

paragraph appeared:—" *Rara avis*. A beautiful specimen of a rare bird, the Cream-Coloured Courser, *Cursorius Europæus*, was shot this week in Hackney Marsh, near the Victoria Station, by Mr. G. Beresford, of the White House. It was found in the open marsh, and ran with incredible swiftness, and it was very difficult to make it take wing."

In October 1864 a specimen was killed near Maryport, in Cumberland, and is now in the possession of Mr. T. H. Allis, of York: this is the last instance known to me of the occurrence of the bird in Britain. It will be observed that all the specimens enumerated have been taken in England, and always in autumn. On the continent of Europe it is scarcely more plentiful than with us, excepting in the more southern countries, in the neighbourhood of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, bordering on the native habitat of the species, where, as might naturally be inferred, its appearance is more frequent. The very aspect of the bird, whether we regard its buff- or sand-coloured plumage, or the peculiar structure of its legs, indicates that it is a denizen of desert and sandy plains, a creature of the Sahara; and in such localities it dwells throughout the greater part of Africa, north of the equator, from Tunis to Egypt, in Persia, and in the Punjab and Scinde, whence I have received several examples; I have also a specimen from the Cape de Verd Islands.

For a knowledge of its eggs we are indebted to the researches of the Rev. H. B. Tristram, who sent to Mr. Hewitson the following notes respecting them:—"Although during the winter of 1856-57 I penetrated several hundred miles into the Algerian Sahara, and beyond its limits as far as between latitude  $31^{\circ}$  and  $30^{\circ}$ , yet this bird only once came under my observation, being evidently for the most part only a summer migrant to those regions. In the month of June 1857 I twice met with small flocks of them on the Hauts plateaux, between Biskra and Batna, to the south of Constantine. During the previous summer of 1856 I had met with the bird several times in the Western Sahara, north of Leghouat, and especially in the neighbourhood of Ain Oosera, a solitary caravansary in the desert, kept up by the French government as a halting-place. Though certain the birds were breeding there at the time, I was unable to detect their nest; but shortly after my departure the keeper of the caravansary, who had assisted me in my search, and who had in previous years frequently taken the eggs and cooked them as omelets along with those of *Pterocles setarius*, found me the nest and sent me the eggs, which, he affirms, are always three in number, as indeed might have been expected from the character of the bird. It makes no nest whatever, but deposits its eggs on the bare soil in the most arid plains. They bear a very striking resemblance both in shape and colour to some of the eggs of the Norfolk Plover. The delicate undulations are not easily imitated in a drawing."

The above notes are extracted from Mr. Hewitson's paper on "Recent Discoveries in European Oology," published in the 'Ibis' for 1859, in the plate accompanying which the egg is represented as nearly round in form, and of a delicate pale buff or cream-colour, minutely streaked with pale violet, orange, and light red.

Of the isolated and well-defined genus to which this bird belongs, five, six, or seven species are known. They are all natives of Africa and the hotter parts of India, and are so swift of foot, and turn so frequently when running, as to present the appearance of pieces of paper blown about by the wind.

The general plumage of the adults is of a light cinnamon-brown, becoming much paler on the under surface, especially on the chin and abdomen, which parts are nearly white; forehead cinnamon-red; occiput and part of the nape ashy grey; back of the neck black; from above the eye to the occiput a band of snow-white, and below it another of black; primaries brownish black; secondaries brownish black on the inner web, cinnamon-brown on the outer, with a small patch of brownish black near the extremities, and the tips white; tail pale cinnamon, all, except the two central feathers, with a conspicuous, somewhat crescent-shaped, mark of blackish brown near the extremity, beyond which the tip is white; the black marks occupy both webs of all the feathers on which they occur, except the outer one, on which the black mark is absent from the external web; they are scarcely perceptible when the tail is closed; bill fleshy brown at the base, blackish brown towards the tip; legs and feet creamy white; nails black; irides brown.

The young birds until they are nearly adult have the feathers of the upper surface crossed near the tip by a narrow band of dark brown; in other respects the old and young are very similar.

The Plate represents two adults and a young bird; the front figure is of the natural size, the others somewhat reduced.