CORVUS CORNIX, Linn.

Hooded Crow.

Corvus cornix, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 30.

— cinereus, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. and Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 18.

— subcornix, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 168.

Corone cornix, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 99.

The Hooded Crow is strictly a migrant in the southern parts of England, arriving from the north early in October and departing again in April. All, however, do not leave us; for individuals have been known to remain, form an alliance, and occasionally breed with the Common Crow; still such alliances must be regarded as exceptional. Those who have visited the flat shores of the lower part of the Thames, the open pastures of Suffolk and Hertfordshire (particularly near Royston, in the latter county, whence its trivial name of Royston Crow), the rabbit-warrens of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, or similar districts in other parts of England, must have frequently seen this species. Lord Lilford informs me that in Northamptonshire "a few pairs make their appearance early in November, and frequent the valley of the Nene; and in that of the Welland, which separates North Hants from Rutland and Leicestershire, it is even more common." A few words only are necessary to give the reader an idea of its distribution over other parts of England. In autumn, winter, and early spring it is spread over nearly all our flat shores, from north to south and from east to west, as well as in similar situations in Scotland and Ireland. The rich arable lands of the interior are, as a rule, without its presence; there the Common Crow takes its place.

The Hooded Crow is said to be very rarely found in Iceland, and not in Greenland or America. On the continent of Europe its dispersion is as general as in our islands in all situations congenial to its habits. It is abundant in the Crimea, in Palestine, Asia Minor, and on the banks of the Nile. So far as we yet know, it does not occur in India; neither, I believe, is it found in South Africa, although it proceeds from the shores of the Mediterranean into the interior of the northern part of that continent. In Egypt and Palestine it is the foster-parent (and, according to Mr. Tristram and Mr. Taylor, the only foster-parent in those countries) of the Spotted Cuckoo (Oxylophus glandarius), whose very dissimilar eggs it hatches and rears the young, just as the small birds do here the egg and young of the Common Cuckoo (Cuculus canorus). How strange is all this! and how little do we know of the influence these parasitic birds exercise over those by which they are surrounded, both great and small! "In Norway," we learn from Mr. Hewitson, "it inhabits here and there the boundless forest, but never at any great distance from the sea, arising probably from its partiality to shell-fish." Mr. Wheelwright only saw a single pair in the district of Quickiock, in Lapland.

"Although somewhat more sociable than the Carrion Crow or Raven, the Hooded Crow," says Macgillivray, "is not gregarious; for, although four or five individuals may often be seen together, more than that number seldom convene unless when attracted by an abundant supply of food. It derives its subsistence from carrion, dead fish, crabs, echini, mollusca, larvæ, grain, and other matters, being fully as promiscuous a feeder as the Carrion Crow or the Raven, although it certainly prefers fish and mollusca to large carcasses, and very rarely feeds upon a stranded whale or even a domestic animal. Young lambs are favourite delicacies, and in severe seasons sometimes afford an abundant temporary supply. I am not, however, inclined to believe that it often destroys those animals, or that it ventures to attack sickly sheep. In districts frequented by it, you commonly find it along the shore, sometimes among the rocks, searching for crabs and shell-fish (which it has sagacity enough, when it cannot otherwise open them, to raise in the air and drop to the ground), sometimes on the beach, especially if fish or echini have been cast up. The latter are so frequently devoured by them in the Hebrides that they have obtained the name of Hooded-Crows' cups."

St. John, speaking of the Hooded Crow in Sutherland, says it is "numerous everywhere, in spite of traps and guns. Wary and strong, they manage to evade all attempts at their extirpation, and to keep up their indiscriminate and wholesale destruction of eggs of every kind. I consider the Hooded Crow to be the greatest enemy to game, and, indeed, to all other birds, that we have.

"There are one or two grassy hillocks near the lakes, to which those mischievous robbers, the Hooded Crows, bring the eggs which they have pilfered, in order to eat them at their leisure; and, until I administered a dose of strychnia, I never passed these places without finding the fresh remains of