CORVUS MONEDULA, Linn.

Jackdaw.

Or the true Corvine birds inhabiting the British Islands the Raven is the largest, and the most formidable, and is generally regarded as a bird of ill omen. The Carrion-Crow and its near ally, the Hooded, are among most persons scarcely more in favour, from the depredations they commit; the Rook, on the other hand, has commended himself to us by his social habits, while the Jackdaw and Chough are especial favourites with all.

To say that the Jackdaw is strictly indigenous to the British Islands, that it is gregarious, and that it associates with Rooks for the greater part of the year will not be adding to the information regarding it already recorded; yet such affirmations are necessary whenever the subject is treated of in an independent work. I have said that the Jackdaw is an especial favourite; and so he really is. If left unmolested, he has no natural shyness, and we feel no repugnance at his intrusion when he forces himself on our notice during the greater part of his life; for when he is not in the fields among the Rooks or in a little company of his own kind, he is enlivening with his presence the castellated towers of a royal palace, the minster of some cathedral town, the ivy-clad tower of a famed ruin, the gateway of an ancient abbey, or the more humble clock-tower of some of the many borough towns which exist from one end of our island to the other. To all such places he resorts at one or other time of the day, but more especially in the early morning and in the evening. It is true that some Daws spend the days of autumn and winter wholly with the Rooks, and return with them every evening to their roosting-place in the woods, as I noticed many did while making my observations on the vast assemblages of Rooks at Tregothnan, in Cornwall. The strings of these birds that came in from every point of the compass to the common centre of the great assembly were each accompanied by Jackdaws, which always betrayed their presence by their loquacious cackling. In the spring, however, a complete separation of the two birds takes place—a separation which, although remarkable, is in strict conformity with the different instincts, habits, and economy of the two species. I commenced this memoir with an enumeration of the British Corvine birds, and I will now add a few words on their nidification. The formidable Raven is the first to breed, its nest being formed in January or in the beginning of the ensuing month; the Crow is a little later; the Rook, when Valentine's day comes round, may be seen coquetting with his mate; the impulses of the Daw do not, however, prompt him to perform this duty so early, and it is fully a month later before he weds; and the pairs betake themselves, for the purpose of breeding, to belfries, towers, church-steeples, precipitous rocks on the sea-shore, pits of chalk, old gateways in towns, holes of pollard trees, or deserted rabbit- and fox-holes on the hillside. It is not until the beginning of April that they collect sticks and roots to make a platform for the future nest, and wool, old rags, or other soft materials to line it with. Now, however, they may be seen actively passing to and fro the whole day long. At this time, in some situations, the Jackdaw becomes more shy and wary than at any other season, and upon being disturbed quits the pit-side with the greatest haste, or bustles out of a hole in the ground with the utmost turbulence; a short flight, however, is all he takes, perhaps only to the top of the nearest poplar, where he quietly sits until danger is past, and then returns to finish his nest or complete any other task upon which he may have been engaged. Many are the accounts on record of the extraordinary amount of materials taken down some deserted chimney or deposited on the narrow staircase of a little-frequented belfry. Apparently the sole aim of the bird is to build on from time to time, and pile up from year to year sufficient to raise its nest to the mouth of the opening; and if left undisturbed for a number of years, it generally succeeds in accomplishing its object.

Mr. Wolley informed Mr. Hewitson that he saw the nest in the turret at Eton mentioned by Mr. Jesse in his 'Gleanings,' and that it was, he believes, raised no less than nine feet from the foundation. Taking its rise from two or three steps of the circular stairs, it was built up compactly, and of a nearly uniform breadth, to a lancet window in the perpendicular wall, the bottom of which window was not otherwise sufficiently wide to support a nest. Referring to the point in dispute, whether or not birds of the Crow

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