

RING DOTTRELL.

Charadrius hiaticula, Linn.

Le Grand Pluvier à collier.

Of all those elegant birds which constitute the group of the genus *Charadrius* generally termed Dottrells, the present beautiful species is by far the most common and universally spread, being an inhabitant, not only of our own shores, but equally so of those of temperate Europe in general, as well as of North America. Its favourite localities are flats along the shore, particularly where the sea at its ebb retires to a distance, and leaves extensive beds of sand or shingles. It is not, however, confined entirely to the margin of the sea, being not unfrequently met with on the borders of lakes and at some distance from the mouths of large rivers. It appears to be a bird which makes a permanent residence in our own and similar latitudes, breeding along the shore among broken shells and gravel, merely hollowing out a small depression for the reception of its eggs, which are of considerable size in proportion to the bulk of the bird,—a circumstance which may be noticed as general among the *Charadriadæ*. Their colour is yellowish white, streaked and dotted with irregular marks of black, which are most numerous at the larger end.

The young, while yet covered with down, and hatched a few days only, run with great quickness and dexterity, separating and squatting for concealment among the loose stones and long weeds of the shore on the appearance of danger, while the parents exert every artifice to draw off the intruder to a distance, uttering their mournful cry, and feigning inability to escape pursuit.

The food of the Ring Dottrell, which it searches for on the shore, consists of worms and insects of various species.

The difference between the summer and winter plumage consists rather in the depth of the black and pureness of the white, during the season of incubation, than in any decided change. In winter, in fact, the plumage approaches to that of the immature bird of the year, in which the black band on the chest is indicated only by a dark tint of brownish grey.

The adult colouring of the male in summer consists of a brownish grey over the whole of the upper surface, the head being white with a black band stretching over the top from eye to eye, and a band of a similar colour passing from the forehead, at the base of the upper mandible, beneath the eye and over the ear-coverts; a broad black band occupies the chest, becoming narrower at the back of the neck, where the extremities meet; beak bright orange colour merging into black at the tip; naked circle round the eyes and tarsi orange.

The female differs in having the coronal band and that of the chest of smaller size and of a somewhat browner hue.

Besides having only indications of the pectoral band, the immature birds have the feathers of the upper surface of a light brown, edged with yellowish, the coronal band wanting or very obscure; the beak blackish; and the tarsi dull yellow.

The Plate represents a male and female in the spring plumage, of the natural size.