

Presently the lads called out to me that they had found some young Cranes. As I ran towards them, a Crane (not the one I had previously seen) rose just before me from among some bushes which were only two or three feet high, and not twenty yards from the place where the lads had been shouting for at least a minute or two. It rose into the air in a hurried frightened way. There was nothing just at the spot where it got up, neither eggs nor young. I then went up to where the two little Cranes were found. They were standing upright and walking about with some facility, and making a rather loud "cheeping" cry. They seemed as if they could have left such eggs as Cranes were supposed to lay only a very few days. I say *supposed*; for in England we know nothing of the eggs which are called Cranes', but which may have come from any part of the world. They were straightly made little things, short in the beak, livid in the eye, thick in the knees, covered with a moderately long chestnut or tawny-coloured down, darker on the upper parts, softening away into paler underneath. As I fondled one of them it began to peck playfully at my hands and legs, and when at length I rose to go away, it walked after me, taking me, as I supposed, for one of its long-legged parents. I had only just before been plucking from it some bits of down to keep; for, valuable as I knew it to be in a natural history point of view, I could not make up my mind to take its life. As soon as I saw its inclination to follow, I took to double-quick time, and left it far behind. Its confidence was the more remarkable as all the time we were with it the old Cranes were flying round near the ground at some distance from us, their necks and feet fully stretched out as usual, but with a remarkable sudden casting up of the wings in a direction over the back after each downward stroke, in place of the ordinary steady movement. At the same time they were making a peculiar kind of low clattering or somewhat gurgling noise, of which it is very difficult to give a description; and now and then they broke out into a loud trumpeting call not unlike their grand ordinary notes, which, audible at a great distance, gladden the ears of the lover of nature.

"The Crane in Lapland is not gregarious when it has once arrived at its summer quarters. As soon as it reaches its breeding-place (for the most part as soon as the snow is mainly off the ground), it repairs its simple nest, and lays its two eggs; for two were in each of the four nests that have occurred to me, and two generally say those few natives who know anything about the subject. The nest is neither large nor concealed. The birds are silent towards intruders on the eggs. The young run probably as soon as, or soon after, they are hatched, and by some means are led or conveyed to a great distance by their parents after having been disturbed. They have a chestnut or tawny down, no feathers visible in their wings for some time. In Lapland, and, as far as I have heard, in Sweden and Finland, the Crane never breeds otherwise than on the ground."

"The Common Crane of Europe," says Mr. Jerdon, "visits India in numerous flocks during the cold weather. In the Deccan and Central India it is generally seen in small parties of from six or eight to twenty, and now and then in much larger numbers, especially in the Punjab and the North-western Provinces. It feeds chiefly on grain, committing great havoc in the wheat- and rice-fields in Bengal; but it also eats the shoots of plants and flowers, and occasionally, it is said, insects and reptiles. On one occasion I found the flowers of *Carthamus tinctorius* had been the only food partaken of. In China it is stated to devour sweet potatoes. It feeds chiefly in the morning, and rests during the day in some river or tank, returning to the fields for a short time in the afternoon. It utters a fine, loud, trumpet-like call, chiefly during flight. It leaves India early, generally before the end of March, and breeds in Northern Asia and Europe, mostly in marshy ground. The eggs are two in number, of a greenish colour, with some brownish spots. This Crane is occasionally hawked at and killed by a good Bhyri (*Falco peregrinus*)."

For the following note on the breeding of this bird in Spain, I am indebted to Major L. H. Irby:—"The Common Crane, known to the Spaniards by the name of 'Grulla,' is very plentiful in winter in Southern Spain and Morocco, arriving in October and leaving in March. I was unable to find or hear of any nesting in Morocco; but a few pairs, varying in number according to the wetness of the season, annually occur at the Laguna de Janda, about twenty miles from Tarifa, on the road to Cadiz; a few also sometimes nest at the Laguna near Casa Viega, about ten miles further to the northward. The maximum number nesting in these two places is about twenty-five or thirty pairs. These lagunes generally become dry in August. In some years a few pairs nest in the marismas of the Guadalquivir, but not, so far as I am aware, in any other locality. The nest is always placed in the laguna, and is simply a collection of grass and rushes raised above the level of the water, in which never more than two eggs are laid. About the 5th of May is the earliest date on which they begin to lay; and eggs hard set and only fit to hatch have been found on the 10th of June. The shape and colouring of the eggs found in different nests vary a good deal in size, shape, and colour; but those in each nest are always alike in these respects. They usually resemble the markings and colour of the Great Bustard; but a rare and beautiful variety, more elongated and of a coffee-creamy brown colour, beautifully marked at the larger end with reddish brown, is occasionally found."

The principal figure in the Plate is about one third of the natural size.