

Wolley from Finland :—‘ I expect that henceforth the Spotted Redshank will always start up in my memory at the mention of Lapland : it is so peculiar to the country, so remarkable in its appearance in summer, and so often attracts attention by its striking actions ; added to which, my ignorance of its nest and eggs for a whole year after my arrival thus far north kept up in my mind the liveliest interest concerning it. It was easy to talk about a bird with so much character ; and I soon found it was known amongst the people by several names, all more or less expressive ; and in my drives about Finland and into Norway during the winter I had heard from so many quarters accounts of its nesting-peculiarities, that I only waited for its return here to verify them. It came as soon as the snow was off the ground, and laid its eggs with very little delay. At this time a singular call is heard in the marshes, which the Fins express by the sound *reevat*, corresponding to a word in their language meaning an evil spirit ; and one of the names of the bird is taken from it—a name always spoken with a spiteful emphasis by rein-deer stalkers ; for the Rivatter is as mischievous to them as the grey crow is to a Highland forester, or a gull to a seal-shooter ; but the cry with which it spoils their sport is *tjeuty* ; and from this another name is derived, generally coupled with the distinctive epithet corresponding to black, or with one meaning burnt wood ; but whether this last is taken from the colour of the bird, or from a common place of resort for it, or both, I am not sure. Certain it is that this black bird not unfrequently lays its eggs in a part of the forest which has formerly been burnt ; and here is one of its most unexpected peculiarities—a marsh-bird choosing the driest possible situation, even hills of considerable height and covered with forest timber. I have seen two nests so placed ; and one of them was on ground which, from the charred wood lying about, had evidently been burnt at some former period. They were nearly at the top of long hills many hundreds of yards from any marshy places, and with good-sized fir trees on all sides ; but they were not in the thickest part of the forest ; and the vegetation on the ground round about was very scanty, diminutive heather and such like plants growing thinly amongst short reindeer lichen. Here they were placed in slight depressions of the ground near some small ancient logs so nearly buried as to afford no shelter, on a bedding of only a few dry leaves of Scotch fir. The bird sometimes sits so close that one is tempted to try to catch it with the hand. Its white back is conspicuous as it crouches with its neck drawn in ; and it either gets up at once or runs a short way before it rises, and then flies round with an occasional *tjeuty*, or stands upon the top of a neighbouring tree, showing the full length of its slender legs, neck, and bill. But it is not until it has young that all its powers are brought into play : it then comes far to meet any intruder, floating over him with a clear cry that echoes through the forest, or may be heard over a great extent of marsh, or stands very near, bowing its head and opening its bill quite wide in the energy of its gesticulation. The eggs, four in number, are of a rich green ground-colour when fresh, or sometimes of a bright brown. This year they were laid hereabouts at the end of May. The young are probably carried into marshy land as soon as they are hatched ; for there they are to be found while still very small. I am told that dry mounds rising out of swamps are sometimes chosen as breeding-places.

‘ The nests described were stumbled upon in walking through the forest, where the bird is scattered usually at wide intervals, only two or three pairs being seen in the course of a long day’s walk. The bird is so wary that I have never succeeded in watching it to its nest.’ ”

It must not, however, be supposed that Norway and Finland are the only countries in which it summers and performs the duty of reproduction ; for there can be but little doubt that all suitable situations in similar latitudes of the Old World are alike resorted to, and consequently that it is as plentiful in northern Russia, Siberia, and Mongolia as it is in the far west. I presume, at least, that such is the case, because we know that it is a winter resident in North Africa, India, and China ; and we may therefore conclude that the individuals frequenting those countries pass vernal and autumnally north and south ; this it is pretty certain is the route of the Woodcock, and doubtless of this bird also.

Mr. Hewitson has figured three beautiful varieties of the eggs of this species, and remarks that they vary as “ much as those of the Terns, while in the elegance of their form they are truly typical of the eggs of the *Scolopacidae*.”

Of the three figures above mentioned one is greenish olive, blotched (particularly round the middle) with dark and reddish brown ; the second is pale greyish green, similarly but not so much marbled with brown ; and the third is of a tawny hue, blotched all over with dark and purplish brown.

The front figure in the Plate represents the bird in the full summer dress, the centre one that of immaturity, and the reduced figure in the distance that of winter. The two former are of the natural size.