

have conjectured the Sand-Grouse, '*Kata*,' or the desert Shieldrake, *Casarca rutila*, found about salt lakes, a most uneatable bird; while Dean Stanley has put forward the idea of 'large red-legged Cranes, three feet high, with black and white wings, measuring seven feet from tip to tip,' by which he undoubtedly means the White Stork, the innumerable flights of which literally darkened the sky, he states, when camping near the Wady Huderah (Sinai & Palestine, p. 82).

"It is undoubtedly true that vast flocks of all these three species of birds do visit the Sinaitic desert at the time of migration; and I have also seen the Black Stork in almost as large numbers; while the Dean suggests the possibility of the Stork on account of its standing three feet high, and thus explaining the statement of their being two cubits from the ground. But besides that the flesh of these birds is abominable for food, while the Sand-Grouse is very dry and hard, and could scarcely have fully satisfied the hungry people, we have a clear proof of the identity of the Common Quail with the Hebrew '*selav*' in its Arabic name '*salwa*,' from a root signifying 'to be fat,'—very descriptive of the round plump form and fat flesh of the Quail. The expression 'as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth' probably refers to the height at which the Quails fly above the ground.

"There are several expressions in the scriptural account which are borne out by observations of the habits of the Quail. At all times its flight is very low, just skimming the surface of the ground, and, especially when fatigued, it keeps close. It migrates in vast flocks, and regularly crosses the Arabian desert, flying for the most part at night; and when the birds settle they are so utterly exhausted that they may be captured in any numbers by the hand. Being birds of weak flight they instinctively select the shortest sea-passages, and avail themselves of any island as a halting-place. Thus in spring and autumn they are slaughtered in numbers on Malta and many of the Greek islands, which they quit in a day or two, very few being seen until the period of migration comes round again. They also fly with the wind, never facing it, like many other birds.

"The period when they were brought to the Camp of Israel was in spring, when on their northward migration from Africa. According to their well-known instinct they would follow up the coast of the Red Sea till they came to its bifurcation by the Sinaitic Peninsula, and then, with a favouring wind, would cross at the narrow part, resting near the shore before proceeding. Accordingly we read that the wind brought them up from the sea, and that, keeping close to the ground, they fell thick as rain about the camp, in the month of April according to our calculation. Thus the miracle consisted in the supply being brought to the tents of Israel by the special guidance of the Lord, in exact harmony with the known habits of the bird. The Israelites 'spread them' out, when they had taken them before they were sufficiently refreshed to escape, 'round about the camp' to dry and prepare them for food, exactly as Herodotus tells us the Egyptians were in the habit of doing with Quails, drying them in the sun.

"We thus see on careful comparison how the most ancient of all historical works and natural history reflect attesting lights on each other.

"The Quail's note, when once heard, will be always recognized—'Peek-whit-whit!' rapidly repeated, and somewhat resembling the sound of some species of locust. The bird is not gregarious during the breeding-season, and rears large bevvies of young, sometimes as many as sixteen in a brood. It is too well known to require description, and a Quail of the year is considered the most delicate eating of all game."

The mode of incubation of the Quail is very similar to that of the Partridge, the female depositing her eggs in a slight depression in the ground, either natural or scratched for their reception, in the centre of corn-fields, or amidst the covert of bordering scrubs or rough patches of ground. "The eggs," says Mr. Hewitson, "vary much in number, being from six to fourteen, though most commonly ten; they differ also in colour and markings." The egg figured by him as most characteristic of the species is of a deep buff, largely blotched round the centre with deep brown, has numerous reddish dots and stains over the remainder of its surface, and a large patch of dark brown near the smaller end; it measures one inch and a quarter in length by seven-eighths in breadth: a variety figured on the same plate is pale buff, numerously spotted all over with minute marks of deep brown and purple; and Mr. Hewitson says there are more as strikingly different.

The high spirit, ardour, and pugnacity of the Quail have been celebrated from ancient times to the present. "As quarrelsome as Quails in a cage" was a Greek proverb; and Quail-fighting was a favourite amusement with the Greeks and Romans, who kept it in numbers for this purpose as our forefathers did game-cocks; and in India and China Quail-fighting as well as Cock-fighting is still a popular amusement.

The Plate represents a male and female and a clutch of young ones, all of the natural size. The plants are the common Daisy and the Speedwell (*Veronica chamædrys*, Linn.).