

bird. At the further end of the hole the single egg is deposited: in size it nearly equals that of a pullet, but varies much in form, some being acute at one end, while in others both ends are equally obtuse. Its colour, when first laid, is white; but it soon becomes soiled from its immediate contact with the earth, no materials being collected for a nest at the end of the burrow. The young are hatched after a month's incubation, and are then covered with a long blackish down above, which soon gives place to the feathered plumage; so that at the end of a month or five weeks they are able to quit the burrow and follow their parents to the open sea. Soon after this time, or about the second week in August, the whole leave our coasts on their equatorial migration. . . . . On the water the Puffin is more wary than the Guillemot, generally taking wing or diving before a boat can approach within gun-shot. It flies rapidly, but not to any great distance at once, being obliged to employ its short and narrow wings to their utmost power for the support of its body, which is heavy in proportion to its dimensions."

"By far the most abundant species in St. Kilda," says Macgillivray, "is the Puffin, which breeds in the crevices of the rocks as well as in artificial burrows in almost every situation, sometimes at a considerable distance from the water's edge. It is taken by the fowlers in two ways,—when on the nest, by introducing the hand and dragging out the bird, at the risk of a severe bite; and when sitting on the rocks, by a noose of horsehair attached to a slender rod, generally formed of bamboo-cane. The latter mode is most successful in wet weather, as the Puffins then sit best upon the rocks, allowing a person to approach within a few yards; and as many as three hundred may be taken in the course of the day by an expert bird-catcher. . . . The Puffin forms the chief article of food with the St. Kildians during the summer months, and is usually cooked by roasting among the ashes."

It has not been very clearly ascertained how far the Puffin proceeds in a northerly direction, or whether its range extends beyond the neighbourhood of the North Cape in Europe or the southern part of Greenland. I suspect that a nearly allied species, the *Fratercula glacialis*, takes its place in those regions; for Mr. Alfred Newton, during his recent visit to Spitzbergen, found the bird so called, and not the present one, in that inhospitable country. On the authority of Professor Baird, I give the northern portion of America as one of the habitats of our bird. It appears to be the commonest species of the two in Iceland; and in the Faeroes it is exceedingly abundant.

The Puffin is subject to precisely the same kind of seasonal changes in its plumage as those which take place in the Auks and the Guillemots. The black throat-mark being peculiar to summer, the whole of the throat at the opposite season is either white or greyish white; the colour of the bill, which is clear and vivid in the spring, becomes more clouded, and the yellow at the angle of the mouth less prominent or dilated. The bill of very young birds, while dressed in the first costume of black down, differs but little from that of the young Guillemot; but it soon begins to resemble that of the adult; it is not, however, until the second year that it attains the full normal form. For what particular purpose can the strong hooked claws of this bird have been given to it? Is it for clinging to the branches of seaweed and corallines during its search for crustaceans and other aquatic creatures at the bottom of the deep, or to enable the bird to excavate the hole for the deposit of its egg? I think the former is the more likely reason, because the bird does not, I believe, confine itself to fish, although it is upon that kind of food that its newly hatched young are mostly fed. How often have I seen a lengthened row of silver sprats hanging from the beak of an old bird, when flying in a straight line just above the surface of the water towards the rocks, upon which the young were patiently waiting! How evenly were they arranged along the bill, from the gap to the tip! How beautifully they glittered in the sun!

The Plate represents an adult, and a young bird of a week old, of the natural size. The distant scenery is intended to represent one of the "rookeries" of Guillemots and Razorbills, which, with Puffins, make up the general mass. The bird in the air is the Peregrine Falcon.