they are to pursue. How interesting is all this! Let not the astronomer, in the fulness of his wisdom in tracing the course of a planet or foretelling the coming of a comet, consider the journeys of the Spotted Flycatcher too trivial for a passing thought.

In the garden attached to the cottage belonging to the Rev. William Scott, at Taplow, in Buckinghamshire, a pair of Spotted Flycatchers have taken up their abode for the last three summers; and as I have had the opportunity of making some careful observations on their nidification, I here insert my notes on the subject:—"1863, May 20, the Spotted Flycatcher first appeared in the garden, and on the 25th began to build in the usual place, behind the branch of a cherry-tree on the wall. On the 1st of June the first egg was laid; on the 2nd there were two, on the 3rd three, on the 4th four, on the 5th five, and the female then began to sit; on the 17th two were hatched, on the 18th all were hatched; on the 24th the young birds opened their eyes, and flew in the afternoon of the 30th. A young one, captured this day, weighed 240 grains;" and thus the weight of the entire brood would be about 1200 grains. Now as their sole food had been insects, what a vast number must have been destroyed by the parents for the support of themselves and their brood in the short space of twelve days! and how great must have been the good thus effected! Surely then the presence of such birds must be most beneficial. There is seldom any good, however, without an alloy; and country-people say that the bird is destructive to bees. This assertion I can neither affirm nor deny: if it be true, it must be a troublesome neighbour to an apiary; but I should think the insect would be too large to be seized by its delicate mandibles. Still its trivial name of Bee-bird would indicate that it has such a propensity, as its other appellation of Beam-bird has reference to the situation it frequently selects for its nest.

I have before alluded to the Spotted Flycatcher being scarce in some districts of Scotland; and this is verified by a fact communicated to me by the Duke of Argyll—that while it is plentiful in the neighbourhood of his Grace's seat at Inverary, it does not occur near Balmoral. In Ireland it is less numerous than in England, yet sufficiently so for it to be designated a common bird there. On the Continent it is a summer visitant of every part, from Lapland to the shores of the Mediterranean, and of all countries as far east as the Crimea.

I have alluded above to the absence of vocal powers in this species, and, in the main, the term mute may be correctly applied; but if the nest and young be approached, the inward-sounding triple *chat-chat-chat* of the adult, expressive of alarm, may be heard; at other times the bird gives utterance to a very feeble inward song—so feeble, indeed, that a very near approach is necessary before it can be detected.

Besides gardens, the Spotted Flycatcher affects plantations, lawns, orchards, the skirts of woods, and glades in the forest; but, wherever it may be, it selects an exposed site whereon it may sit and survey the open space around, and whence it may sally forth to capture any passing insect.

The situations chosen for the nest are much diversified; the more usual ones are the face of a rock, the side of a faggot-stack, a hole in the wall, a beam in an out-building, the branch of a pear-tree, a vine, or a honeysuckle, trained against a building; but it has been known to construct it on the head of a garden-rake left by accident near a cottage, in a bird-cage left, with the door open, suspended from a tree in the garden, on the angle of a lamp-post in one of the streets of Leeds, where it reared its young; and my friend Mr. Jesse mentions, in the second part of his 'Gleanings in Natural History,' that one was found on the top of a lamp near Portland Place, in London, having five eggs in it, which had been sat upon. This nest, fixed in the ornamental crown on the top of the lamp, was seen by Mr. Yarrell at the office of the Woods and Forests in Whitehall Place.

The nest is a somewhat frail structure, composed of a few slight sticks, grasses, and shreds of bark, bound together by cobwebs, with a lining of similar but finer materials. The eggs are four or five in number, of a pale bluish white, irregularly dashed and blotched with rust-colour or light red, and are about nine lines in length by seven lines in breadth.

The name of Spotted Flycatcher is more applicable to the young of this species than to the adult; for from the time it assumes its first plumage to the autumn moult it is very prettily marked, particularly over the back—a portion of the dress which is plain brown in the old bird: by the time the young leave this country they are very similar to the adults, both sexes of which are alike in colour.

The solitary figure represents an adult male, of the size of life, on a branch of the Oak.