Its nest is one of the neatest and most elegant of the many beautiful structures built by our native birds—its lining of feathers and hair being admirably arranged, and its little freckled light-greenish-blue eggs equally charming to look upon. The materials of which the nest is composed appear to vary considerably. Mr. Hewitson describes it as "very small, of the most elegant construction, and formed of the stalks of plants, roots, moss, and dry grass, with hair towards the inside, and thickly and most beautifully lined with the catkins of the willow, equalling in whiteness and texture the finest cotton-wool;" he has, however, "found the nest without any of the last-mentioned material, hair, fine grasses, and feathers being substituted in its stead. The eggs are from four to six in number," of a light bluish grey, freckled with pale red and a few specks of dark brown near the larger end. The time of incubation is about the middle of June, and the young are able to fly at the end of the month or the beginning of July.

Macgillivray describes the flight of the Lesser Redpole as "peculiarly bounding and buoyant, and its voice remarkably clear and loud. When starting, it emits a hurried chatter of short notes, and as it proceeds on its flight utters a single note at intervals less prolonged than those of our other Linnets. Its cry is so different from that of the Brown Linnet and Twite, being clearer and sharper, that one who has attended to it can readily distinguish the species on the wing. Although not abundant in any part of the country, it forms large flocks in winter, and betakes itself to the birch- and alder-woods. I have also seen them in August scattered over a tract overgrown with thistles, the seeds of which they pick out precisely in the same manner as the Goldfinch does. On such occasions, unless they have previously been shot at or pursued, they take little heed of approaching danger; so that one may easily approach them, and even go so near as to snare them with a noose on a long stick or fishing-rod."

The summer and winter liveries of these little birds are very different. In the spring and during the season of reproduction the crown and breast of the male are beautifully tinted with red, which tint, contrary to the law which obtains with regard to most other birds, increases at the end of the season or after the duty of reproduction has been completed. The richness of this red colour appears to be due to the brown tips of the feathers becoming worn away or stripped off by the bird, and admitting the more brilliant part to become conspicuous; but it is very evanescent, soon fading on exposure to light. In autumn the bird moults, after which the males, females, and the young birds of the year are very similar; but the old males may be readily distinguished by the dull blood-red colouring of the crown.

The male has the lores, a band across the forehead, and the throat black, with a tinge of yellowish grey at the tip of each feather; crown of the head dull red; remainder of the upper surface yellowish brown, streaked with blackish brown; wing-coverts dark brown, tipped with pale yellowish brown, forming two bands when the wing is closed; the remainder of the wings and the tail dark brown margined with light brown; under surface pale brown, streaked with a dark tint; abdomen and under tail-coverts whitish.

The female is very similar, but has a smaller amount of red on the head, and no indication of that colour elsewhere.

In summer the bill of the male becomes greyish brown above and yellow beneath; the crown of the head crimson; the sides and front of the neck, the breast and flanks carmine red; the centre of the breast, the abdomen, and the under tail-coverts white tinged with rose-colour.

The dress of the female at this season is very similar to that of winter, but is perhaps somewhat lighter in its general hue.

The Plate represents a male, a female, and a nest and eggs, on a branch of the whitethorn (Cratægus Oxyacantha), all of the natural size.

TO THE PARTY OF TH