observed similar instances. The most notable that has come under my own observation, was where, in a newly-planted potatoe-field, a host of these birds were feeding, while among them hung four of their brethren gibbeted, and looking so fresh, that they had apparently been killed only two or three days before†.

By Wm. Sinclair, Esq., of Milltown, near Belfast, I am informed, that towards the end of autumn, when the harvest has been gathered in, numbers of rooks have, for the last dozen years or more, come every morning, for about a fortnight, to the pine-trees (*Pinus sylvestris*) in that district, for the sake of the cones, which they pluck from the branches and carry away. When the cones cannot be detached in the ordinary manner, they seize them in their bills, and launch off from the branch into the air, that the weight of their bodies may detach them. This is their common procedure with unyielding cones, and has been witnessed with much interest from the windows of my friend's house, within a few yards of which are some pines, in which this ingenious feat is regularly practised. The rook being an especial favourite with me on account of the benefit it does mankind, I was much gratified to learn this proof of its intelligence, which raises it to an equality with the gray crow (as evinced by its rising into the air with shell-fish and dropping them on the rocks to break them), and proves it to be not unworthy, on the score of intellect, of being placed in the same family group with the raven. What they do with the cones has not been ascertained. It would seem to me, that unless the scales of the cone be so widely open that

* In his 'Familiar History of Birds,' the Bishop of Norwich fairly weighs the good and harm done by rooks, and is convinced that the former greatly preponderates. He suggests this watching, as Sir Wm. Jardine, likewise, has subsequently done.

† A friend who kept three eagles procured rooks enough on which to feed them in summer, as these birds came to regale themselves at the troughs containing pig's-meat, of which potatoes formed the principal part.

the seed is ready to drop out, they could hardly reach it, and even then a portion only would be accessible; the scales themselves could not, I conceive, be detached, unless they were partially decomposed; unfortunately, the proceedings of the birds, subsequent to their carrying off the cones, have not been watched*.

Great meetings of rooks, before the breeding season commences, have been alluded to by authors, some of whom consider that the object is to settle preliminaries respecting that important period—of the correctness of this idea I have little doubt. These assemblages are sometimes long continued. During four weeks in the year 1837—from January 21st to February 17th—whenever I happened to ride between two and three o'clock in the direction of two rookeries, I always saw, at a place intermediate between them, and about a mile distant from each, extraordinary numbers, amounting certainly to several thousands; more than I conceive the two rookeries could furnish—a third rookery, about a mile and a half distant, must, I imagine, have likewise contributed its numbers. Although they closely covered fields of all kinds (pasture, meadow-land and ploughed ground), they were not congregated for the purpose of feeding, not more perhaps than one in a hundred being ever so engaged. Again they would be all on wing at such a height as to look no larger than swallows, and keeping within as limited a space in the air as they had occupied on the earth.

As remarked by Mr. Macgillivray, rooks “seem to calculate upon the protection which they usually receive in the neighbourhood of their breeding-places.” Here it is highly interesting to observe them become fellow-labourers with man when the plough is at work, closely following its track to consume the destructive insect larvæ which are turned up; thus performing an important office that the lords of creation could not accomplish for themselves. At such times too, as if conscious of the good in which they are engaged, they admit of a near approach, and their finely polished plumage has a beautiful effect as it glances like burnished metal in the sun. Their time of roosting varies a little, according to the afternoon being bright or gloomy. On the 10th of August 1837, I remarked a great number busily employed in feeding at some distance from the rookery so late as seven o'clock in the evening: the day throughout had been dull and dark.

I was informed by Richard Langtry, Esq., in the spring of 1831,

* Mr. Blackwall, in his ‘Researches in Zoology’ (p. 156), remarks, that “rooks in the autumn frequently bury acorns in the earth, probably with the intention of having recourse to them when their wants are more urgent.” It is added, that they sometimes forget where they have concealed them. Mr. Jesse too states, that these birds “are known to bury acorns, and I believe walnuts also, as I have observed them taking ripe walnuts from a tree, and returning to it before they could have had time to break them and eat the contents. Indeed, when we consider how hard the shell of a walnut is, it is not easy to guess how the rook contrives to break them. May they not, by first burying them, soften the shells, and afterwards return to feed upon them?” (Gleanings in Nat. Hist., 1st series.)

that a pair of herons built their nest in the rookery at Dromedaragh (county of Antrim), that the rooks tore the first nest to pieces, but that the herons eventually succeeded, and reared their brood in safety. A few years before that time about one hundred and fifty young rooks had been killed there during a storm, by being blown out of the nests. Among adult birds, there was an extraordinary fatality in the county of Westmeath on the night of the great hurricane of January 7th, 1839. As was noticed in a communication to the *Annals**, my friend Mr. R. Ball was assured by Dean Vignolles, on whose property the circumstance occurred, that the amazing number of 33,000 † were picked up dead on the shores of a lake some miles in length, and with extensive rookeries on its borders. So remarkably numerous were the dead bodies, that as a matter of curiosity they were reckoned by some boys as they gathered them into heaps. Dean Vignolles likewise submitted to Mr. Ball's inspection a more than ordinarily strong panel of a new window shutter, which was driven in and split by a rook being dashed against it on the night in question—the innocent cause of the damage was found dead between the window and the shutter inside the room. Other fatalities occasionally befall the rook. In the autumn of 1831 (?) there was a dense fog over Lough Neagh and its neighbourhood for two nights and an entire day, during which time great numbers of these birds perished in its waters, and were afterwards washed ashore. I have been told that a similar circumstance occurred in the harbour of Cove in the south of Ireland some years ago.

At Redhall, county of Antrim, a friend once saw a brood of four young rooks, all of which were white : both parents were of the ordinary sable hue. J. V. Stewart, Esq. of Rockhill, near Letterkenny, informs me that he possesses two varieties of the rook, one entirely of a dingy brown colour, and having a diseased appearance ; and the other with two white bars across the wings, the rest of the plumage being of the usual colour. In the year 1839 I was told by Mr. G. J. Allman of Bandon, that several light fawn-coloured birds of this species were shot near to that town a few years before, some of which he had seen in company with other rooks, that freely associated with them.

In Scotland these birds have, by suiting themselves to circumstances, come under my observation in a manner in which they have not done in Ireland. I have for many miles along the coast of Ayrshire met with them in the autumn, feeding among the fresh seaweed or rejectamenta of the preceding tide ; and at other times they were crowded seeking for food among the heaps of sea-weed collect-

* 'Note on the Effects of the Hurricane of January 7, 1839, in Ireland, on some Birds, Fishes, &c.' vol. iii. p. 182.

† Were a figure taken off the above number, it would be reduced to what I have remarked to constitute a respectable rookery. Mr. Jesse too states that "the average number of rooks' nests, during the last four years, in the avenue of Hampton Court Park, has been about 750 ; allowing three young birds and a pair of old ones to each nest, the number would amount to 3750."—*Gleanings*, p. 65, 1st Ed.

ed on the beach for manure. About two miles inland from Ballantrae, in Ayrshire, a few hundreds of these birds, in the autumn of 1839, regularly roosted on the ground upon a rising knoll in a pasture-field. I first saw them there at eight o'clock P.M. on the 20th of August; and afterwards, on returning late from grouse-shooting in distant moors, they were always to be seen. This roosting-place was in the midst of a cultivated district, in which there was no wood of sufficient age to be patronized by the rook. At the commencement of a snow-storm in England, and after the ground became well covered, I was once amused at seeing a rook rolling in the snow, apparently enjoying itself as much as a Newfoundland dog could have done*. In summer I have met with the rook in Holland, France and Switzerland, and in some parts of the first-named country observed that it was as common as in its chief haunts in the British Islands. At the Hotel Bellevue, which is situated close to the king's park at the Hague, I for the first time experienced the evils of a rookery, the cawing from a closely adjacent one being so incessant from daybreak as to drive all sleep from me, unaccustomed as I was to such music;—this was at the end of May, when the calls of the young are almost constantly uttered.

The rook has attracted the attention of authors possessing a celebrity of a very different kind. In the 'Bracebridge Hall' of Washington Irving, an admirable chapter is devoted to it. Goldsmith gives a very interesting account of its nestling in the Temple Gardens, London, as observed by himself. A most graphic description of its manner of life about Selborne is furnished by White. Sir Wm. Jardine introduces it in a picturesque manner as an adjunct to the scenery of the park; and Mr. Macgillivray, as if conceiving that the subject had already been quite exhausted, imparts a new feature to the history of the bird, by visiting a rookery at night, and relating the proceedings at that period.

THE JACKDAW, *Corvus Monedula*, Linn., is found throughout the island, especially where the labour of man is evinced by buildings, the plantation of trees, and the cultivation of the ground. But it is much more interesting to meet with this bird in its more wild and natural abode in the bold and precipitous cliffs which it frequents, whether inland or marine.

The basaltic precipices of the north-east of Ireland are much resorted to by these birds, and I believe at all seasons—in the month of October, in different years, I have observed them at the approach of evening to gather in as great numbers as in summer, to roost in the rocks at the Cavehill, near Belfast. In the wild peninsula of the Horn (co. Donegal) they breed in the marine cliffs, and according to the late T. F. Neligan, Esq., of Tralee, they nestle in caverns in very small islands about three miles distant from the coast of Kerry. On the 29th of May, 1836, I saw many jackdaws at the sandy pre-

* Waterton in his 'Essays on Natural History' mentions a tame raven acting similarly.

craggy cliffs rising above the beach of Lough Neagh, at Massareene deer-park, where they breed in holes, all of which were stated by the gamekeeper to be the deserted burrows of rabbits.

Church towers* and steeples, chimnies†, and occasionally trees, are their ordinary nestling-places. They are generally described as late breeding birds; but a most accurate observer furnishes me with notes to the effect that on the 2nd of March he had seen them carrying building materials to a chimney in Belfast; and to other chimnies in the same town he on the 20th of that month, and on the 7th of April, saw them carrying food, as he conceived, for their young. The first foray of certain country jackdaws, in the early morning, is to the town, where they are very punctual in making their appearance: on the 11th of June I once noted the precise time of their appearance to be 45 minutes past 3 o'clock. Here they are quite innocuous; but in the country, it must be confessed, they occasionally levy contributions. Montagu has remarked that they are "fond of cherries," to the truth of which more than one of my friends' gardens about Belfast, had they not "poor dumb mouths," could bear testimony. Of all birds they are the most destructive to this fruit. A friend on one occasion coming upon a number regaling in one of his cherry-trees, fired at them, without reflecting on the damage he must necessarily do to the tree, and five fell dead to the ground; here they and other species, particularly blackbirds (*Turdus Merula*), for some years entirely consumed the crop of cherries on a number of fine and tall standard trees which could not conveniently be netted, and in consequence of their depredations the trees were all cut down. The cherry-trees in the garden of another friend, resident in the neighbourhood of Belfast, were sacrificed for a similar reason. In a district well known to me, jackdaws generally associate with rooks, and hence participate both in the good and evil done by these birds to the farm; though, as mentioned in treating of the rook, the former greatly preponderates. In a wild and uncultivated district on the northern coast of the island, I have in summer remarked flocks of these birds feeding on the sea-shore between tide-marks, and among *fucus*-covered stones.

The sites chosen by the jackdaw for perching are frequently amusing; thus I have observed five of them, in flying to a vane, alight with the most correct regularity on the letters N. E. W. S., while the other surmounted the ball, and thus would they remain stationed for some time, looking as if they were "part and parcel" of the weathercock. On the head of Nelson, as he stands erect in all his majesty on the top of the pillar which bears his name in

* In the tower of a country church near Belfast, jackdaws had in the course of time accumulated such quantities of sticks, that cart-loads of them had to be removed before some repairs on the building could be commenced.

† The burning of Shanes Castle (the mansion of Earl O'Neil, situated on the borders of Lough Neagh), which happened about twenty years ago, was said to have been caused by the dry sticks forming the nests of jackdaws in one of the chimnies having caught fire. [The last fire at York Minster has been attributed to the same cause.—ED.]

Sackville Street, Dublin, I have seen the jackdaw alight, and impart an air of the ludicrous to the hero of Trafalgar. But under similar circumstances, this bird would not scruple to perch even

“On the bald first Cæsar’s head*.”

Three jackdaws, entirely white, were reared in a chimney in Belfast a few years ago, and about the same time two of a similar colour were brought up in a demesne in the neighbourhood; here they were observed by a friend associating, both in feeding and on wing, with their sable brethren, who acknowledged them as kindred. On account of their colour, they were unfortunately persecuted to the death, when they proved to be perfect albinos, the bill and legs, as well as the plumage, being white; their hoary moustaches gave them a most venerable appearance, though in reality they were birds of the year.

On the 29th June 1835, I saw many jackdaws about the fissures of the lofty chalk-cliffs rising above the river Derwent, near Matlock in Derbyshire, where it was presumed they nestled, and the next evening heard their call there so late as ten o’clock, which tended to confirm the conjecture. In the Morea and the Archipelago, late in the spring and in the summer of 1841, I observed jackdaws equally numerous, and in localities similar to those at home, such as about the ruins of the old castle at Patras, the high western cliffs of the island of Sphacteria (the scene of Byron’s *Cor-sair*), and on a rocky islet, lying to the north-east of the entrance to Port Nousa, in the island of Paros.

THE MAGPIE, *Corvus Pica*, Linn., has long been common throughout the island, but, according to several authors, was unknown down to a certain period. Smith, in his ‘History of the county of Cork,’ published in 1749, remarks, that it “was not known in Ireland seventy years ago, but is now very common;” and Rutty, in his ‘Natural History of Dublin,’ observes, that “it is a foreigner, naturalized here since the latter end of King James the Second’s reign, and is said to have been driven hither by a strong wind.” (!) Dean Swift thus alludes to it in his ‘Journal to Stella’:—“Pray observe the inhabitants about Wexford; they are old English; see what they have particular in their manners, name and language. Magpies have been always there, and nowhere else

* The following note is contributed by my friend Mr. R. Patterson of Belfast:—“I remember some years ago my uncle, John Fowler, Esq., of the bank of Ireland, had a pet jackdaw, which answered to the name of Jack, and was regularly in the habit of performing a feat, which might baffle many a person who talks about ‘the centre of gravity.’ When Mr. Fowler after dinner had mixed his ‘tumbler’ of punch, and called ‘Jack,’ the bird instantly came, and perched on the edge of the glass, where he poised himself so nicely that it was never upset. I believe that, on such occasions, he used to get from his master a bit of white sugar, which he ate while thus resting on the tumbler.”

in Ireland*, till of late years." To a commentary on this by Mr. Ogilby, published in Yarrell's 'British Birds' (vol. ii. pp. 111, 112), the reader is referred. In the Irish Statutes, 17 Geo. II. ch. 10, a reward is offered for magpies, along with other "four- and two-footed vermin†."

That this bird has, like other species, increased and multiplied to a goodly extent in Ireland, appears from the following circumstance. In September 1836, I was informed by the intelligent and trustworthy gamekeeper at Tollymore Park (co. Down), the seat of the Earl of Roden, that by ranging the country for many miles around the park, he, by robbing their nests, shooting and trapping them, destroyed in one half year 732 birds and eggs. At the assizes held in the spring and autumn of every year he "presented" for vermin killed, and on the occasion in question received 12*l.* for magpies, &c. So long as a reward was offered for their heads, he killed immense numbers of these birds—it was discontinued two or three years previous to 1836. In extensive districts in the north of Ireland, where the farms are small, and every cottage possesses a few sheltering trees, the magpie's nest is a certain accompaniment; and the trees being generally the open-topped ash, the dark ball of the nest is visible from so great a distance, that I have often reckoned a considerable number from one point of view. The magpie builds rather early, and in all kinds of trees, none being greater favourites than fine old hawthorns: the eggs not uncommonly amount to seven in number. In a note on the margin of the copy of Montagu's 'Ornithological Dictionary' which belonged to the late Mr. John Montgomery, of Locust Lodge near Belfast, an accurate observer, it is stated, that "when angry or alarmed for the safety of its young, the

* Derricke, who wrote his 'Image of Ireland' in Queen Elizabeth's time, says—

"No pies to pluck the thatch from house
Are breed in Irishe groundes,
But worse than pies, the same to burne
A thousande maie be founde."

Letter xxvi. vol. ii. p. 309, 2nd edit.

† The following notice of the magpie appears in the lately published 'Tracts relating to Ireland,' printed for the Irish Archæological Society, vol. i. In 'A brife Description of Ireland, made in this yeere 1589, by Robert Payne,' it is remarked—"There is neither mol, *pye*, nor carren crow." In a note to this, contributed by Dr. Aquila Smith of Dublin, it is observed, "As to the magpie (*Pica caudata*) our author is probably correct, for Derricke, who wrote in 1581, in his 'Image of Ireland,' says—[—the four lines above quoted are introduced here.] 'Ireland,' says Moryson, in 1617, 'hath neither singing nightingall, nor *chattering pye*, nor undermining moule.' Itinerary, part iii. b. iii. p. 160. [The extract elsewhere given from Smith's 'Cork' appears here.] The earliest notice of this bird as indigenous in Ireland is in Keogh's 'Zoologia Medicinalis Hibernica,' Dublin, 8vo, 1739: he merely mentions the 'magpie or pianet, *Hib. Maggidipye*.' This evidently Anglo-Irish word, for we have no name for it in the ancient Irish language, favours the opinion held by our best-informed naturalists, that this bird is of recent introduction into this country."

magpie is not only very clamorous, but pecks the branch on which it rests, violently tearing the bark off in its rage." On the 9th of May, I once saw a gray crow attack the nest of a magpie, when the latter, "single-handed," boldly repulsed and drove it off to some little distance. The crow nevertheless returned to the nest several times, but was always beaten off without effecting its evil purpose. Bold as the magpie is in defence of its own, I have more than once seen it beaten away by a pair of missel-thrushes (*Turdus viscivorus*) from the vicinity of their nest.

It has been often observed, that if one of a pair of magpies having a nest be shot, another mate is soon found, the period, according to Mr. Selby, "sometimes scarcely exceeding a day;" but a gentleman of my acquaintance assures me, that on his shooting one of a pair of these birds in the forenoon, the survivor had found another partner before evening. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of widowed magpies becoming provided with new partners is that recorded by the celebrated Dr. Jenner in the Philosophical Transactions for 1824 (p. 21). These birds are often so far gregarious as to frequent particular groves near their feeding-ground for roosting, in considerable numbers, and to which they resort in straggling flocks: I have thus reckoned twenty-six on wing together, when the distance between the first and last resembled that in an ill-matched pack of hounds during the chase. November 20, 1838, was a dull, dark, true November day throughout, and so early as half-past two o'clock P.M., I saw a number of these birds that had evidently retired to roost for the night; so many as about twenty of them, which on being alarmed by me flew from a fine old willow on the banks of the Lagan, looked very beautiful as they rose together.

Magpies are very generally persecuted with us on account of their evil propensities. One friend complains that his garden has suffered much from their depredations on cherries and other fruit; another that the eggs of game, &c. are greatly destroyed by them;—their propensity for eggs is taken advantage of for their destruction, and they become victims to the trap baited with those of our domestic fowl. Grain, too, they certainly consume, but their numbers are not anywhere so great as to do much injury in this respect. That they do a great deal of good, I have had abundant and positive evidence from an examination of the contents of their stomachs (supplied me by bird-preservers) at various times, but particularly in winter, when almost every one contained insects (chiefly *Coleoptera*), or the remains of mice and slugs—of the last, the internal shell (*Limacellus*, Brard.) only remained—mixed with these occasionally appeared oats and other grain. In winter, the magpie, as well as others of the *Corvidæ*, is of great service to the public, by resorting in numbers to such meadows as are manured with the offensive refuse of the slaughter-house, and feeding on the titbits*! By George Mathews,

* Since writing my account of the magpie, I find that this and several other particulars dwelt upon are much better treated of by Mr. Waterton in his 'Essays on Natural History.' His description of the bird throughout is excellent.

Esq., I have been informed that a trustworthy warrener at Springvale, county of Down (the seat of his grandfather Major Mathews), assured him, that he once saw a magpie fly some distance out to sea with a stoat or weasel fastened to it, and that he and some other men launched a boat, and followed to see the issue; when they found the magpie lying dead upon the water. The quadruped had disappeared, and they conjectured had been drowned; but Mr. Mathews thinks that it may rather have made its way ashore, as he has often seen these animals swim admirably. Montagu, in the 'Supplement to his Ornithological Dictionary,' mentions his having been witness to a weasel killing a carrion crow, the latter being in the first instance the aggressor.

Magpies are so bold, as apparently, through mere wantonness, to persecute birds that would seem to be more than a match for them: the beautiful kestrel or windhover they occasionally annoy. Towards the peregrine falcon they dare hardly show any impertinence, but the curiosity which I once saw exhibited by a pair of them towards a bird of this species was highly amusing. A trained falcon belonging to my relative Richard Langtry, Esq., on being given its liberty, after taking a few circuits through the air, alighted in a small tree, where first one, and then another magpie likewise alighted, without exhibiting the least fear, but with the intention only, to all appearance, of examining it more closely. They gradually approached the hawk until almost touching it; one indeed seemed to strike it, and immediately after they both flew to a tree close by, and commenced an incessant chattering, which was continued for some time, and which a spectator could not have believed to be anything short of a discussion upon the merits of the stranger bird. When in the tree with the hawk, they maintained a respectful silence. At the same place, a tame magpie and a sheep of a peculiar variety, whose fleece hung nearly to the ground, were great friends, and generally associated together. The favourite perch of the bird was on the sheep's back, and this animal became innocently a receiver of stolen goods, as the magpie concealed its pilferings in the thick wool of its back. It sometimes hopped after the sheep, picking at its heels; and, whether through mischief, or manifesting a natural carnivorous propensity, was very partial to pecking at the bare heels of beggars who came about the house, excessively to their annoyance. Here, also, two magpies were proficient in talking. One, without any teaching, learnt all the phrases of a parrot kept in a neighbouring cage*, and the other was taught several words and short sentences, by their being repeated to it by its master; perhaps

* It would seem that, in a wild state also, either this species or a nearly allied one will imitate the notes of other birds. Mr. Nuttall, who, from a knowledge of the bird both in Europe and America, considers the common magpie of the two continents identical, remarks—"I one day observed a small flock, and among the fraternity heard one chattering familiarly in the varied tone of the cat-bird, as he sat on a bough by the water, where birds might become his prey."—Audubon's *Ornithological Biography*, vol. iv. p. 409.

the most comical of these was "pretty-poll," as passing strangers, on hearing the well-known words, turned round to look at the supposed parrot, and saw only impudent "mag" instead. But anything more on this subject would be only taking a leaf out of the history of a pet magpie communicated by my friend Mr. Stevelly, Professor of Natural Philosophy in Belfast College. He remarks—

"When a boy I succeeded in rearing a magpie from a very young bird; he became much attached to me, and long before he could fly would follow me about with a curious kind of sideling hop, and even at this time of life began to show great archness, running after the peasant children, who, in the south of Ireland, go for the most part without shoes and stockings, and pecking at their bare heels; and then instantly looking up to see if punishment were meditated, of which, if he saw the least symptom, he would escape with wonderful celerity. He became so adroit at length at this amusement, that the children who came near the house were much afraid of him; when his beak became stronger, he also attacked dogs in the same manner, but always with much and very droll caution. He flew well and strongly before I attempted to confine him in the slightest degree, and roamed at large round my father's place; but when I wished him to come home in the evening, one or two loud calls of his name 'Jack' were sure to bring him from some neighbouring high tree on which he had perched, to my shoulder, which was a very favourite resting-place; when there, it was a favourite practice of his gently to run his beak between my lips or into my ear, with that peculiar motion which pigeons are observed to use when they caress each other; the tickling sensation which this process caused when my ear was in question made me always submit with difficulty, and I was frequently obliged to withdraw my head suddenly with a shudder; at this he always seemed highly delighted, and used to chatter with a guttural sound not unlike Irish words.

"The country people in the south of Ireland have a manner of calling each other from a distance by bending their fore-finger, putting it into their mouth, and producing a very loud and shrill whistle. This whistle 'Jack' became very expert at imitating, and it was a favourite amusement of his to sit on a very hot day on the top of the house, and if he chanced to espy any person at a distance, as, for example, the market-boy riding into town, a whistle from Jack, repeated if necessary, was sure to bring him back, however great his hurry, under the impression that some important commission had been forgotten, or that his presence was required at the house or farm-yard; the length of the avenue, and a gentle slope in it at about a quarter of a mile distance from the house, rendered this trick very easy to be practised, and he seemed to take great delight in it when successful, and many a hearty curse he received from the wearied subject of his practical joke as soon as he had discovered the individual who had so importunately called him back.

"He was particularly fond of any shining article, such as spoons and trinkets; these he frequently stole, and we came upon his treasure-house in a laughable way. There was an old gentleman, a

great friend of my father, who resided with us almost continually. He was of a peculiarly studious disposition, but from a deformity in his person used generally to read standing, with his arms and breast resting on the back of a chair, and the book placed on a table before him; after having read for a while, it was his habit to take off his spectacles, lay them beside him, blow his nose, take a pinch of snuff, and after a few moments, pondering what he had been reading, resume the spectacles and proceed. One very warm day I lay reading at one end of a room in which there was an open glass door leading to the greenhouse; in this room the old gentleman was most intently pursuing his studies at a little distance from me. My attention was soon arrested by seeing the magpie perched upon the chair near him, eyeing him most intently and with a very arch expression, and at length, in an instant, he had with a most active hop touched the table, secured the red leather spectacle-case, and was out of the glass door with the most noiseless wing and with a very graceful motion. I remained quiet, resolved to see the end of the joke; after a few seconds' absence 'Jack' was again at his post, eyeing the old gentleman with a most inquisitive and yet business-like glance; it was nearly impossible to resist the ludicrous impression produced by the entire scene: at length off came the spectacles, and out came the pocket handkerchief and snuff-box; quick as thought Jack had invaded the table and was out of the open door with the prize, which I have no doubt had from the beginning been the object of his covetous admiration while they were on the nose of the old gentleman. This time the magpie did not return, either because he found it more difficult to reach his storehouse with the spectacles than with the case, or because, having gained the object of his ambition, he conceived his presence no longer necessary. At length the period of rumination having elapsed, the old gentleman set about replacing the spectacles; as soon as his surprise had abated at not finding them with his hands beside him on the table, he removed the chair and groped about on the carpet, then raised the book and examined every part of the table. Not being able to restrain myself any longer, I exploded in laughter; and of course I was instantly suspected of playing off a practical joke, and charged with taking the spectacles, but at length succeeded in convincing him I had never risen from the sofa on which I reclined; but after a good deal of laughing, and two or three other members of the family having been attracted to the room by the hubbub, I was compelled, under cross-examination, to own that I had witnessed 'Jack's' abstractions. The question then became serious how the articles were to be recovered; some person suggested to leave a teaspoon near him and watch him. This was accordingly done, but his motions were so rapid that he eluded us all, seeming at first to pop completely over the house; at length, by placing two or three persons in favourable positions, he was 'marked' in a leaden valley between a double part of the roof; and this having been closely searched, a deposit was discovered not only of the things which 'Jack' had that day carried off, but also of some articles which had been for some time supposed to be lost, but re-

specting which a breath of suspicion as to him had never been entertained. This day's successful foray led to his losing his entire store, no doubt in the midst of his triumphal rejoicing.

"His thieving propensities seemed to gather strength from this period; but I have little doubt many articles which were lost were set down to his account without sufficient evidence that he was the thief. A valuable brooch which belonged to a lady who was on a visit with my mother was at length lost, and every finger pointed to 'Jack' as the thief; this charge acquired probability from the fact that he had on the previous day overturned and destroyed a very valuable writing-desk in her room while examining too anxiously some of the silver ornaments of its bottles; an order was forthwith issued by my father that a cage must be made for him, and the absolute liberty he had heretofore enjoyed somewhat curtailed. I submitted the more cheerfully to this order as his flights from home were now becoming obviously longer, and on one or two occasions he had not returned all night; and although at these times he made his appearance next morning hungry and cold and with a very rueful aspect, yet I was beginning to fear that he would at length acquire the habits necessary for shifting for himself, and stay away altogether. Accordingly he was caged; at first he furiously attacked the wooden bars of the cage and broke some of them, but in places so scattered, that in no one place did he succeed in making a breach large enough for his exit. He pined very much at the confinement, and the beauty of his plumage was much deteriorated, so that I at length began to let him fly about: his delight on these occasions was excessive and often laughably expressed; but his distress when again seized on to be returned to his cage was at least equally strongly expressed. He used to screech long and loudly, and resist with beak and talon; hence he soon began when liberated to fly straight off and remain away for several hours. In one of these rambles, a woman returning from Cork was astonished to see him stand so tamely on the public road beside a small pond at which he occasionally drank; she came near him and held out a herring towards him, which he very thankfully began to eat, when she secured him, cut one of his wings, and on reaching her home put him among some poultry, who beat him most unmercifully. It was four or five days before I was able to discover his prison, the woman living three or four miles off; and when I did, and had paid a few shillings for his ransom, he came home in most piteous plight; his spirit was quite broken, his plumage much injured and dingy, and except for the well-known 'Jack' and one or two other words, chiefly Irish, which he pronounced, I should have doubted or disbelieved his identity. I however pulled the feathers of his wings (which were mere stumps on one side), and by care he was beginning to recover his vivacity; when, attempting to drink at a barrel, in which, when he could fly, he was in the habit of splashing, he fell in, and was drowned before his danger was discovered. I never felt so bereaved as upon the death of poor 'Jack.'"

At the performance of the Maid and the Magpie in Belfast Thea-

tre, on one occasion in my young days, a schoolfellow about fourteen years of age, who had not before been at any dramatic representation, was present. On seeing that the woman was about to be executed for the theft committed by the bird, he from the pit gallantly roared out at the top of his voice that she was innocent, for he had seen the magpie steal the spoons.—I well remember the laugh of the school being turned against him on the following morning.

This species rarely exhibits variety in its plumage: a white one frequented a demesne near Belfast for two or three years; and a friend once saw three pure white ones, which were brought from the neighbourhood to town for sale;—they had probably been reared in the same nest.

In the month of May last, I met with the magpie about Smyrna: over the greater part of the European continent it is common.

In their respective works on British Birds, Sir Wm. Jardine admirably points out the favourite haunts of the magpie; and Mr. Macgillivray gives a very characteristic description of its manners in a wild state.

THE JAY, *Garrulus glandarius*, Flem., can now be claimed as an indigenous bird by about the southern half of Ireland only.

Smith, in his 'History of the county of Waterford' (1745), says, "the jay is pretty common in our woods," and in his 'History of Cork' enumerates it among the birds of that county. Mr. R. Ball considers it to be now rare in that quarter: in the summer of 1837 he saw young birds which were taken from a nest near Youghal. Mr. G. J. Allman informed me in 1839, that the jay had of late, owing to its being protected, become common in Lord Bandon's park, in the last-named county. Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, replied as follows to some queries in Feb. 1837:—"The jay must be indigenous: the oldest inhabitants remember them to be much more plentiful than they now are: they still breed in woods near us, but were formerly to be seen close to the town." About Portarlington (Queens-county) they are particularly numerous, and to go out there specially for jay-shooting is not an uncommon practice. About Portumna they are said to be met with, but not frequently. In Rutt's 'Natural History of Dublin,' the jay appears as one of the birds of that county, and as such it is known at present to Mr. R. Ball.

I am not aware of the existence of this bird either now, or for a long time past, in the north of the island, although there are many districts apparently well suited to its abode, and every year becoming more so from the increasing age of full-grown timber. Dubourdieu, in his 'Survey of the county of Antrim,' remarks—"The jay was much more frequent before the woods at Portmore were cut; it is still [1812] however to be met with about Shanes Castle, and other woods at the borders of the lake [Neagh]." I have been unable to verify its being there at so late a period. It must not be taken for granted that the bird called jay in the north of Ireland is the *Garrulus glandarius*, as that name is frequently bestowed on the

missel-thrush (*Turdus viscivorus**). The latest positive evidence known to me of the occurrence of the true jay in the quarter alluded to, is afforded by a venerable friend, who about sixty years ago received three young ones from a nest in Portmore park, on the borders of Lough Neagh, once rich in fine woods of oak, but which long since have fallen before the axe. In the Irish Statutes, 17th of George II., chap. 10, a reward is offered for the head of the jay, together with that of the magpie and others of the *Corvidæ*. Mr. Yarrell seems to imagine that it is to the numbers killed in consequence of this reward being offered, that the species generally became less numerous with us; but as the jay can, like the *Corvidæ*, for which a reward was at the same time offered, take very good care of itself, I should attribute its decrease to other and more natural causes. With reference to the distribution of this bird in Ireland, it is desirable to ascertain its distribution in Scotland. Sir Wm. Jardine observes, that "as we proceed northward it becomes much more local, though by no means rare, where it is found frequenting generally the older wood around private seats, and in parks, and some of the forests in the middle highlands. It is common both in Perth- and Argyleshire, but we are not sure that it extends to the forests of the far north†."

I have never met with this beautiful bird in a wild state in Ireland, but have had the gratification of seeing it in Scotland among the natural wood about the northern extremity of Loch Lomond, as well as about Coniston Water in Lancashire; and on the continent, in Switzerland and Italy—in the latter country, on the richly wooded banks of the Nera, not far from its confluence with the Tiber, and 14° to the south of the first-named locality‡.

GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKER, *Picus major*, Linn.—All that can be positively stated of woodpeckers as Irish birds, is, that the *P. major* has in a very few instances been met with.

Templeton records a specimen obtained in the county of Londonderry in August 1802, having been sent to Dr. M'Donnell of Belfast§; and a second having been met with since. An example

* This bird is correctly remarked by Dubourdieu to be "now frequent," so that the true jay is evidently the bird alluded to.

† Brit. Birds, vol. ii. p. 253.

‡ The nutcracker, *Nucifraga Caryocatactes*, Briss., cannot be announced with any certainty as having ever been met with in Ireland. Among the notes of Mr. Templeton is one to the effect that a bird of this species "had been shot at Silvermines, county of Tipperary, by Mr. J. Lewis." In the preparation of Mr. Templeton's 'Catalogue of the Vertebrate Animals of Ireland' (published in the 'Magazine of Natural History,' vol. i. New Series) by his son, the nutcracker was omitted in consequence of the latter gentleman being unaware of any further particulars.

§ Among Mr. Templeton's drawings is a beautiful coloured representation of this bird. I have only met with this species in its native haunts, in the richly wooded valley of Sarnen, Switzerland.

which I saw in the museum of the Royal Dublin Society in 1834, was stated by Mr. W. S. Wall, bird-preserver, to have been killed on the banks of the canal near the metropolis in December 1831, when another was seen in company with it. By a letter from Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, dated Feb. 1837, I learned that, six years before that time, a *P. major* was shot at St. Johnstown, in the same county. To the fifth vol. of the 'Annals' I communicated the following note on the greater spotted woodpecker. "On Nov. 13, 1839, one of these birds was shot at Castlereagh, near Belfast, by Mr. Greenfield, who remarks that it was 'very tame,' and when fired at was engaged in pecking into a dead tree; it seemed to be unaccompanied by any of its species. It is a male bird, but not in adult plumage; and has been liberally presented by the gentleman just named to the Belfast Museum."

Smith, in his 'History of Cork,' remarks under "Hoopoe"—"Mr. Willoughby ranks it among the woodpeckers, of which I have not yet seen one in this county." In the same author's 'History of Waterford' there appears "*Picus Martis*, the woodpecker, a bird rare in this county;" can *P. martius* here be meant? Ruddy enumerates the "*Picus varius minor*, lesser spotted woodpecker," as one of the birds of the county of Dublin; and it likewise appears in Dr. Patrick Browne's 'Catalogue of the Birds of Ireland,' into which it was probably copied from Ruddy. All these notices of woodpeckers are very unsatisfactory*.

THE TREE CREEPER, *Certhia familiaris*, Linn., generally inhabits districts throughout Ireland in which old wood prevails, and is everywhere resident.

Owing to its habits, it is perhaps of all our native birds the least known, but to the ornithologist is particularly interesting, from being the only one of the zogodactyle birds indigenous to the island: its presence too throughout the winter is an additional attraction.

* I have been told that the green woodpecker is found in an old wood in the county of Donegal, but no proof was ever afforded:—when in Dublin some years ago, I saw in the possession of a bird-preserver a fresh example of this species, which was accordingly believed to have been shot in Ireland; but by inquiry from the owner, I learned that it had been sent him from England: other similar cases respecting the *Picus viridis* have occurred to me.

A recent specimen of the Nuthatch (*Sitta europæa*), sent to a bird-preserver in the metropolis, was on the same presumptive evidence as the green woodpecker mentioned to me as an Irish bird; but on inquiry it was found to have been killed in Wales. This species is not known to have ever visited the island.

Wryneck, *Yunx Torquilla*, Linn. There is no record of this species having ever been met with in Ireland. On the 29th of April last I saw one of them among some shrubby plants in the island of Sphacteria, which bounds the western side of the fine bay of Navarino. On the 25th of the same month, a wryneck which alighted in H.M.S. Beacon, when about sixty miles to the south-east of Calabria, was captured, as mentioned in the 'Annals,' vol. viii. p. 127.

In the woods of the counties Down, Antrim, and Fermanagh*, this bird has occurred to me. Mr. J. V. Stewart notices it as found in the north of the county of Donegal; Mr. R. Ball, as met with about Dublin and Youghal; to the Rev. Thomas Knox it is known as common in some parts of Westmeath, and about Killaloe; by Mr. R. Davis, jun., it is reported to be not uncommon in Tipperary; and that the species is common in Kerry, I was informed by the late Mr. T. F. Neligan. Such of these birds as have come under my observation, though apparently aware of my presence, never exhibited any shyness, but admitted of a near approach, when it was extremely interesting to observe the regular, quick, and business-like manner in which they searched for their food. Now one would appear moving in a straight line up the trunks of the largest pines, from near the base until it would almost reach the summit; then it would be seen ascending the next tree to which it flew, by spirally winding round it, the effect being much heightened by its breast, in contrast with the dark-coloured bark, appearing of a silvery whiteness. Mr. R. Ball has "known the creeper to be captured by boys getting to the opposite side of a tree at the base of which it commenced feeding, and making a random stroke with a cap or hat, at the place they supposed it had reached in its upward movement." This species is generally stated by authors to live entirely on insects; but the stomachs of the only two I have examined, contained each, in addition to such food, a few seeds of the common pine (*Pinus sylvestris*): the specimens were shot in the month of January. Wilson, in his 'American Ornithology,' mentions his having found the seeds of the pine-tree (of course a different species from *P. sylvestris*) in the stomachs of individuals killed in the United States, and likewise "fragments of a fungus that vegetates on old wood." Mr. Macgillivray gives a very full and graphic description of the creeper, 'Brit. Birds,' vol. iii.

[To be continued.]

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ROYAL SOCIETY.

Dec. 16, 1841, and Jan. 6, 1842.—A paper was read, entitled, "On Fibre," by Martin Barry, M.D., F.R.SS. Lond. and Edin.

The author observes, that, in the mature blood-corpuscle, there is often seen a flat filament, already formed within the corpuscle. In Mammalia, including Man, this filament is frequently annular; sometimes the ring is divided at a certain part, and sometimes one extremity overlaps the other. This is still more the case in Birds, Amphibia, and Fishes, in which the filament is of such length as to con-

* Here I have seen it close to the house at Florence Court; and a friend living near Belfast has observed this bird creeping up the yard-wall attached to his dwelling-house. There is in reality nothing remarkable in such cases: they are mentioned, as some persons imagine that the creeper never leaves the depth of woods.



Thompson, William. 1842. "LVII.—The Birds of Ireland." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 8, 486–502.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03745484209442788>.

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other points of structure. Not having succeeded, however, in detecting vibratory cilia upon their surface, I rather incline to consider them as corresponding to the tentacular filaments which are found at the extreme edge of the cloak in all our British *Patellæ* as well as in *Lottia testudinalis*, though entirely wanting in this species, to which the term "*marginē integerrima**" may therefore very appropriately be applied.

In tracing this species through all its stages, I find that in its very young state the red markings of the shell are not in regular lines, but have a tessellated or chained appearance exactly similar to those of Mr. Forbes's *Lottia pulchella*; in fact, I cannot perceive any difference between my shells and specimens of *Lottia pulchella* kindly presented to me by Mr. Forbes.

That the specimens collected on this coast are really the young of the larger species I can have no doubt, having observed it in all stages of growth, and traced the transition of the chained markings of the centre until they become linear at the edges of the half-grown shells. In more advanced stages of growth, however, the apex becomes thickened and the early markings obliterated.

From what has been stated, then, I think I am warranted in coming to the conclusion, that this species is a *Lottia* of Gray (*Patelloidea*, Quoy); that *L. pulchella* of Forbes is the young state of the same; and, after an examination of the figures and description in the 'Zoologia Danica,' I must also add, that I consider it to be the true *Patella virginea* of Muller†.

Newcastle, Dec. 9, 1841.

L.—*The Birds of Ireland.* By WM. THOMPSON, Esq., Vice-Pres. Nat. Hist. Society of Belfast.

[Continued from p. 360.]

No. 9.—*Fringillidæ*; *Sturnidæ*; *Corvidæ*.

THE BULLFINCH, *Pyrrhula vulgaris*, Temm., is one of those birds which is distributed over the island, but is at the same time, in one sense, a local species. Mr. Selby observes that it is "common in all the wooded districts of these islands,"—but

* See Muller's description of *Patella virginea*.

† *Patella tessellata*, Mull., appears to me to be a variety of *Lottia testudinalis*, which sometimes approaches very near in appearance to *L. virginea*. The tessellated markings, the distinct longitudinal striæ, and the brown impression inside the shell, are all characters of the former species, and constitute the principal difference between them. The cloak of *L. testudinalis* is also (as I have stated above) fringed with filaments at the external margin, while that of *L. virginea* is entire.

this will not apply to Ireland. In many of the *artificially* wooded districts, it is either not to be found at all, or is only known as an occasional visitant; but where any extent of indigenous or natural wood remains, and there is sufficient growth of the more shrubby trees, the bullfinch may be looked for almost with certainty. In some picturesque and extensive glens in the county of Antrim and near Belfast, this bird was common so long as the hazel and holly of natural growth maintained their ground, but as these were swept away, the bullfinch deserted such localities as abodes, and "few and far between" are now even its temporary visits. In the neighbouring county of Down, this bird finds a home in sequestered situations where the hazel predominates, and in this shrubby tree commonly nestles. In "nature's wild domain," the bullfinch looks eminently beautiful, and can be admired without the alloy associated with its appearance in the garden or the orchard, where it proves so destructive. Its call-note and song have generally met with little admiration from the historians of the species, but being sweetly plaintive, are to me extremely pleasing.

Small seeds were the only food in the stomachs of a few bullfinches which came under my observation in winter.

Mr. Selby (in his 'Illustrations of British Ornithology' and the 'Naturalist') and Mr. Knapp, give very interesting accounts of the bullfinch from personal observation, and particularly with reference to the plants which it attacks.

PINE BULLFINCH, *Pyrrhula Eucleator*, Temm.—See *Annals*, vol. vii. p. 478.

CROSSBILL, *Loxia curvirostra*, Linn.—This bird has long been known as an occasional visitant to Ireland. In Harris's 'History of the County of Down' (1774), it is remarked of crossbills, that "many of them were seen at Waringstown in 1707." Smith, in his 'History of Cork' (1749), observes, that "these birds have been seen in this county, but are rare." Rutton, in his 'Natural History of Dublin' (1772), says of the crossbill—"it has been seen at Ireland's Eye, and we have had several flights of them to the counties of Wicklow and Dublin, particularly in 1714." Mr. R. Ball informs me, that during his residence at Youghal, this species was known to him as occurring but once in the south, upwards of thirty years ago, when it committed great devastation in the orchards: its appearance in the south of the county of Cork, about twenty-nine or thirty years ago, has been reported to me by others, who state that it was looked upon as an extraordinary rarity—probably the same flight of birds is alluded to by all. Mr. Ensor, in an article contributed to the 6th vol. of the 'Magazine of Natural

History' (p. 81), and dated Ardress, county Armagh, remarks—"there was a flight of these birds in my plantations for weeks in 1813 or 1814*." In 1821, when crossbills were so abundant in Scotland, they visited Ireland also, and some were killed about Belfast—here a venerable friend has from his early years known them as occasional winter visitants, and has captured them when feeding, by means of fishing-rods smeared with bird-lime.

Since my own attention has been given to the subject, the cross-bill is recorded either in my notes or otherwise as occurring at the following times and places :—"in the county of Wicklow, about December 1828" (Dr. J. D. Marshall); and on the 26th of this month, when an example was obtained near Belfast; it was on the top of a larch-fir, apparently feeding on the cones when fired at, and being only wounded, clung so tenaciously to the branch that it was with difficulty got down; in the winter of this same year the species was shot in the county of Tyrone or Armagh—near Belfast in the winter of 1829–30; in the month of January in this latter year, specimens were procured in the county of Wicklow;—Dr. Burkitt, of Waterford, writes to me that "crossbills visited us in 1831, and were said to be very destructive to orchards near the city;"—near Belfast in July 1833, when several in red plumage were obtained;—December 22, 1835, one was shot at Crumlin, county of Antrim, and about the same day another was killed when feeding in company with a few others in larch-firs near Lurgan, county of Armagh;—about the 1st of February 1836, two, shot near Tanderagee in the last-named county, came under my inspection; the point of the lower mandible extended beyond the profile of the upper in one of them; their stomachs were filled with larch-seed: a specimen was shot near Belfast in the same month. When visiting Tollymore Park, county of Down, this year (1836), in the month of August, I was informed by the intelligent gamekeeper that a pair of crossbills had bred there in the summer just then passed; he saw them with their three young ones: although he had before observed this species here in the winter, he had not done so in summer until that time;—July 1837, I saw two examples in Dublin which were shot in the neighbourhood of the Dargle, county of Wicklow, at the end of June, when many more were in company with them: they attracted attention by their noise, which was described to resemble that produced by the breaking of sticks, and the observer on looking up saw the birds hanging to the upper branches of fir-trees engaged in opening the cones for the seed.—In the winter of 1837–38, the following note of specimens which were sent to Dublin to be preserved was obligingly made for me by T. W. Warren, Esq., and H. H. Dombrain, Esq.: "Oct. 20. Numbers seen and some killed in the neighbourhood of Booterstown,

* *Loxia coccothraustes* is the scientific name applied to the bird referred to, but from the observation that it is significantly called "cross-beak," it seems to me warrantable to conclude that *Loxia curvirostra* is meant.

county Dublin.—Feb. 3, 1838. Three shot in the county of Carlow.—Feb. 5. Seven from county of Kildare, and 26th of same month a similar number were sent from the county of Carlow to Dublin;—about the metropolis itself, specimens were occasionally shot from October to March.” At the end of December 1837, I received from Portglenone, county of Antrim, two specimens, which with a couple more were shot out of a flock of about twelve that made known their presence by the noise produced in opening the cones of the “Scotch-fir” (*Pinus sylvestris*), in a grove of which trees they were feeding. On the 9th of January, and again on the 20th of February, two of these birds were killed in a fir-grove near Hillsborough Park, county of Down; on the former occasion four were seen, on the latter, the two only.—At Finnebrogue, near Downpatrick, one was obtained last winter; and the Rev. T. Knox, writing from Toomavara, in the county of Tipperary, remarked, that he had heard of flocks being seen in the west of Ireland at the same period. When at Tollymore Park in June 1838, the gamekeeper before alluded to informed me that in the preceding winter crossbills were abundant there, as many as fifty being sometimes seen in a flock. He pointed out a larch-fir upon which he and a gentleman visiting the park saw fourteen or fifteen engaged in extracting the seed, some of the birds being at the time but a few yards above the spectators’ heads, and sending the cones to the ground in numbers;—like others who have witnessed it, he remarks that they are generally very tame when feeding. He has seen them picking at the cones of the various species of firs and pines in the park, and particularizes the spruce-fir as one on which they were so employed:—since 1836 the crossbill has not been known to breed there*.

In the spring of 1838, as communicated to me by the Rev. B. J. Clarke, seven of these birds were shot on the Spire Hill, near Portarlington, Queen’s-county;—about Mountmellick, in that county, they were abundant some years ago, and proved very destructive to the apples. Dr. Farran, of Feltrim, near Dublin, has assured me that crossbills bred at Delgany and the Vale of Ovoca, in the county of Wicklow, in 1838; and in the same year they are said to have bred in the county of Meath, but unfortunately no particulars are available. A crossbill shot near the town of Antrim on the 20th of January 1839 came under my observation. In one instance only have any fragments of stone occurred to me in the stomach of this species. A bird-preserver in Wexford, in a letter dated November 1841,

* My informant states, that about twenty years ago (now 1838) crossbills came “in thousands” to the plantations at Dumfries House, in Ayrshire, the seat of the Marquis of Bute, “and did not leave a cone upon the firs.” The year 1821 is probably alluded to, as these birds are reported to have been then particularly numerous in other parts of Scotland and some parts of England. Mr. Macgillivray (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 425) gives a most lively and graphic account of a flock of some hundreds he met with in the east of Scotland feeding upon the fruit or seed of the mountain-ash (*Pyrus aucuparia*).

kindly communicated that "in the last shooting-season" several crossbills were killed in that neighbourhood.

Mr. Robert Davis, jun., of Clonmel, a very zealous and observant naturalist, replied in February 1837 to a query respecting the occurrence of crossbills in that part of the country, that he had not heard of them since their appearance in great numbers about the year 1802. I was afterwards informed by this gentleman, that "about the 18th of January 1838, a flock of these birds appeared at Ballibrado, near Cahir, and five of them were killed; they were very tame, and were observed to feed like a parrot, holding the fir-cones in one claw." He remarks again, that "on the 16th of August the same year, four crossbills were sent me from Ballibrado, where they still continue in considerable numbers. I cannot hear of their occurrence anywhere else, except in the neighbouring demesne of Kilcommon"—"two more [he continues, writing on the 12th of September] were sent me since, but like the others were much damaged, as, in consequence of their tameness, the person who shot them fired from too short a distance. They appeared to be as follows—adult males; males passing from the red state into the adult; young males just getting a few red feathers; and I suppose females, in the brownish-gray state: from what I hear they would seem to be moulting fast." On the 11th of January 1839, Mr. Davis again observes—"Crossbills are still to be seen at Ballibrado, where they have been all winter, and when last noticed, about a week since, appeared to have paired. I am rather of opinion that they bred here last year, but it does not amount to more than a surmise grounded upon their appearance so early, accompanied by such a number of young, and principally from the destruction of the cones of the spruce-fir having been noticed throughout the year." On May 18, 1839, my correspondent, in transmitting the skins of two specimens for my examination, continues—"from ten to twenty crossbills have remained all the winter, and up to the present time at Ballibrado, but, though some search was made, no nest was discovered. About five or six weeks since, two or more clutches of young birds were seen accompanying the old ones who were observed feeding them. The young bird I send was shot in the act of taking food from an old cock; it was sent me five weeks ago [early in April]; the other bird sent varies a little in colour from most specimens, and was shot about three weeks before that time. The young one had every appearance of a nestling, feet soft and weak, bill not strong, and a great number of the large feathers not fully produced*." On July 18th the same year, Mr. Davis observed that the "crossbills had not been noticed in their usual haunts, nor, indeed, anywhere for two months back."

* This bird is of adult size: the head, back, and rump, or whole upper plumage, is yellowish green, with a dark olive centre to each feather, this dark marking occupying more of the feathers anteriorly than towards the tail; the entire under plumage is yellowish-white, with an olive-brown streak down the centre of each feather; tail and larger wing-feathers dark brown, with the outer margin yellowish-green.—W. T.

Notes on the plumage, and sometimes full descriptions from the recent specimens which came under my examination, were drawn up ; but it is sufficient to observe here, that they were in every state from that put on at the first moult to maturity ; by far the greater number were in the bright red plumage : one only (that already noticed) displayed the markings of the young previous to the first moult.

I have not had the gratification of seeing crossbills in a wild state in Ireland ; but early in September 1837, my attention was directed to them by Mr. Selby and Sir Wm. Jardine as they were on wing from one plantation to another in the demesne at Twizell and at Chillingham Park, Northumberland.

Authors generally report the crossbill as arriving in Great Britain in June, but it has mostly been a late autumnal or a winter visitant to Ireland, leaving the country again early in the spring—like other birds of passage. Mr. Yarrell's remark with reference to England, that crossbills "were more abundant during the greater part of 1836, 1837, and 1838 than was known for some years before"—might it not be said, than was ever known before in three successive years?—applies to Ireland also, as shown in the preceding notes. In endeavouring to account for the cause of the more frequent visits of crossbills to the British Islands of late years, we should perhaps know in the first place if any change has occurred in their metropolis or chief quarter whence they come ; but, ignorant of this, we can only look at home and see if there be any attraction for them now that the country was deficient in before. Sir Wm. Jardine observes : "in the south of Scotland at least, where an immense extent of young pine timber has been planted within thirty years, the crossbill has undoubtedly become more common, and we know now remains through the year*." In Ireland likewise, plantations including the *Coniferæ*, but above all, the larch, have greatly increased within the same period, and may be the means of prolonging the stay of crossbills, or inducing them to remain occasionally throughout the year. And as somewhat corroboratory of this, it may be noticed, that plentiful as these birds were of late years, we have heard but little of damage done to orchards by them as in earlier times, the seed of the *Coniferæ* having generally afforded abundance of food. Still, I cannot but think that the primary cause of their more frequent migrations hither must be looked for in their aboriginal abode. A friend of excellent judgement to whom this idea was mentioned, is rather inclined to consider crossbills as a wandering tribe having no proper home, but who pitch their tent and take up their

abode at a place just so long as it suits them, without contemplating a return to any particular region.

Bewick and Yarrell, in their respective histories of British birds, treat us with delightful and copious accounts of the appearance of crossbills in England in the olden time, when, like a more potent enemy—"they were attacked with slings and crossbows," valiantly "never thinking of flying off till some of them, stricken by stones or apples, or leaden bullets, fell dead from the trees." The grand point of view in which birds were considered at that period (1593) is not omitted to be mentioned, as in one account it is stated that "their flesh was sufficiently savoury and delicate," and in the other, that "they were very good meate*."

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL, *Loxia leucoptera*, Gmel.—The only record of the occurrence of this bird in Ireland is the following, communicated by Mr. Templeton to his friend Mr. Dawson Turner, and published in the 'Linnæan Transactions'—"Shot at Greenville, near Belfast, January 11, 1802." This is the first notice of the species as a visitant to the British Islands. Mr. Templeton's drawing represents the female bird as described by C. L. Bonaparte.†

* *Loxia pytiopsittacus* is included in Templeton's 'Catalogue of Irish Birds,' from the supposed occurrence of the species in one instance. A coloured drawing of the specimen, of natural size, was fortunately made by that accomplished naturalist. It represents the *L. curvirostra* with the point of the lower mandible not reaching beyond the profile of the upper. At the foot of the drawing, *L. pytiopsittacus* is followed by a note of doubt, which does not appear in the printed catalogue.

† It is remarked by Rennie of some species of our small birds, that its nests about a cotton-mill in Ayrshire were found to be lined with cotton. At Whitehouse, near Belfast, (as I have been informed by James Grimshaw, jun., Esq.,) the chaffinches and common sparrows which built around two cotton-mills always made use of cotton in the construction of their nests. The mills were a quarter of a mile distant from each other, and all the nests of these birds erected in the intervening plantations, as well as in the vicinity of the mills, exhibited the foreign product, not only as lining, but more or less of it on the outside. On remarking to my informant that its conspicuous colour would betray the presence of the nest, and not accord with the theory that birds assimilate the outward appearance to surrounding objects, he stated, that on the contrary, the use of the cotton in that locality might rather be considered as rendering the nest more difficult of detection, the road-side hedges and neighbouring trees being always dotted with tufts of it, owing to the constant passing of the workers from the one mill to the other.

The same gentleman mentions, that when lately (Nov. 1841) in Manchester, a lady of his acquaintance there told him of her having last summer lost a piece of very valuable old lace which was left out to dry, and that on the spouts being cleared of sparrows' nests, the lace was discovered uninjured as partly lining one of them.

A note upon a canary-finch may here be given.—Sept. 9, 1833. A bird

STARLING, *Sturnus vulgaris*, Linn.—Montagu remarks of this species, that “many stay with us the whole year; but the vast flocks that are seen in *severe winters* probably migrate to this country [England] in search of food, and return northward in the spring. We have observed continued flights of these birds going westward into Devonshire and Cornwall in hard weather, and their return eastward as soon as the frost breaks up.” Mr. Knapp observes that—“Towards autumn the broods unite and form large flocks; but those prodigious flights with which in *some particular years* we are visited, especially in parts of those districts formerly called the ‘fen-counties,’ are *probably* an accumulation from other countries.” The Bishop of Norwich, in his ‘Familiar History of Birds,’ gives as his opinion, “that they are partially migratory, quitting one part of the kingdom for another;” and Sir Wm. Jardine states, that “in many parts of Scotland where they do not breed, they are migratory, appearing in autumn and spring.”

In that portion of the north of Ireland with which I am best acquainted, there is nothing irregular in the migration of starlings; they await not any severity of weather; and although they may occasionally change their quarters when within the island, yet do they of all our birds present the clearest evidence of migration, as annually they are observed for several weeks to pour into Ireland from the north, and wing their way southward*. To myself they have frequently so appeared, but I prefer giving the more full and satisfactory testimony of trustworthy and intelligent “shore-shooters,” three of whom being consulted, agree upon the subject. They state that the general autumnal migration of stares or stars† (as they are sometimes called) commences towards the middle or end of September, according to the season, and continues daily for about six or eight weeks‡. When the weather is moderate,

of this species which escaped from its cage at Cromac, the residence of Mr. Garrett, near Belfast, yesterday morning flew away and was not seen again until this morning, when it appeared at an early hour, and made known its presence by tapping at one of the windows with its bill before any of the inmates were up. On a cage being presented, the bird eagerly flew into it.

* It is now many years since Mr. Templeton, in his valuable ‘Naturalists’ Report’ (published in the Belfast Magazine), called attention to the regular migration of starlings into Ireland.

† Similar abbreviations are in common use among the dealers in birds (whether living or dead) in the north of Ireland; thus, in gray-linnet, chaffinch, green-linnet, &c. an economy of words is practised, and the first syllable alone is sufficient to indicate the species. In the same manner I have in Perthshire heard the *hooded* or gray-crow called simply *huddy*.

‡ So early as the middle of July, a flock was once observed flying south-

flocks consisting of from half-a-dozen to two hundred individuals are seen every morning coming from the north-east, passing over a point of land where a river enters Belfast Bay about a mile from the town, and continuing in the same course until lost to view. They are generally seen only for one and a half or two hours—from eight to ten o'clock A.M.—none appearing before the former hour, and rarely any after the latter, except when the wind is high, and then the flight is protracted until noon; when very stormy they do not come at all. At the season of their earliest appearance, there is daylight between four and five o'clock in the morning, and their not being seen before eight o'clock leads to the belief that they have left some distant place at an early hour. On the same morning the flocks all take the same line of flight, but the direction varies when the wind is sufficiently strong to affect their move-

erly in the autumnal course. When they commence migration very late in the season, as was the case in 1838, they make up for lost time by an increase of numbers. Thus they were first seen in that year on the 23rd of October, when they made their appearance at half-past eight o'clock A.M., and continued passing in flocks of from twenty to one and two hundred individuals, until two o'clock. The following day, I had the gratification of witnessing a flock consisting of about two hundred, going through their beautiful evolutions, preparatory to roosting on a bank of *Arundo phragmitis* at the side of the river Lagan, near Stranmillis. From a great height in the air, they several times swept down almost vertically to the reeds, and, though the flock in each instance seemed to lose some of its numbers there, the great body sprang up again to a considerable altitude, and renewed its elegant manœuvres. Every time that they descended to the reeds, it was from the highest range of flight the stoop was made: when flying over at half the elevation, and they wheeled downwards, they never drooped so low as the reeds. At twenty-five minutes past four o'clock they had all alighted. Concealed by a high hedge, I had the opportunity of watching them from a short distance, and perceived by their flitting from one part of the reeds to another, that they were very restless for some time. In thus changing their quarters they rarely rose above the tops of the *Arundo*, and when at rest were perched so low down as to be invisible. After alighting they kept up a very noisy concert, in which no sound like their whistle was heard, but rather a medley different from and more guttural than their ordinary chatter.

I have seen small flocks of starlings on a few other occasions during the time of migration roosting here, and have (different from what has just been mentioned) remarked single birds perch so high up on the reeds as to sway them horizontally. These plants were always preferred here, for roosting in, to trees, though these, of various size, up to the most lofty, are quite contiguous. By Mr. Wm. Todhunter, late of Portumna, I have been informed, that after a hurricane in September 1836? nearly nineteen hundred of these birds were washed ashore on the banks of the Shannon. The reeds in which they placed their trust were snapped asunder in consequence of their weight. Starlings are stated by Mr. Todhunter to be vastly more numerous during winter than summer in that quarter. This gentleman remarked that they frequented the same woods for roosting-places for two or three winters only: in the course of eight years, during which he lived at Portumna, they thus changed three times.

ments. Those which come within the hours already mentioned very rarely alight; but when a flock arrives during the day it occasionally does so, apparently as if it had flown from a greater distance than the earlier comers, and required rest and food before proceeding further. The number of birds that come in this course is not very great. The average of five or six flocks seen in a morning may consist of about 250 individuals; the greatest number ever seen in one day may have amounted to 1500; and those altogether seen throughout the migratory period may be estimated at about 15,000. Of my three informants, two live in the district over which the starlings fly, and consequently have had daily opportunities of seeing them in their season (one indeed has done so for the last half-century), and the other was in the habit of going to the place every morning in the hope that the flocks would pass over within shot, which they often did. In only one instance did any of these persons see starlings return this way in spring, namely, on the 13th of March, when a flock appeared passing north-eastward, in the direction whence they come in autumn*:—on the 23rd of that month, a flock consisting of sixty was once observed by myself returning in this course.

These birds very rarely stop anywhere in the vicinity of Belfast on their southward migration; but a low lying tract of marshy meadows, when flooded by excessive rain, has occasionally tempted the latest comers to remain a few days, and till the end of December 1833, a flock of about 200 frequented a district at the base of the mountains three miles from the town. The only instance in which one of the shore-shooters before mentioned met with these birds about the bay in winter, was some years ago during heavy snow after Christmas, when they appeared in immense flocks. So numerous were they, that some of the little grassy patches rising above the ooze near the shore could not contain them, and a portion of the flock kept hovering above their more fortunate brethren who had found a resting-place. On such petty islets of green-sward or on heaps of "sleech-grass" (*Zostera marina*) only did

* The autumnal flights of these birds can be traced as coming from Scotland. Capt. Fayrer, R.N., in a letter dated Portpatrick, Oct. 23, 1831, and published in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, remarks, that "very large flocks of starlings have arrived within the last few days. They start before sunrise and steer to the southward." I have had circumstantial evidence of this fact myself, as some years ago, when shooting at the latter end of October about Ballantrae, in Ayrshire, flocks of these birds were numerous, where subsequently, from the 12th of August to the middle of September, a very few individuals only, which had their nestling-places in the neighbourhood, were to be met with.

he on this occasion, or ever in autumn, see them alight—the sand or bare beach was always avoided. In the middle of March, flocks of starlings have occurred to me in unusual localities, and were supposed to be moving northward on migration; and during the first week of April 1837, large flocks were seen in “unaccustomed places” in Down and Antrim, having doubtless been kept from crossing the channel by the prevalence of the north-east wind and very cold weather.

Although the multitudes seen about Belfast are on their way southward, the extensive marshy tracts of the most northern counties (Antrim, Londonderry and Donegal) display throughout the winter their hosts of migratory starlings. Mr. Knapp remarks that these birds sometimes associate, but not cordially, with fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*): the Rev. G. M. Black informs me that at Newtown-Crommelin, in the county of Antrim, where they are in immense flocks throughout the winter, they are always associated with these birds*, and as there are neither reeds nor trees near the place, he is of opinion that they must spend the night in company upon the ground. That the fieldfare in some districts remains during the night upon the ground is mentioned in a former paper of this series.

Mr. R. Ball remarks, that “starlings seem to have fixed on our celebrated round towers as favourite nestling-places,” and certainly they are admirably suited to such a purpose, there is so little danger of molestation. Ruins generally, old trees, rocks†, and occasionally chimneys, are resorted to for nestling. These birds, it may be remarked, are not spread over Ireland as they are over England in the breeding-season, but are confined to comparatively few and favourite localities. Within the memory of old persons they built annually in the steeple of St. Ann’s church, Belfast, and in other places within and about the town, but have long since ceased to do so ‡.

* In his ‘History of Cork,’ Smith quaintly observes—“They company with redwings and fieldfares, yet do not go off with them.”

† When at the peninsula of “the Horn” (co. Donegal), and at the largest of the South Islands of Arran, I was informed that they build in the lofty rocks which rise above the ocean—in the latter locality they nestle also in ruined buildings. In Dr. J. D. Marshall’s memoir on the Statistics and Natural History of the Island of Rathlin, published in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy in 1836, it is remarked of the starling,—“This is one of the most common birds in Rathlin. It is found over the greater part of the island, but principally about Church Bay, where the houses are more numerous, and where there are a few trees and shrubs. In July they were assembled in flocks of from one to two hundred, dispersing themselves over the fields and along the sea-shores. They frequented the more rocky parts of the pasture-fields. * * * * They build among the rocks.”

[‡ They still frequent the precincts of the Charterhouse in the centre of London.—Ed.]

Massareene deer-park*, and Shane's Castle Park, both well wooded and very extensive domains situated on the banks of Lough Neagh, and far remote from public haunt†, are now their nearest regular nestling-places. Ruined castles, both in marine and inland localities in the north of the island, where not very many years ago they nestled, have of late, without any apparent cause, been deserted; and the same has been reported to me with respect to districts in the south‡.

The starling has been well described by authors as one of the most sociable of birds. Every month in the year it may be observed in flocks, though in May and June but few individuals comparatively are seen congregated in these islands. At the end of May, I have in Holland remarked considerable flocks feeding in the pastures, and flying from tree to tree on the road-sides. At the end of June and very early in July large flocks are not unfrequent;—around Penrith in the north of England, about Birmingham, and in the very different scenery of the South Islands of Arran, at the entrance of Galway bay, I have observed them at this season.

It is most entertaining to witness starlings feeding, so very active and lively are all their movements; not one moment are they still, and well may it be so, for truly are they omnivorous§. In the 'Fa-

* May 29, 1836. I remarked nine starlings associating together here, and about the same time saw a single bird hastening with its bill filled with food to its mate or young. From the 6th of June to the second week of July, according to the season, young starlings have been observed by the Bishop of Norwich to be able to leave their birth-place in company with their parents.

† This observation, correct though it be, may seem strange to persons who, like myself, have at this season observed the starling about the parks of London, including the much-frequented St. James's Park.

‡ Mr. Waterton, in his 'Essays on Natural History,' treats in a most interesting manner of the starling, and satisfactorily accounts for the comparatively smaller number of these birds breeding in England than formerly:—the reasons there assigned partly apply to Ireland also.

§ The contents of the stomachs of starlings often show that a great deal of life of various kinds is sacrificed to their appetite, and in quantity as well as variety of food they exceed all birds that have come under my observation. From my notes a few examples may be selected. Dec. 17, 1834.—A starling was found to contain five perfect and full-grown specimens of *Bulimus lubricus* and a *Helix radiatula*; some minute Coleoptera, especially dung-beetles, and numerous insect larvæ; a blade of grass, a few grains of oats, and fragments of gravel.

March 12, 1835.—On opening a starling, thirteen specimens of *Bulimus lubricus* and two *Helices*, together with perfect Coleoptera of different species, and numerous larvæ, were observed.

Dec. 29, 1835.—The stomach of a starling was filled with insects of various kinds, or indeed families, but chiefly Coleoptera, some grain, and the following shells:—twelve perfect adult specimens of *Helix radiatula*, a *Hel. cellaria*, and a *H. hispida*, both whole and of ordinary size; twelve examples of *Bulimus lubricus* nearly all adult and perfect.

Nov. 25, 1836.—Nine starlings examined contained only the remains of

miliar History of Birds' and the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' their habits are admirably treated of: in the former work the singular flight of a large body before retiring to roost is described in the most graphic manner. Mr. Knapp correctly observes, that "they seem continually to be running into clusters," which, in the winter season, "brings on them death," as they become thereby a temptation to the shooter; but an instance to the contrary may here be mentioned. A small flock observed by a shooter of my acquaintance alighted in a field where his cow was grazing, and clustering on the ground about her head, kept pace with her movements, watching it was believed for some favourite food which she aroused; hence the birds, though fairly within shot, could not be fired at, lest the cow should be brought down by the same discharge!

The starling is to be met with very generally over the continent. Holland may, from the nature of the country, be called its metropolis. Southward, I have in August seen it in the Pontine marshes between Rome and Naples; and eastward, observed numbers in the middle of the month of May about the ruined walls of Constantinople, near the celebrated Seven Towers. On comparing an example killed in Ireland with one from India labelled "Suharunpoor; January," they proved identical in species.

THE ROSE-COLOURED PASTOR, *Pastor roseus*, Temm., has at rare and uncertain intervals during the summer and autumn visited all quarters of the island, including the range of the most western counties. In the course of three successive years this bird has been met with. It has generally appeared singly and during the cherry season, and has in several instances been taken alive.

In a letter from Dr. R. Graves of Dublin to a mutual friend in Belfast, dated Nov. 1830, it is mentioned, that "among my late acquisitions has been the *Turdus roseus*, shot in a cherry orchard in the county of Clare [in the summer of 1830?] by one of my pupils, whose father says he shot a bird of the same species thirty years ago in the same orchard." Dr. Graves was at that period forming a collection of native birds, and subsequently I saw the pastor alluded to, together with other rare species which he possessed. In the first volume of the 'Magazine of Natural History,' p. 493, a letter appeared from Mr. C. Adams Drew, dated Ennis, June 25, 1828, in which the writer states that—"It is now above twenty years since, on visiting my friend Mr. Lane at Roxton, I found him in his garden endeavouring to shoot a strange bird which had for several days previous been making sad havoc among his cherries. After two or three unsuccessful attempts on the part of Mr. Lane, the bird at last fell

insect and vegetable food. They were shot together near Lough Neagh. *Clausilia rugosa* and *Limneus fossarius*, with earth-worms, and seeds of many kinds, have been found in others.

[A starling which I once had was exceedingly fond of calcavella. After having sipped a teaspoonful with avidity, he would dance in an ecstasy of delight, repeating his own name, 'Jacob.'—R. T.]

to my barrel. * * * Its cry resembled that of the water-ouzel. It was quite a *rara avis* in this country, no one knowing anything of it." A description of the bird follows, proving it to have been the *Pastor roseus*. The specimen was given to a gentleman mentioned, with the intention that it should be preserved for the "Dublin Museum." It is possible that the same example of the bird may be alluded to, in both of the foregoing letters. In the 'Zoological Journal,' No. 4, p. 489, Mr. Vigors states that a rose-coloured pastor, shot near Wexford in 1820, is in his collection. One obtained in the year 1830 has already been noticed. I have been informed by Dr. Harvey of Cork, that a bird of this species "was captured at Carrigataha, adjoining Ballibrado, in the county of Tipperary, in June 1833, by Mr. Fennell, who baited a fish-hook with a cherry, which the bird swallowed, and was thus taken." A pastor which I saw in the possession of Mr. W. S. Wall, bird-preserver, Dublin, was noticed in a letter from the Rev. Thomas Knox as "shot in a garden near Dublin on the 20th of July 1833. On dissection, the bird proved to be a female; the eggs were small and not distinct; gizzard muscular; the skins of cherries visible, by which fruit the inside of the gizzard and mouth were stained bright pink." When in Dublin on the 26th of June 1834, I saw in the bird-preserver's just mentioned an example previous to its being skinned of an adult male *P. roseus*. It was taken in a cherry-net in the garden of Richard Long, Esq., Longfield, Cashel, on the 7th of that month, and had been kept alive for a fortnight. In July 1836, Lieut. Davis, R.N., of Donaghadee, sent to the Belfast Museum an individual of this species, which was captured early in the month, in a garden near that town. It had been kept alive for a few days: on dissection it proved to be a male, and was in adult plumage. About the middle of the same month a second example, which came under my examination, was shot at Hillsborough, in the same county. On the 12th of August that year, a third was made known to me as obtained in Ireland: this was shot near Kenmare, in the county of Kerry*; and sent by Dr. Taylor, the distinguished botanist, resident in that neighbourhood, to Mr. R. Ball of Dublin. In the summer of the following year (1837), as I learn from Mr. T. W. Warren of Dublin, a pastor, which he saw in a fresh state, was shot from among a flock of starlings in one of the islands of Arran at the entrance of Galway Bay; it was preserved for Mr. Thompson of Clonskea Castle, the proprietor of the islands. In June 1838, as reported to me, one of these birds was sent from Ashbourne, about ten miles from Dublin, to Mr. W. S. Wall, to be preserved. The stomach was found on dissection to be filled with cherries. Dr. Farran of Feltrim, in the vicinity of the metropolis, likewise informed me, that on the 7th or 8th of July 1838, a *P. roseus* was shot when feeding on the same fruit at Newbarron, near Fieldstown, a few miles from Dub-

* In a letter from Mr. William Andrews of Dublin, dated Nov. 14, 1841, it was mentioned, that "three specimens of the rose-coloured pastor have been shot near Tralee, one in the garden of Colonel Crosbie."

lin*. On the 13th of September 1838, I saw two specimens which had been killed in different parts of the north of Ireland. One was shot about the 1st of that month in the plantations about Bangor Castle, county of Down, where another was seen in company with it; they had been observed for some time before: on dissection, no food was found; it proved to be a male, as the plumage denoted. The other example was shot by Alex. Tyler, Esq., at the Umbra, Magilligan, county of Londonderry, about the 10th of September. Having the opportunity of examining this bird in a fresh state, I drew up the following description.

	inch.	line.
Entire length	8	9
Bill from rictus to point	1	2½
Upper mandible, measured along the ridge from forehead } to point	0	9
Wing from carpus to end of longest quill	5	0
Tail extending beyond closed wings	1	0
Tarsus	1	3
Middle toe and nail.....	1	3
Hind toe and tail, measured in a straight line	0	9

Tibia feathered to the tarsal joint. Colours, those of the adult male as described by authors (as are likewise those of the one above noticed from Bangor Castle), and as such contradistinguished from the plumage assumed until the second year as described by Temminck (Man., part 3, p. 76). On dissection it proved a male; it was in excellent condition. Its stomach, with the exception of a large coleopterous insect, was entirely filled with the seeds of gooseberries.

In April 1838, I learned from Mr. H. H. Dombrain of Dublin, that he had received a rose-coloured pastor which had been captured some years before at Woodhill, Ardara, in the county of Donegal, the seat of Major Nesbitt: it was taken alive in the green-house in an exhausted state, and died a few hours afterwards.

On a comparison of Irish examples with specimens obtained in India (in the same locality with the starling already mentioned), the species proved to be the same.

THE CHOUGH †, *Fregilus Graculus*, Selby, is noticed in Harris's 'Down' (1744), and Smith's 'Cork' (1749), as one of the birds of those counties, and in the latter is said to be "very common, frequenting rocks, old castles and ruins upon the sea-coast." The species is more generally diffused around the rock-bound shores of Ireland than British authors would lead us to believe it is on those of Scotland and England, and

* As it was not until some months afterwards that the notes were communicated, the same individual may possibly be alluded to by both my informants; in which case there would be an error about the month.

† Red-legged jackdaw of the north of Ireland; cliff-daw of Kerry. Smith states in his 'History of Cork,' that the Irish name for this bird implies a Spanish jackdaw.

may be met with in such localities in the north, east, south, and west of the island.

The basaltic precipices of the north-east are admirably adapted to choughs, and about the promontory of Fairhead these birds especially abound. On one occasion, when visiting this place and the headlands in the immediate vicinity of the Giant's Causeway on the same day (8th of June) during the breeding-season of these birds, I remarked choughs only about the former locality, and jackdaws only about the latter, both species being numerous in their respective quarters: the choughs too were wonderfully tame in this instance, permitting our approach within about twenty-five paces*. About Horn Head, in the north-west of the county of Donegal, I saw many choughs and jackdaws in the month of June, and was told by the gamekeeper of the district that they never bred in company nor associated together there; the nest of the chough was stated by him to be placed so far within the clefts of rocks as to be difficult of access. The nearest place to Belfast tenanted at present, or within the last few years, by a pair or two of these birds, is a range of marine cliffs called the Gobbins, just outside the northern entrance to the bay. Here on the 28th of May a few years ago, a nest of young birds which had made known their proximity to the summit of the rocks by their calls for food, was doomed to perish by a visitor to the place wantonly shooting both their parents. The only instance in which I have had personal knowledge of choughs wandering far from their usual haunts, and to a place in no respect suited to them, was on the

* In Dr. J. D. Marshall's memoir, before alluded to, on the statistics and natural history of the basaltic island of Rathlin (lying off the north of the county of Antrim), it is remarked of the chough, "This is called by the islanders, the *jackdaw*, and is by far the most numerous species on the island. In the month of July, I found them everywhere associated in large flocks, at one place frequenting inland situations, and at another congregated on the sea-shore. They had just collected together their different families, now fully fledged, and were picking up their food (which consisted chiefly of insects), either on the shore, in the crevices of rocks, or in the pasture fields. Mr. Selby mentions that the chough will not alight on the turf, if it can possibly avoid it, always preferring gravel, stones, or walls. In Rathlin, its choice of situation seems to be but sparingly exhibited, as I found it frequenting the corn and pasture fields, in even greater numbers than along the shores. * * * They breed on the lofty cliffs overhanging the sea; the eggs are of a whitish colour, speckled at the larger end with brown. The chough is of a restless, active disposition, hopping or flying about from place to place; it is also very shy, and can with difficulty be approached. Temminck says, that the legs of this bird, before the first moult, are of a dark colour, while Montagu affirms, that they are orange-coloured from the first. The young which I examined were about six weeks old, and in them the bills were of a brownish orange; not of that brilliant colour which marks the adult bird, but certainly exhibiting enough of the orange to lead us to conjecture that they would become completely of that colour after the moult. The legs could not be called 'orange-coloured,' for although there was a tinge of that colour, yet the brown predominated. I should, therefore, agree with Temminck, in stating the legs and feet to be 'dark-coloured' in the young birds."

5th of March 1836, when a pair appeared, and one of them (in beautiful adult plumage) was shot at Dunbar's Dock, Belfast. That day and the preceding were very stormy, and the wind southerly : their haunts to the southward are all far distant. The stomach of the specimen was filled with insect larvæ.

When on a tour with Mr. R. Ball in the summer of 1834 to the west and south of Ireland, choughs occurred to us at Achil Head, and the largest of the South Islands of Arran, &c., in the west ; and in the south, were heard about the Lower Lake of Killarney ; and were seen at Cable Island, near Youghal. Colonel Sabine has noticed that they breed in the rocks at Ballybunian, on the coast of Kerry ; and the late Mr. T. F. Neligan of Tralee, in mentioning to me some years ago that they were very common about the marine cliffs of that county, stated, that numbers build in the rocks of inland mountains, four and five miles distant from the sea. The choice of such places is not rare in Ireland. Some of the latest writers on British ornithology appear to think that the chough never leaves the vicinity of the sea, and in one work it is inadvertently stated that the species is "never observed inland," although Crow Castle is noticed by Montagu as one of its haunts. This is situated in the beautiful vale of Llangollen in North Wales, where the Lombardy poplar spiring above the other rich foliage around the picturesque village of the same name, imparts, in addition to other accompaniments, quite an Italian character to the scene. But to particularise further in Ireland : the Rev. G. M. Black observed a pair of these birds throughout the breeding-season about a ruin between Newtown-Crommelin and Cushendall in the county of Antrim, and three miles distant from the sea : at Salagh Braes, a semicircular range of basaltic rocks in the same county, and nearly twice that distance from the coast, the chough nestles. The gamekeeper at Tollymore Park, county of Down, informed me in 1836, that he had shot these birds in the mountains of Mourne, which are regularly frequented by them, and where they build in the inland rocks. Here for some years previously, he annually discovered two or three of their nests, whence he has taken the young with the intention of rearing them, but in this he was unsuccessful. This intelligent gamekeeper assured me, that once in the mountains here, he came upon seven choughs attendant on a poor sheep, which was in a particularly weak state when lambing. About half of the young animal was protruded, and had been nearly consumed by three of these birds, which were busily engaged preying upon it*. He had not a gun with him at the time, but was so wroth at witnessing this cruelty of the chough, that in the latter part of the day, when armed, he sacrificed three of these birds ; all which came within his range. He believes that choughs would even destroy a weakly animal. They are seen by him commonly frequenting the entrance to foxes' earths, for the purpose, he conceives,

* Mr. Hogg contributes to Macgillivray's '*British Birds*' (vol. i.) a similar account of the carrion-crow, with horrible details of what to human sympathy would seem its cold-blooded cruelty to sheep, when in the act of parturition.

of feeding on "sheep-shanks" and other similar rejectamenta. As the chough is not considered a carnivorous bird, I was most particular in questioning my informant as to the species, and of his accuracy there cannot be a doubt. Montagu mentions that his tame bird was fed partly on raw and boiled flesh-meat.

Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, informs me respecting the chough, that it has been shot within a mile of that town, and that he has seen the species at Helvick Head in the county of Waterford, and great numbers at Loop Head on the coast of Clare;—about the marine cliffs generally of the latter county, Mr. W. H. Harvey states that it is common. Mr. Davis writes—"although Mr. Selby says 'it has been remarked that the chough will not alight on the turf if it can possibly avoid it, always preferring gravel, stones or walls,' I have seen hundreds freely alight and feed on it, and have observed them feeding like rooks in a ploughed field." I have myself observed these birds on the short pasture of the marine cliffs, but consider that they have the predilection noticed by Mr. Selby, whose remark however may refer merely to Montagu's tame bird. Mr. Davis further states, that "great numbers of choughs breed in the precipices over the lakes in the Cummeragh mountains, county of Waterford, about seven Irish miles from the sea, where they are very rarely molested, on account of nestling in almost inaccessible spots. Here the young were ready to fly on the 6th and 7th of August 1836: on the 28th of April 1841, I got four of their eggs from this locality."

I have seen examples of the chough which were killed about Portpatrick in Wigtonshire, and on the Ayrshire coast; and have heard the call of the species in the evening about the ruined castle at Ballantrae in the latter county. In July 1826, when in the valley of glaciers on the south side of Mont Blanc, I was attracted by the well-known but somewhat distant call of the chough, and on looking up saw an immense flock bending their way towards the pinnacles or *aiguilles* of that "monarch of mountains*."

THE RAVEN, *Corvus Corax*, Linn., is distributed over Ireland, and is more especially to be seen within a day's foray of the rocks in which it can roost or nestle. As sites for the raven's building, rocks are preferred to trees in this island, and wherever there is a range of cliffs suited to the purpose this bird is sure to be found, unless the eagle or buz-

* The call of the closely allied *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*, Temm., likewise an inhabitant of the Alps, is unknown to me, but in the present instance my attention was arrested by the similarity of the note to that of our native bird.

This to my ear is very lively and pleasing, and cannot be mistaken for that of the jackdaw. The flight of the chough too is peculiar, though, as in others of the *Corvidæ*, the quills are much expanded, and give a deeply fringed appearance to the wing as the bird flies overhead. A friend remarks upon the flight as "singularly waving; they flap their wings, then sail forty or fifty yards, and so on gradually until they alight."

zard monopolize the locality. From time immemorial ravens have been considered to inhabit the same rock. In the lower districts of England certain trees have for such a length of time been resorted to by this species for nestling, as to have acquired the name of Raven-trees. In like manner, a wild and unfrequented locality in the Belfast mountains bears the name of the Crow Glen, in consequence of a pair of ravens having for a series of years nestled there in a cliff. Persecution has long since driven them from the spot, which however still retains the name. Their place was for some years supplied by a pair of kestrels (*Falco Tinnunculus*); but as their nest, though not easy of approach, could, with some difficulty be reached, it was always robbed of its young tenants, and this species too has ceased to nidify there*.

I have with much interest observed in the month of October, about the fine basaltic cliffs of the Cave-hill, near Belfast, and long after the breeding-season was past, that as evening set in, a few ravens would appear together hoarsely croaking about the rocks, whilst at the same time hosts of jackdaws were garrulously chattering, and several kestrels added their shrill voices as they careered gracefully about in company. After some little time they all retired to the rocks for the night.

On one occasion I had interesting evidence of the power of sight in the raven. A nest of young rats not more than three or four days old had been dug up in a stubble field, and after being killed were left there. Very soon afterwards two or three ravens passing over the place at a great height, on coming above the spot dropped almost directly down upon them. The young rats had not been ten minutes dead at the time, and consequently could hardly have emitted any effluvia. Besides, they were so small, that even had they given out any to the air, it seems hardly possible that it could have ascended to the great elevation at which the birds had been. Sight alone, I conceive, must in this instance have been exerted.

Mr. R. Davis, jun., of Clonmel, remarks, that ravens, if taken young, can be reared so as not to injure other birds, as he "for a

* Ravens are generally so very wary and mistrustful of man, that the following note (communicated by my brother) may be worth insertion. "In the middle of March 1828, a pair of ravens had a nest in Grogan's Glen, in the Black Mountain (near Belfast). It was near the top of the highest rock; was formed of sticks and lined with wool; it contained seven eggs of a dark green colour, blotched over with black. The birds were very tame, the first day I saw them approaching within three or four yards, and hopping about near me so long as I remained, when their glossy plumage looked very beautiful." Their tameness arose simply from their being unmolested in the locality, perhaps in consequence of a belief among the country people, that it is "unlucky" to kill a raven; for this very pair of birds was known to carry off eggs, young ducks, &c., from the nearest farm-yards. But, as is usual in such cases, one of the poor ravens, by thus putting its trust in man, was shot a few days afterwards by a vagrant gunner.

long time kept in one cage a raven, a hooded crow, a jackdaw, a magpie, and a jay, all of which lived on good terms with each other."

Mr. R. Ball communicates the following anecdote of this species:—

"When a boy at school, a tame raven was very attentive in watching our cribs or bird-traps, and when a bird was taken, he endeavoured to catch it by turning up the crib, but in so doing the bird always escaped, as the raven could not let go the crib in time to seize it. After several vain attempts of this kind, the raven seeing another bird caught, instead of going at once to the crib, went to another tame raven, and induced it to accompany him, when the one lifted up the crib, and the other bore the poor captive off in triumph."

It was a common practice in a spacious yard in Belfast, to lay trains of corn for sparrows, and to shoot them from a window, which was only so far open as to admit the barrel of the gun; neither the shooter, nor any but a part of the instrument of destruction, being ever visible from the outside. A tame raven which was brought a young bird from the nest to the yard in question, and probably had never seen a shot fired, afforded evidence at the same time that it understood the whole affair. When any one appeared carrying a gun across the yard towards the house from which the sparrows were fired at, the raven exhibited the utmost alarm, by hurrying off with all possible but most awkward speed to hide itself, loudly screaming all the while. Alarmed though it was for its own safety, this bird always concealed itself near to and within view of the field of action, and the shot was hardly fired when it dashed out from its retreat, and seizing one of the dead or wounded sparrows, hurried back to its hiding-place. The whole scene I have repeatedly witnessed. The raven's portion of the sparrows was as duly exacted as the tithe of the quails killed during their migration at Capri are said to be by the bishop of that island.

Mr. R. Patterson in a note which he has contributed thus states—

"In September 1831, I travelled from Portarlinton as far as New-bridge barracks with a very intelligent man, the colonel of a Lancer regiment stationed there. This gentleman mentioned, that when travelling near Limerick on the preceding day, he from the coach-top saw a raven alight among a flock of full-grown ducks in a field adjoining the road, and after having given one of them a few blows, throw it on its back, and begin to tear it up. All works on ornithology mention that the raven destroys young ducks and chickens, but I did not before know that it ever carried its audacity so far as to attack a duck when full-grown, as in this instance*." The late Mr. T. F.

* Mr. Waterton states that a tame raven kept at Walton Hall "took a sudden dislike to an old duck, with which, till then, he had been on the best of terms; and he killed her in an instant."

A raven which lived in the yard attached to the chief inn at Antrim, for about fifteen years, had occasional encounters with game-cocks brought thither to engage it, and bets were pending on the issue. The raven in every instance proved the victor. It avoided the blows of the cock, and acted only on the defensive, until it could manage to lay hold of the cock's head, which as soon as done, was crushed in its powerful beak, and its antagonist fell lifeless on the ground.

Neligan of Tralee, mentioned to me, that ravens chiefly frequent the sea-shore in the county of Kerry, where he had often seen them feeding on putrid fish. Great numbers of these birds are in some works (especially those treating of American ornithology) described as flying in company. Although ravens may be seen every day in the year around Belfast, the most I have heard of being seen on wing together did not exceed twelve in number. About Navarino and Athens I have met with the raven—at the latter place Chateaubriand introduces it, in his description of sunrise as seen from the Acropolis*.

Mr. Waterton, in his 'Essays on Natural History,' gives a highly interesting account of the raven, but to his great grief, this bird has not for many years been seen about Walton Hall.

Sir Wm. Jardine, in his 'British Birds,' points out with an accurately observant eye the favourite haunts of the raven. Mr. Macgillivray treats very fully of its habits, and gives much desirable information (vol. i.); as Audubon likewise does, from personal observation in America. The raven is honoured with a place in those delightful articles in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for 1826, entitled 'A Glance over Selby's Ornithology,' in which the keen observer of the habits of birds is evident, through the wit and imagination investing the whole subject.

CARRION CROW, *Corvus Corone*, Linn.—This species was noticed by Smith as one of the birds of the county of Cork; but that it is not well known in Ireland is sufficiently indicated by the absence of its name from Mr. Templeton's published catalogue of the native vertebrate animals. In the MSS. of that eminent naturalist it is remarked—"I have not seen this bird, but from what I have heard am inclined to think it is found about Dundalk." Its not being distinguished from its equally sable congener the rook, is one reason for the carrion crow being considered more rare than it really is†. About the river Lagan, within the flow of the tide, and along the shores of Belfast Bay, this bird is by no means scarce, and feeds upon any animal matter cast up by the waves, but more

* 'Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem.'

† Since the above was written, the 1st volume of 'Tracts relating to Ireland, printed for the Irish Archæological Society,' has appeared. In 'A Brief description of Ireland, made in this yeere 1589, by Robert Payne,' it is stated,—"There is not that place in Ireland where anye venomous thinge will liue. There is neither mol, pye, nor carren crow." In a note to this, Dr. Aquila Smith of Dublin (who edited the memoir) remarks—"Of the *carren* or carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), we have not any authority as to the date of its introduction into Ireland. Moryson [in 1617] says, we have not the blacke crow, but onely crowes of mingled colour, such as wee call Royston crowes," part iii. b. 3. p. 160. Although the attractive magpie may have been introduced to this country, I cannot think that the carrion crow ever was, but believe it to be strictly indigenous; its comparative scarcity in this island, together with the reason adduced above, caused it, I conceive, to be overlooked.

especially rejoices in the carcasses of horses, which after being skinned are left upon the beach. The refuse of the slaughter-house, when spread on meadows for manure, particularly attracts it inland.

The carrion crow is known to me as found in the north, east, and west of the island : in the south, as already mentioned, it was noticed by Smith, yet was never seen by Mr. R. Ball during his residence at Youghal. About Clonmel, however, Mr. R. Davis, jun., states that it is always to be found, though not very common. In the neighbouring county of Kilkenny, the attention of a gentleman of my acquaintance was one day attracted by a "black crow" having an extraordinary white appearance about the head. It flew about a hundred yards after it was first seen, and then alighted on the ground. On running up to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon, he was astonished to see the identical bird fly off an ordinary crow ; but on reaching the place where the bird had "pitched," a duck's egg was found, which being carried in the bill had produced the appearance described—the egg was still whole*.

When at Glenarm Park, county of Antrim, in 1833, I was informed by the gamekeeper, a native of England, and who knew the bird well there, that he had seen a few about Glenarm, and that in the breeding-season one of these birds and a gray crow (*C. Cornix*) were constantly associated together for some weeks, and he had no doubt were paired. A Scotch gamekeeper who very soon afterwards supplied the place of my informant, told me the following year that he had occasionally killed the carrion crow in Glenarm Park, but considered the species rather rare†. He assured me that when gamekeeper in Scotland, he had repeatedly seen the carrion and gray crow paired, and knew an instance of such a pair being mated for two or three years, and building in the same tree annually. The identity of the gray one was sufficiently manifest by its being minus a foot, which had not improbably parted company from its owner in some trap. In the instances which came under the observation of my trustworthy informant, the gray crow was considered to be the male, on account of its comparative absence from the nest, &c. The young birds in one nest examined by this gamekeeper were stated to have exhibited, some the plumage of the gray, and others, that of the carrion crow.

This species is sometimes, if not generally, infested with parasitic insects (lice) to an extraordinary degree, so much so, as in one in-

* In Macgillivray's 'British Birds' (vol. i. p. 526), an instance of the carrion crow bearing off the egg of a wild duck whole is recorded by Mr. Weir who witnessed it—this gentleman and Mr. Hogg contribute full and interesting narrations of this bird to the work. The contributions of the latter, called a "Shepherd" in the preface, have all the racy spirit of the mountain air about them. Mr. Waterton states that the carrion crow carries eggs off, "not in his bill but on the point of it, having thrust his upper mandible through the shell."

† I saw specimens which had been obtained there exhibited as "vermin" on one or both occasions.

stance to deter a friend from skinning one he had received, just after it was shot. On mentioning this to another amateur taxidermist, it was remarked, that in skinning one of these birds, he became "covered" with its parasites. According to my own observation, birds of prey, or species partly carnivorous, are more infested with lice than others; and particularly with those belonging to the most active and stirring genera of their attractive tribe! From Mr. Denny's forthcoming work, '*Monographia Anoplurorum Britanniae*,' we expect much novel information on this subject.

THE GRAY CROW*, *Corvus Cornix*, Linn., is a common species in Ireland, and resident in all quarters of the island. In the north and east it has come under my own observation at every period of the year, and is fully as numerous in summer as at any other time, although at this season it is absent from England. In summer I have remarked it to be common in the west and south, and my correspondents there agree in noticing it as a resident species.

From what has been written on the gray crow as a bird of Great Britain, it would appear to be more common in Ireland generally, than in England, or on the mainland of Scotland. The sea-shore or its vicinity is the favourite haunt of this bird, but it is likewise resident in far inland localities. Sir William Jardine states, that according to his observations rocks are preferred as a nestling-place; and Mr. Macgillivray (vol. i. p. 533) seems to doubt its building at all in trees; but around Belfast it prefers trees in the immediate vicinity of its "beat" to rocks which are a little more distant, and where the raven and jackdaw find a home. In some very fine and tall beech trees on a lawn bordering the bay, several pairs of these birds have built for many years, and two or three of their nests occasionally appearing in a single tree, suggest the idea of an infant rookery. When however more nests than one appear in any tree, they are I believe the erections of different years, or are not tenanted at the same time. In wooded glens, and other localities where the *Coniferæ* bore a very small proportion to the deciduous trees, I have remarked the partiality of this bird for nestling in the pine. Mr. William M'Calla of Roundstone, states that "the gray crow is very common in Connemara, and breeds in all the wooded islands of the lakes, in other woods and thickets, and even in thorn-bushes in the vicinity of houses: it lays from three to five eggs. These birds are not accused of doing much harm to the keepers of poultry, the dead animal matter at all seasons on the shore supplying abundance of food." He further remarks, that gray crows "are very cunning in seeking their food, and that in the upper part of Roundstone Bay they may be observed picking up the *Buccinum boreale* [*undatum*?], rising with them into the air and then letting them fall on the rocks to break them: in this they are frequently unable to succeed, and have to drop

* In the north of Ireland it is commonly called by this, its most distinctive appellation.

the shell from a height in the air several times before attaining their object." Mr. R. Ball has seen one of these birds drop a cockle (*Cardium edule*) on a stone to break it, whilst another stood cunningly by to snatch it up, and succeeded in the theft. All this is but a counterpart of what is related by Dr. Fleming in his 'Philosophy of Zoology,' as having been observed by him in Zetland. The mere act of their rising into the air with shell-fish and letting them drop on rocks, I have myself repeatedly witnessed. This bird is useful on the sea-shore by consuming any animal matter cast by the tide upon the beach; but by the gamekeeper it is looked upon as an evil-doer, accused of sucking the eggs of game, and occasionally destroying the infant birds, and is accordingly persecuted. I remember a pair of these birds being accused of sucking a dozen or more eggs in a wild-duck's nest in the aquatic menagerie of a friend. At his place a novel experiment was once resorted to. Four young gray crows in a nest were pinioned, in expectation that their parents would continue feeding them so long that a certain opportunity would be afforded of shooting or trapping them. Disappointment was however the result, as the old birds, on returning to the nest and perceiving the mutilated state of their progeny, left them to perish.

A gentleman of my acquaintance, who is very observant of the habits of birds, once saw two gray crows in pursuit of a rabbit in an open field. The chase was continued only as it ran; when it squatted they never attempted to molest it: the chase and parley together were continued for some time. According to the testimony of several of the intelligent wild-fowl shooters of Belfast bay, gray crows are not uncommonly seen in pursuit of the smaller shore-birds (*Grallatores*); and two of my informants were witness to one of these crows pursuing a merlin (*Falco Æsalon*) which had captured a sand-lark (*Tringa variabilis*) until the hawk dropped it, when the crow picked it up from the surface of the water. A pet buzzard (*Buteo vulgaris*) belonging to a friend, was when flying about the demesne always persecuted by gray crows. The gentleman before alluded to shot one of these birds when it had young, and the same evening saw about ten gray crows come to feed the nestlings, which however died in the course of the night, which was very cold and wet. When engaged in the construction of their nest, these birds are more heedless of enemies than at other times, and then occasionally fall victims to the gun; but when one has been killed, the survivor is soon provided with a mate. At this early stage of the breeding-season (as remarked at "the Falls" near Belfast) neither these birds nor magpies were observed to be mated again for three or four days, when a new nest was commenced, not at the same place, but contiguous to the former one. The twice-married crows and magpies here, proved always too wary to be shot.

Mr. Yarrell observes, that "more than two are seldom seen associated together, except when food is to be obtained." But at all seasons of the year, I have seen them associating together in little troops up to the number of fifteen, on the shore of Belfast bay, when there was no apparent cause for their meeting; and when there has

been such in the inland neighbourhood, so many as seventeen have been reckoned on a single tree. In a rabbit warren at the wild peninsula of the Horn, in the north-west of the county of Donegal, I once, on the 27th of June, saw forty of these birds in a dense flock. A note appears in my journal stating that, on the 3rd of April and several previous mornings, seven or eight of these birds frequented an old garden in the town of Belfast, and one or two of them were occasionally to be seen perched on the back of a cow kept there. By George Mathews, Esq., of Springvale, county of Down, I have been informed that a relation living there, had a pet gray crow which followed him about the place. When not so engaged, it sometimes went to feed with its brethren on the shore, but always hurried back to its master when whistled for.

In the middle of May last, I met with this species in the Valley of Sweet Waters, near Constantinople, and at the beginning of June, in the islands of Delos and Paros.

LI. *Descriptions, &c. of a few rare or undescribed species of British Diptera, principally from the collection of J. C. DALE, Esq., M.A., F.L.S., &c.*

To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING some Diptera in my British Collection of Insects which I could not ascertain the names of, I forwarded a few to Mr. Haliday for his opinion; and wishing that other entomologists should profit thereby as well as myself, I think I cannot do better than to make it public through the medium of the 'Annals.'

I am, yours obediently,

J. C. DALE.

Curtis's Guide, genus 1157, LIMNOBIA. (Subgenus DICRANOMYIA?)
Sectio.—Nervo cubitali furcato ramis liberis.

Areola disci nulla.

Areola brachiali anteriore posteriorem superante.

L. flavo-limbata (C. G., species 39^b).—Fusca, thoracis et scutelli limbo, pectoris vittâ laterali dilatatâ et ventris incisuris flavis: alis obscure hyalinis, stigmatè pallido, nervis pubescentibus.

♂ ♀ Long. $2\frac{1}{2}$ —3; alar. 6 lin.

? Synon. *L.* (39 C. G.) *pavida*, A. H. H., Ent. Mag. I. From a late letter it appears to be different from *pavida*, though allied to it.

"Fusca nitida. Antennæ fuscæ thoracis longitudine. Mesothoracis scutum et scutellum flavo-marginata. Pleuræ magnâ parte flavæ. Abdominis incisuræ ventrales et dorsalis ultima tenuiter flavicantes. Terebra rufescens gracilis recurva. Forceps ♂ brachiis linearibus reflexis. Pedes fuscæ. Halteres fusco-pallidi. Alæ obscure-hyalinæ, nervis pubescentibus, stigmatè obsoleto lutescente ad apicem nervi subcostalis. Nervus subcostalis marginem attingit adversus fuscam nervi cubitalis. Nervus mediastinus cum subcostali connexus paulo ultra ortum radii, et cito marginem attingens. Nervus



Thompson, William. 1842. "L.—The Birds of Ireland." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 8, 406–430.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03745484209442777>.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03745484209442777>

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angles, which are nearly right angles; the upper surface is but little convex, the reflected lateral margins are rather broad, the dorsal channel moderately distinct, but obliterated near the anterior and posterior margins of the thorax; on each side, behind, are two oblique, long, smooth foveæ, between which is a transverse impression situated at about one-fourth of the distance from the base towards the apex of the thorax—this transverse impression is not strongly marked. Elytra elongate-ovate, above subdepressed, the lateral reflected margins broad and distinct, the surface nearly smooth but exhibiting indistinct striæ, and these are most faintly punctured; two smallish red spots are observable on each elytron near the outer margin, one towards the base of the elytron, and the other on the apical fourth; the legs are pitchy or pitchy-red. Sometimes the red spots on the elytra are obliterated, the legs are nearly black, and the antennæ and palpi are pitchy.

Obs.—As regards one of the characters upon which I found the present genus, I allude to the male sex having *four* of the joints of the anterior tarsi distinctly dilated, I may call attention to the remark by Dejean in his observations on the *Feroniæ*, viz. that this group is distinguished from the *Har-pali* by the structure of the intermediate tarsi (*i. e.* they are not dilated), and by the fourth joint of the anterior tarsus, which is *never dilated in the male sex*. The genus *Lissopterus* therefore affords a remarkable exception to a general rule.

XLIV.—*The Birds of Ireland* By WM. THOMPSON, Esq.,
Pres. Nat. Hist. Society, Belfast.

[Continued from vol. x. p. 179.]

THE RING-DOVE*—*Columba Palumbus*, Linn.—is common throughout the wooded districts of the island.

Mr. Waterton is rather disposed to believe that in his part of Yorkshire there is an annual increase by migration to the numbers of native birds. Mr. Selby states, in general terms, that there is not any such increase. The great numbers that congregate in autumn, and remain together during winter in Ireland, I have always considered as our indigenous birds only, collected together in their choicest haunts, however widely separated they may have been in the breeding-season.

Belvoir Park near Belfast, with its fine and extensive woods, is quite a preserve for these birds, and throughout the autumn and winter they may be daily seen there in the afternoon, in multitudes.

* Commonly called Wood Quest and Wood Pigeon in the north of Ireland.

nous numbers, occasionally not less than five hundred appearing in one flock. Mr. Selby remarks that the ring-dove prefers fir and ash-trees to roost in, but in this park, the beech apparently is preferred above all other species. Not only is a wood consisting of these trees their chief resort, but in mixed plantations their tops may be seen dotted with these birds, when none appear on other equally lofty deciduous trees, pines, or firs. It was a very pleasing sight on one occasion here to see a number of these birds descend from the highest trees to drink at the river Lagan—which bounds the demesne at one side—before retiring to roost. On November 30, 1838, which was a very dark day, several hundreds were settled on the trees apparently for the night, so early as half-past two o'clock in the afternoon. The immense flocks here, rising *en masse* from their roosting-places with thundering noise, remind us of the vast flights of the passenger pigeon in North America, of which we are so fully informed in the graphic narrations of Wilson and Audubon.

The earliest date in my journal, with reference to large flocks roosting in Belvoir Park, is Sept. 16, 1840, and in the spring of the preceding year, they are noted as seen in very large flocks so late as the 25th of March.

But they breed here fully as early as in the north of England, occasionally even earlier than the latter end of February—the time mentioned by Mr. Selby; lofty trees are generally selected for the nest, but in a locality where the species was protected I have in more than one instance known the nest to be placed not more than seven feet from the ground, in young fir-trees. Their cooing, with which the woods resound in the early spring, and their singular flight at this season, rising and falling suddenly in the air, render the ring-dove highly attractive. Although this bird will, where protected, display little fear of man, particularly in the breeding-season, it is generally very wary, and when assembled in flocks, extremely so: its sense of hearing must be remarkably acute, as the slightest noise, even at a distance, will alarm a flock, and cause the temporary desertion of its intended roosting-place.

The large flocks alluded to divide into foraging parties in the morning, though some few may be seen about their roosting-places at all times of the day. In severe frosts they are driven to the turnip-fields, to feed upon the green tops of the plant. I have seen large flocks regaling on beech-mast; and they are partial to ploughed fields, on account of the seeds and other vegetable matter turned up. Useful in consuming the seeds and roots of weeds injurious to the crops, yet Mr. Waterton, who looks upon all the feathered race in the most favourable light that truth will warrant, does not consider the ring-dove of any service to man. A friend, whose country-seat is in the valley of the Lagan, and near to Belvoir Park, where the species is so numerous, reports, that he has often seen ring-doves pluck gooseberries and currants from the bushes in his garden, but never knew them to attack his cherries. They are very destructive to young plants of the cabbage tribe, which are preferred to the tender tops of turnips. Quantities of all kinds of his grain, when ripe, are stated to be de-

stroyed by these birds, which are accused of flying against the standing stalks, and prostrating them, to feed upon the pickles, and alighting with the same evil intent on the masses prostrated by storm or rain, as well as on the "stooks." Wheat is their favourite—and it is said that for it "they will fly a mile farther" than for any other grain.

Though the ring-dove is prized in the north of Ireland, the young are not regularly sought after for the table, as they are stated by Mr. Waterton to be in Yorkshire. This gentleman in his 'Essays on Natural History,' and Mr. Macgillivray in his 'British Birds,' give full and interesting accounts of the species. In France and Switzerland I have, in summer and autumn, observed the ring-dove to be equally common as in the British Islands*.

ROCK-DOVE, *Columba Livia*, Brisson†.—About the rock-bound and caverned coasts on all sides of Ireland, and the adjacent islands, this species has occurred to me. It is likewise to be found at inland caves and grottos, such as in limestone districts especially are not unfrequent. Some authors speak of the sea-coast only as frequented by the rock-dove, but from personal observation it can be stated, that caverns, be they inland or marine, are its natural abiding-places; and whether situated in the inland solitude, close by the din of the water-fall, or the "roar of ocean's waves," are equally resorted to.

* The Stock-Dove, *C. Œnas*, is unknown both to Ireland and Scotland. In England it is said to frequent only the midland and eastern counties.

† This bird is the parent of the common tame pigeon. When the dove-cot is not far distant from the nestling-places of the wild birds in the rocks, the tame ones often resort thither and pair with them, and the mottled produce seen frequenting wild localities often puzzle the tyro ornithologist. It may be mentioned, on account of the period of time that elapsed on the occasion, that a tame pigeon taken from Belfast to the Falls, two miles distant, and shut up in a room for twelve months, immediately on being liberated flew back to its old quarters.

The following paragraph on carrier pigeons appeared in the *Leinster Express* newspaper in Dec. 1842:—"One of these pigeons was let loose from Palmerston-house, near Chapelizod, the seat of the Earl of Donoughmore, when it accomplished the journey to Castle Bernard, which is upwards of sixty-two miles, in two hours; yet the flight was much impeded, as the day was both dark and hazy, accompanied with a strong head wind at the time. At the late fair of Ballinasloe, Thomas Bernard, Esq. took with him one of these birds, which he let go in the town at eleven o'clock A.M. with a note appended, directing dinner to be ready at Castle Bernard at the given time, as he purposed being home that day, when the bird took its flight, and the message was delivered in eleven minutes after, having travelled twenty-three miles Irish in that wonderful short space of time, or, in other words, at the rate of $125\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. These pigeons, of which Mr. Bernard has a large flock, are so domesticated, that he can handle them as he pleases, and so very tractable are they, that whenever he calls, they attend the call promptly."

An interesting note on the attachment shown by a tame pigeon to her mate, which had been shot and gibbeted in a pea-field, is related by Mr. Jesse, in his 'Gleanings of Natural History,' p. 112, 1st series.

On examining the crop of some of these birds shot in the month of June 1832, at the wild peninsula of the Horn (co. Donegal), where they are very common, they were found to be filled with the seeds of rushes. When visiting the island of Achil, on the 29th of June 1834, in company with Mr. R. Ball, we saw several rock-doves feeding on the low sandy tract near Keil, and approached them within about twenty-five paces. On remarking to Lieut. Reynolds, R.N. of the Coast Guard service, then stationed there, how near they permitted the approach of our party, he stated that on the preceding day he killed twenty-one of them about the same place, and that he had killed as many as fifty and fifty-two in one day there, although more than two were never procured at one shot. In this wild district they are seldom molested, and consequently exhibit little fear of man. In the level tract alluded to there is no ambush to conceal the sportsman, who must walk up directly within sight of the birds until within shooting distance. It is only at a particular season that they are seen here, when, according to my informant, they are attracted to the locality by a "small pea" which is abundant, and is always found in the crops of those killed. We requested to be shown the plant, and found it to be the common bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). When walking along the top of the fine marine cliffs about Portpatrick, in Wigtonshire, in Aug. 1838, in company with Capt. Fayrer, R.N., he remarked, on some rock-doves being sprung, that he had shot many of them there as they came to feed on the "wild liquorice," a favourite kind of food—this also I found to be the *Lotus corniculatus*. About the marine cliffs near Ballantrae, in the adjoining county of Ayr, I have remarked these birds to be common, and have seen flocks of them alight in the fields of green or unripe corn, near the coast*.

In August 1826, when visiting the celebrated cascade at Tivoli, near Rome, rock-doves presented a singular and beautiful appearance, as numbers of them kept flying in and out of the gloomy recesses of the rock, close to where the mass of waters was precipitated: viewed from the heights above, they looked so remarkably small, that at first sight I was deceived as to their species.

At the end of April 1841, I observed rock-doves to be numerous about the precipitous and caverned cliffs of the island of Sphacteria, forming part of the western boundary of the noble bay of Navarino. When there on the 29th and 30th of that month, the officers of H.M.S. Beacon set out in a boat for the purpose of entering the caves to shoot them, and returned on each day with several brace. They remarked, that of the great numbers seen, all were on the western or *sea* side of the island, although as fine caverns are on the eastern or *bay* side. Again, when becalmed in the Ægean Sea on the 10th of June in H.M.S. Magpie, a likely place for these birds presenting itself in a rocky islet, N.E. of Port Nousa, in the island of Paros, a boat was lowered for the commander and myself to go in pursuit of them. A few were seen about its caves and cliffs, and a young bird of the year which was shot on wing was in full plu-

* Mr. Macgillivray gives a full and excellent account of this species from personal observation in Scotland.

mage, but still retained some fragments of down about the head. On this occasion I could not but think how very different was the scene and climate from that in which I first became initiated in rock-dove shooting, by thus visiting marine caves for the purpose. This was in the snow-white range of caverned cliffs extending for some distance westward of Dunluce Castle, near the Giant's Causeway. The rock-dove was equally common in both localities.

THE TURTLE-DOVE—*Columba Turtur*, Linn.—is an occasional visitant to Ireland, and has been obtained in the counties ranging farthest to the south-west and north-west. It has appeared in spring, summer and autumn, and probably visited the island in some instances to increase its species, although no instance of its breeding here is known to me*. In four or five successive years it has occurred.

Mr. Templeton records the turtle-dove as "seen at Cranmore and Shanes-Castle;" the former his own residence near Belfast, the latter that of Earl O'Neil, situated on the borders of Lough Neagh. About the year 1820, one of these birds was seen by a friend at Fisherwick Lodge; which, with the two localities just named, is in the county of Antrim. The collection of J. V. Stewart, Esq. of Rockhill, Letterkenny, contains a specimen shot in the north-west of the county of Donegal. About Youghal, the species has two or three times been met with by R. Ball, Esq. I have been informed by Dr. Harvey of Cork, that "Mr. Fennell of Ballibrado, near Cahir, county of Tipperary, shot a turtle-dove there in the spring of 1830, when several of them were seen during a few weeks about his place; in the following year, likewise, he saw three or four of these birds in the same locality." In March 1834, a turtle-dove shown me by Mr. Glennon, bird-preserver, Dublin, was said to have been shot at Carton, the seat of the Duke of Leinster; and at the same time it was mentioned that the species had for two or three summers visited Simpson's nursery-grounds, near the metropolis. By the late T. F. Neligan, Esq. of Tralee, one of these birds was obtained near that town on September 20, 1834: its crop was filled with wheat. To T. W. Warren, Esq. of Dublin, I am indebted for notes to the effect, that in the year 1834 he saw a recent example of this species, which was shot in the county of Wexford; that two specimens in his collection were shot near Malahide, county of Dublin, in the summers of 1835 and 1836—two or three years before this time, he more than once met with a bird of this species feeding in a field of vetches, in the locality whence the specimens were procured, but it was too wary to admit of his approach within gun-shot. H. H. Dombrain, Esq. states, that one was shot in the summer of 1836, in Lord Roden's demesne, Dundalk. On the 10th of July 1837, I saw a

* Since the above was written, I have been credibly informed that a pair of turtle-doves bred in a plantation near Downpatrick in the summer of 1842. They remained to a late period in the locality, one of them having been killed on the 12th of November. Dr. Burkitt of Waterford mentions two specimens obtained near that town—in 1834 and 1836.

turtle-dove in the shop of Mr. Glennon, who assured me that it had been killed about three weeks previously near Donnybrook, a few miles from Dublin. George Selby, Esq. of Alnwick, Northumberland, (brother to the distinguished naturalist, and imbued with similar tastes,) on visiting Belfast in October 1837, informed me that one of these birds, which admitted of a close approach, was seen by him on the road-side between Armagh and Aughnacloy in the first week of that month.

When on a tour in Holland and Switzerland in the summer of 1826, the turtle-dove was met with, and in the former country was very tame. When proceeding in H.M.S. Beacon from Malta to the Morea in the spring of 1841, a few of these birds appeared on the 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th of April, coming from the south on their way from Africa to Europe. They generally came singly, and not more than two were seen in company*. On the 29th of April I saw one near Navarino; and again on the 6th of May in the island of Syra:—at the end of this month, numbers were observed in the spacious gardens of the old seraglio at Constantinople.

THE PHEASANT—*Phasianus Colchicus*, Linn.—is a species, which, having unquestionably been introduced to Ireland, has only claims to be considered in a supplementary note. The period of its introduction is unknown to me†. Smith would seem to have imagined that it was indigenous to the island, as in his 'History of Cork' it is observed—"They are now [about 1749] indeed very rare, most of our woods being cut down." This splendid bird has for a long time past been common in many parts of the country, where it is carefully preserved and protected. In Down and Antrim the ring-necked variety is not uncommon; and I have seen a few examples (shot in a wild state) of the female in the assumed plumage of the male, but, although his colours were there, they were always dull in hue compared with the gloss and splendour of the adult plumage of the veritable cock—on the dissection of one of these, the eggs were observed to be not larger than clover-seed.

I have often remarked the aversion of the pheasant to take wing when near its home, and have seen it, even when cantered directly up to, or charged on horseback, run across a considerable stretch of field to the preserve, rather than take wing. Attention has been called by some writers to the effect of thunder in prompting the pheasant to crow, and on this subject the following note appears in my journal:—"April 7, 1833. When walking along the banks of the Lagan today between four and five o'clock, there were a few peals of thunder, at the immediate commencement of each of which, the pheasants in Belvoir Park crowed, although their 'most sweet voices!' were not to be heard at any other time." Mr. Waterton does not believe in the capture of pheasants by means of the fumes of sulphur, but though never present at any such poaching office, I

* In Annals, vol. viii. p. 128, are further particulars.

† In the year 1589 it was noticed as common. See note on Quail.

have no doubt from what has been related to me that they are so taken, and that the vile practice is resorted to on the western, as well as the eastern side of the Irish Sea. An observant friend has often remarked that during the absence of the pheasant from its nest the eggs (sometimes thirteen in number) were covered with hay, which he believed to have been always placed there by the bird itself.

Upon looking to notes on the food observed in opening nine pheasants, killed at various times and places during five months—from December to April inclusive—I find that the stones of haws or fruit of the white-thorn were contained in seven of them; in addition to these were grain, small seeds, and peas: one exhibited a few roots of plants and twigs of trees: another was nearly filled with grass: one only contained any insects—all presented numerous fragments of stone. A pheasant which frequented our own garden daily for some time in summer was accused of feeding on black currants; the tops of turnips are sometimes eaten; and a fine cock bird was in the habit of visiting a stable-yard in the vicinity of Belfast very early in the morning for the purpose of feeding there.

The Bishop of Norwich, in his 'Familiar History of Birds,' mentions an ungallant and furious assault of a cock-pheasant upon a young lady when quietly walking on the highway, but who, nevertheless, seized her assailant and carried him home. Though, perhaps, not a rare instance in the case of the barn-door fowl, it may be worth noticing, that a fine cock of this species kept in our own yard, on more than one occasion assaulted an old cook who nowise meddled with him, though she did sometimes lay hold of some of the members of his seraglio. She was once indisposed for a few days after his attack, on which occasion he, according to her own version, had struck her "severely with his spurs between the ribs."

In April 1842 the following paragraph appeared in a Dublin newspaper:—"On Sunday se'nnight, a child named Martha Collins, living at Harold's-cross, was sent by her mother to a livery-stable yard in the neighbourhood, kept by a Mr. Smith. On entering the yard, a cock flew at the child and struck her three or four times in the face and other parts of the head, cutting her with each blow. A woman, also named Collins, resident in the yard, hearing the screams of the little sufferer, ran to her assistance and rescued her. On the Tuesday following, it was considered necessary to have medical aid, and the child was shown to Dr. Monks, who at once pronounced the case fatal. The child expired the next day. An inquest was held on the body, and a verdict according to the above-mentioned circumstance returned."

In the work last mentioned, a mousing hen is alluded to (vol. ii. p. 97. 3rd ed.), which reminds me that in my young days there was a hen of our own stock which took an especial delight in mouse-hunting, and often have I seen her carrying her victims about as if in triumph.

GOLD PHEASANT (*P. pictus*), SILVER PHEASANT (*P. nycthemeris*). As it is interesting to know the age which these birds will

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attain in captivity, one or two notes on the subject may here be introduced. A fine male silver pheasant has been known to me to live twenty-one or twenty-two years. Such gold pheasants as I happened to learn the age of did not exceed half that period, though which species can really be termed the longer lived, I am unable to state. Such of the latter as came under my knowledge died almost instantaneously, and when in the highest condition as to flesh and plumage. Some years ago I saw at Glenarm Park a brood partly of the common, and partly of the silver pheasant, which had thriven very well together under the maternity of a "barn-door" hen—the young of both species made their first appearance on the same day.

It may here be mentioned that a pair of PEA-FOWL (*Pavo cristatus*) which we had for some time, paid due respect to the hall-door, as there they would eat only of bread or biscuit (moistened), although at the back door, or in the yard, they would feed freely on potatoes.

George Matthews, Esq. informs me that many years ago at Springvale, county of Down, where nearly fifty GUINEA-FOWL (*Numida Meleagris*) were kept, they flew about in company every evening before roosting, and then settled for the night on the highest trees about the place, which were ash. On a field of barley being reaped there, a nest of these birds was discovered, containing between two and three hundred eggs.

[To be continued.]

XLV.—*Anatomical Researches on the Nervous and Circulating Systems of the Triton aquaticus, or Aquatic Salamander*. By G. NICOLUCCI of Naples. Communicated by Dr. Grant, Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Zoology in University College, London.

THE object of the brief investigations which we now detail is merely a summary indication of the nervous and circulating systems of the Aquatic Salamander, in preparing a complete monograph of which we have been for some time engaged.

1. *Nervous System*.

The encephalic mass of the Salamander occupies a great part of the cavity of the cranium, and is formed by two oblong hemispheres, having a median furrow on their upper and under surface. The pineal gland, sufficiently developed, fills the space that the hemispheres present on the under side by diverging a little from each other, and closes the large calamus scriptorius between the two enlargements of the medulla oblongata, which, extended as far as the tail, presents a longitudinal median furrow. It is around the brain itself, and most especially externally along the furrow that separates the lobes of the medulla oblongata, that the chalky follicles of



Thompson, William. 1843. "XLIV.—The Birds of Ireland." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 11, 283–290.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03745484309445305>.

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