at once commenced feeding her young; in a day or two the male followed her example; and between them they reared their family with as much care, and apparently as much pleasure, as if they had still been in the woods. An old Siskin will eat out of the hands of its master a few days after it has been caught, and very soon seems to form a kind of acquaintance with, and attachment to, those who feed it. It is a cheerful, restless little bird, arrives in winter in large flocks, and feeds on the seeds of the alder and birch, and also on those of the thistle and many other weeds. Its song, though not varied or rich, is pleasing. In the spring it frequently utters a long harsh cry, like the noise of a file. The eggs are white, tinged with blue, and spotted with brown."

We learn from Mr. Hewitson's valuable work on British Birds' Eggs that "the nest is small, measuring in diameter, outside, three inches; inside, one inch and three quarters; depth of cavity, one inch and a quarter. It is composed outside of moss, twigs of the fir, and delicate vegetable fibres, lined with a few hairs and a little down; generally there is also a feather or two, and occasionally a little wool."

Mr. Wolf, the celebrated natural-history draughtsman, found the Siskin breeding in considerable numbers in most of the pine-woods at Guisachan, the seat of Sir Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, Bart., in Inverness-shire, about the middle of June 1867, and remarked that, as they flew up in the air, the yellow colouring of their wings and tail presented a pleasing contrast to the clear blue of the sky.

The Duke of Argyll tells me that it must occasionally incubate near Inverary, because he has seen young birds in August. Small flocks or family parties may be observed every winter in Dumbartonshire, feeding on the seeds of the alder and the birch; and it is common and breeds on the Dee-side.

In case I should not have been sufficiently particular in mentioning the parts of England in which the Siskin is found in spring, I may state, in a few words, that there is no county in which it has not been seen. Mr. Stevenson informs us that it is numerous in Norfolk: a flight of 40 or 50 passed over Keswick, near Norwich, on the 7th of March 1867. On the other hand, Mr. Rodd says it is rare in Cornwall; and Thompson that in Ireland it "can only be noted positively as an occasional winter visitant." Scotland, then, appears to be its principal home (a term by which I would designate only the country in which a bird habitually breeds): and that is precisely what we might expect; for that the bird is more a northern than a southern species is apparent from the fact of its inhabiting Norway, Sweden, Russia, Siberia, and Japan. I name the latter country with certainty, because I have compared examples procured therein with others killed in England, and found no difference whatever between them. It certainly proceeds southward as far as the Atlas range in North Africa; but Captain Loche states that its appearance in Algeria is irregular. As far as I am aware, it does not visit India, its place there being supplied by the Chrysomitris spinoides.

In summer both sexes undergo a partial change in their colouring, the head becoming black, the dark mark on the throat more clearly defined, the breast, wings, and tail yellower, and the spots on the flanks more apparent; but even at this season the colours are not so bright, or the markings so decided, as in the Goldfinch, of which, although nearly allied, it is but a feeble representative, both in appearance and in song, the vocal powers of the Siskin (or Aberdevine, as the bird is also called) consisting of a twittering jumble of low notes, deficient both in power and continuance.

To render my account of the Siskin more complete, I quote the following passage from that portion of Dr. Saxby's "Ornithological Notes from Shetland," which were published in the 'Zoologist' for 1866, because it treats of the bird in a locality I never before heard of its visiting, and on account of the difference in the character of the food of which it was partaking.

"After shooting the two Siskins mentioned in my communication for October last, I managed to obtain some very close views of the remainder of the flock. Some individuals were rather brilliantly tinged with yellow, and deeply marked with black; but others had scarcely any yellow, and, as far as could be ascertained, were without any black on the head. They all kept mostly to the outer branches of the trees, evidently preferring the sycamores—for what reason I knew not, until I discovered that their food consisted entirely of the Aphides which so infest that species. The whole flock was almost constantly in motion; and so eagerly did they pursue their employment, that it was difficult to confine my observations to any one member of it for more than half a minute at a time. Their mode of conducting their search for food instantly called to mind the Blue Tit: like it, they seemed fond of swinging, head downwards, from a leaf-stalk or a slender twig."

The Plate represents two males and a female, of the natural size, on a branch of the alder.