at the top. What next? will it creep down again? No; there it comes with headlong flight, glancing like an arrow, curves as it comes near the ground, alights at the very root of the next tree, and commences its ascent. You may watch it for an hour and you will find it as fresh, as lively, and as keen as ever. Should it happen to observe you, it will run up the back of the tree, appearing now and then on the sides, until it is perhaps halfway up, when it will search all parts alike, being free from the apprehension of injury. But now, hearing its friends the Tits and Reguli at a distance, it looks abroad for a moment from the top of the tree, and, uttering a few cries, sweeps away in a curving, somewhat undulatory course. Such is the ordinary action of the Creeper; and I have seldom observed one a single minute at rest. Yet, like other birds, it has its periods of cessation from labour; and in the breeding-season it is amusing to observe the gambols of a pair chasing each other along the trunk of a tree, perching for a moment on the branches, and then scudding away, all the while emitting their shrill and feeble notes. These birds are easily shot; for they seem to pay little attention to a person approaching them, insomuch that I have been within six feet of one, which yet did not fly off, but merely crept round to the other side of the tree. I suppose that it is destitute of song, never having heard it emit modulated sounds. It flight is generally short and rapid, from the top of one tree to the base of another; but it may sometimes be seen traversing a space of several hundred yards, with a quick and undulating motion, and at a considerable elevation.

"It is a permanent resident, occurs in all parts of the country, but is nowhere numerous, and never appears in flocks. In winter it shifts about from place to place, generally accompanying a flock of Tits or Kinglets, but sometimes seeking for its food solitarily, seldom entering small gardens, but often appearing in woods near houses, hedgerows, or even on large single trees. It pairs in April, and about the beginning of May commences the construction of its nest, which it places in a hole in a tree or rock, or among the roots in a mossy bank. It is composed of withered stalks and blades of grasses, moss, fibrous roots, and other materials, and is lined with feathers. The eggs, from five to seven or eight in number, are seven and a half twelfths of an inch in length, five twelfths in breadth, of a regular ovate form, glossy white sprinkled with dots and small patches of brownish red, often disposed in a broad belt at the larger end, and leaving the narrower half unspotted. Montagu states that 'during the time of incubation, the female is fed by the other sex, whenever she quits her nest in search of food.' The young are abroad by the middle of June, and I have reason to think that a second brood is frequently reared."

Probably there is no bird which selects a greater variety of sites for its nest, the side of a gate-post, the space beneath the tiles of a roofed shed, an interstice in the plaster of a wall, among the timbers in a wood-yard, or an old stack of hop-poles in a field, being all resorted to. I have many notes among my MSS. describing the different nests that have come under my notice; these are far too numerous for them all to be given here; but I select two or three of the more interesting examples.

A nest taken from under some tiles at Maidenhead was a ragged conglomeration of dried grasses, moss, leaves, and sawdusty cobwebs; the interior much neater, and lined with fine hair and grasses.

Another, from a fir-stack at Churt, near Farnham, presented a singularly beautiful yet strange appearance: it looked as if the bird had commenced by constructing a bristling platform of rough twigs with their ends all pointing outwards in different directions, after the manner of a "chevaux de frise;" the true nest, which was composed of coarse grasses, gradually becoming finer toward the interior, and lined with a few soft feathers and moss, was neatly placed in a slight depression in the midst of this platform, from which it was so distinct that one might fancy the bird had constructed the nest separately, and then placed it upon the platform. In it were five beautiful eggs, which were like, but very much smaller than those of the Willow Wren; their colour was pinky white, dotted all over with clear orange-red spots, but particularly at the larger end, where they formed a broken zone.

Mr. Smither, of Churt, informs me that if the nest be disturbed, the bird will remove the eggs; he has noticed that this has been done upon five different occasions, when he had taken some of the eggs from situations where he knew no one but himself could have been.

In justification of the epithet "mouse-like" I have applied to this species, I may mention that Professor Owen informs me that, while walking in his beautiful garden in Richmond Park, his son exclaimed "Why! a mouse has just run between the bark and stem of that Acacia." "Let's see," said the Professor, "what it means;" when out popped the little Creeper, and solved the mystery; and on examination its nest was found snugly ensconced in the crevice.

The sexes differ but little in size or in colour; but I have observed that very old birds when fresh moulted are more silvery in all their whiter parts than younger ones.

The Plate, which will give a better notion of the colouring of this bird than the most lengthy description, represents the two sexes and a brood of young, of the natural size. The Lichen is the *Usnea florida* of Linnæus.