

in winter, and spend the day in wading about the marshes, collect together regularly about sunset, and fly in a compact body to the jungles at the head of the lake, where they roost. They appear to pursue exactly the same course every evening; and I used always to consider their appearance in a body a sign that it was time to take up my post for shooting Ducks, in a small marshy pool between the proper right of the Butrinto river and the rocks which shut in the valley to the north. The Egrets almost invariably flew over this pool from west to east, and generally preceded the first flight of Ducks by about ten minutes."

The Rev. H. B. Tristram, in his "Notes on the Ornithology of North Africa," states that the Little White Egret is "universally distributed in small numbers wherever a suitable locality exists, and frequents familiarly the gardens and ditches of the oases. It breeds in society on the lake Tetzara, and, doubtless, in more southern marshes also." Mr. C. F. Tyrwhit Drake remarks that a few may usually be seen in winter at Martine, in Eastern Morocco.

Mr. J. H. Gurney says that the bird frequents the Bay of Natal, in South-eastern Africa, but is much more numerous about the swamps of the Transvaal; and Captain Sperling, R.N., that it occurs at Mozambique and Zanzibar, and probably on the intermediate coast of the Ethiopian Region of Africa.

"Not even Lac Halloula, in Algeria," says Mr. Tristram, in his "Notes on the Ornithology of Palestine," "can rival the marshes of Huleh (Meroni) as a paradise for Herons, with this advantage, that the breeding-places are wholly inaccessible to man. That treacherous swamp, extending for seven miles, with its deadly malaria, affords a secure haven, under its waving tufts of papyrus, for any number of Heronries." Among the many species of the *Ardeidae* there met with by him, the Little Egret was common, but scattered, and not very sociable.

Capt. Beavan includes it in the avifauna of the Andaman Islands, the truth of which is confirmed by Col. Tytler, who remarks, "I have had this species alive and identified it."

According to Dr. Jerdon the Little Egret is very abundant in India; and there it always nests and lays its four or five blue-green eggs in trees—a statement confirmed by Capt. Beavan.

Mr. Swinhoe states "it is common at Amoy all the year round, and builds in heronries in large banyan trees. It is also abundant at Hongkong, Macao, and Canton; and in Formosa it is a very common resident species, associating (especially in summer) in large flocks, and breeding in company in bamboo and other plantations. I procured a fine male, in full plumage, on the 14th of March."

Dr. Schlegel informs us that the specimens killed in Japan are precisely like those from the other countries inhabited by the bird.

With regard to Australia, I have three or four specimens from that country, which appear to be quite identical with European examples; and C. Coxen, Esq., of Brisbane, has sent me an excellent photograph of the bird in its finest state of plumage: it is a species not yet figured in my folio work on the birds of that country, though noticed at p. 305 of the Handbook.

Meyer says:—"The localities usually resorted to by the Little Egret are the swampy banks of rivers and lakes where the flags and reeds are of low growth, or the vicinity of woods and large trees (in which it roosts at night). Its flight is rather quicker than that of the larger species; but in windy weather it is very helpless and is obliged to skim low over the bushes and reeds from one piece of water to another. But when the weather is fine, it may be seen, if startled by intrusion of any kind, circling high up in the air, as if surveying the neighbourhood before it finally decides upon its course." It is said that it may be partially domesticated if taken young, and that its habits and manners are then gentle and harmless: it is also stated that its ornamental plumes were formerly used to decorate the helmets of warriors, as they still are by the Persians and Turks.

"This little Heron," says Bailly, in his 'Ornithologie de la Savoie,' "is occasionally killed on the borders of the Rhone, the Iser, the lakes of Bourget, and the Marches and their very marshy environs. It generally appears singly or in small companies of from two to five, rarely in greater numbers, at two periods of the year—in April or the first half of May, when it is clothed in its beautiful wedding-garment, and again towards the end of July or the beginning of August, with its autumn dress more or less complete. About the same time it appears on the lakes and marshes of Switzerland, but rarely visits the interior of that country. Being not very wild, it readily admits of approach, whether seeking its food among reeds and grasses, or perched on the trunk of a tree or on a stone. During its stay with us it feeds upon the spawn of frogs and fish, young frogs, fish, worms, leeches and small reptiles. It nests in Sardinia and Sicily, selecting for that purpose damp and marshy places suited to the habits of wading and aquatic birds, several couples breeding in company. The eggs are from three to five in number, pointed at both ends, and of a very pale greenish blue, without spots."

The Plate represents the bird a trifle less than the natural size, with reduced figures in the distance.