bird-life that exists is the Pheasant and the familiar little Robin. In these secluded retreats it noiselessly searches for fallen acorns, wild nuts, and such insect-food as its prying eye may detect. In the spring-time it becomes more noisy and animated, frequents the outer glades and pathways, builds on some low tree often within reach of the hand, and, if the nest be not detected by the keeper or juvenile birds-nester, it rears its four or five young ones, which, as soon as they are fledged, follow in the train of their parents for the remainder of the autumn. Sometimes two or three broods unite and form a small community, which appear to live in harmony. In their usual habits they are still and quiet; but a poaching cat, snared hare, prowling fox, or anything strange is sure to attract their attention; their energies are then aroused, they become all animation, and their garrulous and harsh cry is oft repeated. This trait in the character of the Jay is at least useful to the keeper of game, as it directs him at once to the spot where danger to the objects of his care may be apprehended. In its thievish habit of stealing eggs the Jay displays great energy and diligence, descending to the lowest branches of the trees and surveying everything with the most prying and inquisitive eye. Strictly omnivorous, it also feeds on chafers and other large Coleopterous insects, worms, mice, frogs, young birds, &c.: this kind of food is varied with the fruits of the wild-cherry berries, or any of the products of the garden. Besides uttering its own harsh, disagreeable note, it has a power of mimicry, excelling, perhaps, that of any other bird; every sound, from the crowing of a cock to the mewing of a cat, being within the range of its imitative powers.

Notwithstanding the rather bad character I have given to the Jay, I am sure that, from the nobleman down to the humblest lover of nature, we should all be sorry not to have the bird amongst us. Let a necessary check only be exercised to keep its numbers within bounds, and the "larder" of the keeper be more sparingly graced than it usually is; and let us see less of the revolting sight so frequently exhibited, of numbers of this bird impaled, with many others so wrongfully called vermin. What would our existence be without bird-life in all its varied forms? It may be truly said to be one of the most pleasing of Nature's works. The colours of the Jay, when seen during flight, are very attractive; for the white of its upper tail-coverts and its wing-markings are then displayed to great advantage, and their hues form a striking contrast to the colours of the other parts of the plumage. On a nearer acquaintance, the delicacy of its tints and the beauty of its wings are very charming; and surely it is not the province of any of our great landed pro-

prietors utterly to destroy this handsome bird.

The nest is of a cup-shaped form, about 9 inches in diameter, and is constructed of crooked sticks and coarse roots, neatly lined with other extremely fine hair-like roots and a few hairs. The eggs are five or six in number, and of a yellowish white, thickly speckled all over with light brown; they are 1 inch and 4 lines in length, by 1 inch in breadth.

Like other Corvine birds, little or no difference is observable in the colouring of the sexes; neither are the young differently clothed—a nest of young Jays, by the time they are ready to fly, exhibiting all the colours

with which their parents are adorned.

Forehead and space around the eye greyish white, with a streak of black down the centre of each feather, the tips of those approaching the occiput becoming of the same cinnamon-brown hue as the back and sides of the neck, back, and lesser wing-coverts; from each side of the lower mandible a broad streak of black, forming a conspicuous moustache; chin dull white; breast and abdomen grey, washed with vinous brown, which becomes the prevailing hue on the flanks; lower part of the abdomen, vent, thighs, upper and under tail-coverts white: greater wing-coverts barred on their external webs and at the tip of the inner web with black, deep and pale blue alternately, the base of the inner web brown; primaries black, all but the first margined with dull white; secondaries black, the basal half of the external web snow-white; tertiaries barred across the base of the outer web with blue, the two or three nearest the body chestnut, tipped with black; tail dull black, indistinctly barred with blue at the base, the outer feather paler than the others above, and greyish beneath; legs, feet, and claws flesh-colour; bill black, becoming of a fleshy hue at the base of the under mandible; irides pale-bluish white.

The Plate represents an adult male of the natural size, and a female in the distance.