four young ones nearly fledged. Having returned in the course of a few hours, I again peeped into it, when to my astonishment I found one of them cut in the breast, and almost at the point of death. I could not imagine what had been the cause of this sudden catastrophe. The gardener, however, told me that, whilst he was watching his bees, he heard the male and female Thrushes uttering the most doleful screams. He ran immediately to the spot, in the expectation of seeing a cat or a weasel, but beheld a Missel-Thrush in the very act of killing one of their brood. So determined was it in carrying into effect its daring attempt at murder that he got within a few yards of it before it observed him."

In external appearance the two sexes of the Missel-Thrush are so much alike that it is quite impossible to say which is one and which the other; dissection must therefore be resorted to, to determine the question satisfactorily. Freshly moulted birds are exceedingly rich in colour, particularly in the wash of buff with intersects the spotting of the under surface; after a time, however, this delicate hue fades away until the parts it pervaded become nearly white. The young, just after leaving the nest, are even more beautiful than the adults, each feather of the upper surface being ornamented in the centre with a tear-drop-like marking of deep buff, terminating in a crescent of brown, the remainder of the feather being grey, and the secondaries and tail-feathers conspicuously margined with reddish buff. These feathers, however, are soon cast off, and new ones assumed, and before December arrives the adults and their offspring closely assimilate in appearance. In the youthful state of plumage above described, the Missel-Thrush has been mistaken by many persons for White's Thrush—a very different bird, both in structure and markings.

Many papers have been written, and much discussion has ensued, respecting the structure of the nest, some authors stating that it has an interlining of mud between the materials forming the exterior and interior; while others deny its existence: perhaps both are right; for the bird is, doubtless, greatly influenced by the nature of the materials at hand. Mr. Joseph H. Ellis, of Leicester, in a communication to 'The Field' of May 30th, 1863, says, "I have sent three nests to your office, which you will find have mud in the foundation. As far as my observation goes, they always use mud when the nest is laid on a thick bough, or placed in a large fork of a tree. It seems to be used to plaster the first part of the nest to the branches, to hold the loose materials together. I have seen nests among thin branches where no mud was used." "These nests," remarks the editor of 'The Field,' "are very interesting, and corroborate in all respects our correspondent's description. There is no clay actually used in the construction of either, but, as Mr. Ellis observes, to plaster or attach the first part of the nest to the branch; in fact, the mud serves rather the purpose of glue than that of a building-material."

The nest is a large, round, cup-shaped structure, outwardly composed of mosses, twigs, wool, grass, or any other material at hand, whether it be the shavings blown away from the joiner's shop, or the lace from a lady's cap; internally the neat warm lining is composed of fine grasses. The eggs, which are four or five in number, differ so much from those of the other members of the genus that they cannot be mistaken for either of them: their ground-colour is a stone-white, mottled and spotted with chestnut and various shades of brown; in size they assimilate both to those of the Blackbird and those of the Ring-Ousel.

The Missel-Thrush is so pugnacious during the breeding-season that it does not hesitate to attack Magpies, Crows, and even the smaller Hawks. The late Mr. Thompson mentions that he saw one strike a Kestril several times, and make as many more attempts to do so; but the Hawk, by suddenly rising, escaped the coming blows. On the other hand, it not unfrequently happens that small birds evince their dislike of the

Missel-Thrush by mobbing and following it as they do the Cuckoo and the Sparrow-Hawk.

During the very severe month of January 1867, when all England was under snow and frost, birds generally retired to the more western and, usually, milder climate of Cornwall; but even there the vast assemblages found a country equally inhospitable. Enfeebled by cold and want of food, the smaller birds could not continue their journey southwards, but perished by thousands. The Rooks, Starlings, Blackbirds, Thrushes, Fieldfares, and Redwings suffered severely; but no species succumbed to the rigours of the season so completely as the Missel-Thrushes; they were destroyed to a bird. During my daily walks through the woods and shrubberies of the Tregothnan domain I frequently observed their dead bodies lying around, half picked and eaten by other birds; and I do not remember a more distressing loss of bird-life than those few days occasioned; but as this has been alluded to in another part of this work, I need say no more on the subject here.

The Plate represents an adult and two young birds just after leaving the nest, on a branch of the spruce-fir in flower.