number, and sometimes assemble in small flocks. They now affect open upland districts, commons, sterile wastes, and all situations suited to the growth of their favourite thistle, groundsel, and plantain. This food, however, is not suitable for the young, and they are accordingly fed with caterpillars and other insects; hence considerable good must be effected by these birds during the breeding-season.

Independently of the British Islands, over which the bird is generally distributed, the Goldfinch inhabits all parts of the Continent, from Norway, Sweden, and Russia, to the Mediterranean and Black Seas; it is also found in Northern Africa, Asia Minor, and Persia, but not in India, its place there, or rather in the Himalayas, being supplied by another and equally interesting species, the *Carduelis caniceps*.

The history of the Goldfinch would be incomplete without an allusion to its capacity for receiving instruction, and the consequent readiness with which it may be taught many amusing tricks, such as drawing up water for itself, raising the lid of a small box to obtain the seeds within, feigning death, &c. I have already spoken of its prettiness, and I may add that its colouring is both harmonious and beautiful; its form also is graceful, elegant, and well-proportioned; the Goldfinch is, in fact, the gay gentleman of our smaller birds. In most instances where much decoration is given, it is usually confined to the male; but in the present case the two sexes are nearly alike.

Speaking of the Goldfinch in Scotland, Macgillivray states that it is "generally distributed in most of our wooded and cultivated districts; but while plentiful in some parts, it is rare in others that seem to be equally favourable. Thus, although not uncommon about Aberdeen and Elgin, it is very rare in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, in which I never met with more than a single flock." This statement is confirmed by the following note, with which I have been favoured by the Duke of Argyll:—"The Goldfinch is a rare bird in Dumbartonshire; but small parties are seen during the winter at uncertain intervals. In Argyleshire it is wholly absent, so far as I have observed, in the more wooded and in the more mountainous districts; but it is not uncommon, and appears regularly to breed, along some of the lower western shores. I have observed young birds, in considerable numbers, in the Ross of Mull."

The nest of the Goldfinch is placed indifferently among the trees of orchards, gardens, and plantations, at various heights, according to the suitability of the sites that occur, sometimes among the very topmost branches. A very beautiful nest, taken at Formosa, near Cookham, in Berkshire, in July 1860, was placed on one of the loftiest branches of a tall sycamore, and was curiously interwoven between the slender forks of the extremity of the branch; the interior was deep, the walls somewhat thick, and the whole presented a round and compact appearance. The exterior was mainly composed of one or two different kinds of bright green lichens, firmly interwoven with dried moss and spiders' webs; the interior was warmly lined with the downy cotton-like substance of the blossoms of the willow, intermingled with wool and a very few horsehairs, the three ingredients being felted together, so as to render it perfectly smooth and even. The eggs, four in number, were of a pale greenish stone-colour, somewhat faintly blotched with light reddish purple, the blotches becoming more numerous towards the larger end, and having among them a few very distinct patches of rich umber. The materials of the nest appear to vary considerably. One of two, formerly in the possession of the late T. C. Heysham, Esq., of Carlisle, was externally composed of dried bent grasses, interwoven with lichens, moss, and wool, beautifully lined with thistle-down and a few very fine hairs; the other was mainly formed of roots instead of grasses, and had a few feathers in its lining, besides the thistledown and hair. Mr. Macgillivray describes the nest as resembling that of the Chaffinch in form, but as being more elaborately interwoven with wool and hair,—the exterior being composed of moss and lichens, and occasionally thread, twigs, and other substances; the interior, of the down of various plants, cotton, and such other delicate filaments as the bird meets with. Mr. Salvin mentions that at Djendeli, in the Eastern Atlas, the Goldfinch builds a neat nest, composed almost entirely of the flowers of the tamarisk.

The plumage of the adult male and female are so accurately represented in the accompanying Plate, that it will not be necessary to append a minute description of them. The young birds of the year have the whole of the head, neck, back, and sides of the chest of a nearly uniform greyish brown; in other respects red towards the end of that month.

The two sexes are figured, of the natural size, on the Wild Teasel (Dipsacus sylvestris).