partly to its cheerfulness and innocence. Its aspect is so peculiar that every person must have noticed it as differing from that of other small birds, the body being short and full, the tail elevated or erected, the wings diminutive, and the feet moderate. Excepting the Kinglets, the Creeper, the Chiff-chaff, and the smaller Tits, it is the least of our native birds. Its flight is effected by a rapid and continuous motion of the wings, and therefore is not undulated but direct; nor is it sustained, for the bird merely flits from one bush to another, or from stone to stone. It is most frequently met with along stone walls, among fragments of rocks, in thickets of whins, and by hedges, where it attracts notice by the liveliness of its motions, and frequently by its loud chirring noise. When standing, it keeps its tail nearly erect, and jerks its whole body smartly; then it hops about with great alacrity, using its wings at the same time, and continually enunciating its rapid chit. Although it seldom ascends a tree directly, it may often be seen climbing to some height, and on fences and bushes it usually makes its way to the top by hopping from one spot to another. If usually pleased with a low station, it sometimes ascends even to the higher branches of very tall trees, and may occasionally be seen there in company with Kinglets or Tits. In spring and summer, the male utters a very pleasing, full, rich, and mellow song, which it repeats at intervals; and even in autumn, and on fine days in winter, it may occasionally be heard hurrying over its ditty, the loudness and clearness of which, as proceeding from so diminutive a creature, excites one's surprise, even after it has become familiar.

"The nests are found in a great variety of situations—very often in a recess overhung by a bank, sometimes in a crevice among stones, in the hole of a wall, or of a tree, among the thatch of a cottage or outhouse, on the loft of a shed or barn, the branch of a tree whether growing along a wall or standing free, among ivy, honeysuckle, clematis, or other climbing plants. When the nest is on the ground, its base is generally formed of leaves, twigs, and straws, and its exterior is often similar; but when otherwise, the

outer surface is generally smooth, and chiefly composed of moss.

"Mr. Neville Wood states that the Wren often builds itself a dwelling in autumn, and lodges in it on cold nights. Frequently also the nests in which one or two broods have been reared in summer, are tenanted every night throughout winter.'

"On this subject Mr. Weir has sent me the following remarks:—'During the period of incubation, the male (says an anonymous writer in 'Loudon's Magazine'), apparently from a desire to be doing something, constructs as many as half a dozen nests in the vicinity of the first, none of which are lined with feathers; and whilst the first nest is so artfully concealed as to be seldom found, the latter are very frequently seen.' With respect to the use of these structures, if we believe that birds, like some insects, have foresight, a more ingenious theory might be advanced. During the severity of winter they may be intended as houses of refuge for themselves and families. Whether this is always the case it would be difficult to ascertain; but that they are sometimes employed for this purpose I can affirm, as the whole of those in my neighbourhood during the severe frosty weather of 1837–38 were occupied by them. Our little friend is a *Troglodyte*, a frequenter of holes and caverns; and as it always reposes at night in some sheltered retreat, it may occasionally or often betake itself to its old nest as well as to any other place, that nest being well fitted for its purpose."

The eggs are from six to nine in number, of a fleshy-white colour, sparingly spotted and speckled with reddish brown.

For a singularly interesting and detailed account of the manner in which this bird constructs its nest, and of the number of times the young birds were fed during the course of a single day, amounting to no less than 278, I must refer my readers to the notes communicated by Mr. Weir to Mr. Macgillivray, and which will be found at pages 24 to 30 of the third volume of his 'History of British Birds.' In like manner I must refer them to vol. i. p. 349 of Mr. Thompson's 'Natural History of Ireland,' for an account of the superstitious and other customs connected with this bird in that country.

The only difference in the outward appearance of the sexes is the somewhat smaller size of the female. The young, when ready to fly, are similarly attired, but of course have the yellow fleshy gape common to young birds.

The figures represent a male, a female, and a young bird of the size of life, on the Common Hop (Humulus Lupulus).