

variation occurs between the Swiss birds and those of England, the Alpine birds being much lighter in colour, and having the little crescentic marks on the belly broader and more defined than those of the birds killed in this country. The pectoral mark varies very considerably in different individuals, being small and dusky in some, while it is large and snow-white in others; in the female, which is otherwise similarly clothed to the male, it is often suffused with brown, and in the young of the year is but faintly indicated. I am able to state this with certainty, after a careful examination of a number of specimens sent to me in the flesh by Sir John H. Crewe, Bart., who had them shot at different periods for the furtherance of this work. The figures of the young birds in the accompanying Plate were drawn from examples obtained by myself in the Dovrefjeld, in Norway, where the bird was breeding in abundance at an elevation of 5000 feet. In the neighbourhood of Jerkin the young birds were just ready to leave the nest on the 1st of July; so that by September they would have become sufficiently strong to perform their southerly migration. The food of the Ring-Ousel, with us, consists mainly of insects and their larvæ: but, like the Thrush and Blackbird, it occasionally varies its diet with fruits and berries, among which the Whortle, the Bilberry, the Juniper, and the Mountain-Ash are included.

The Duke of Argyll tells me that in Argyllshire "the Ring-Ousel appears to be restricted in the breeding-season to an altitude above the sea which declines as you go north, *like the snow-line*. I never saw it here under an elevation of 1000 feet, except in autumn, when it comes down to eat the berries of several trees; but in Sutherlandshire I saw it along the wood-sides quite low down in spring."

Thirteen nests of the Ring-Ousel, from the late Mr. Heysham's collection, were all alike in form, and constructed of the same materials—namely, moss, roots, long grasses, and mud intermingled, which, when dry and hard, resembled the inside of a Thrush's nest; interiorly they have a warm lining of very fine grasses for the reception of the eggs. These nests are of large size, some of them considerably exceeding that of a Blackbird.

The eggs, which are from four to six in number, are regularly oval, and of a pale bluish green, freckled all over with pale brown, so much like those of the Blackbird as not readily to be distinguished with certainty.

All writers who have seen the "Mountain-Ousel" in a state of nature, speak highly of its vocal powers; and their remarks to a certain extent are truthful; for, besides a series of chattering notes which it freely utters on the approach of an intruder, its carol is pleasing and melodious, sweeter than that of a Thrush, but less spirited and vigorous, unlike that of its near ally the Blackbird, but somewhat resembling in quality the short but cheery song of *Petrocosyphus cyaneus*, the *Merle bleu* of the French, the "Sparrow on the house-top" of Scripture. "I was delighted with the song of the Ring-Ousel, which was to be heard through every clump of birch" (St. John, 'Tour in Sutherlandshire'). "Of all the Thrushes, perhaps the wild desultory carol of the Ring-Ousel is the loudest and clearest" (Wheelwright, 'Spring and Summer in Lapland'). "When alarmed, it utters a repetition of strong clear notes, like those of a Blackbird, but louder; and its song consists of a few simple loud and mellow notes" (Macgillivray, 'History of British Birds').

The adult male in the breeding-season has the bill yellow, clouded with dark marks on the upper mandible, and the naked lash which surrounds the eye pale olive-yellow; the tarsi and toes are reddish black.

The colouring of these parts of the female is similar, but more clouded than in the male.

The young, when they leave the nest, are without a trace of the white crescentic mark on the breast, have the under surface crossed with wavy lines of black and yellowish white, the inside of the mouth lemon-yellow, and the legs and feet purplish brown.

The Plate represents the male, female, and young, of the natural size.