

and in old nests one might generally fill a quart pot with the elytra of the Coleoptera on which the young have been reared. It is called 'warwar' by the natives, from its cry, and is mentioned by Russell as being considered delicate eating by the Syrians."

Mr. Stafford S. Allen, speaking of the bird as observed by him in Egypt, states that it arrives in the lower part of that country "early in April, on its way from its winter-quarters in the equatorial regions of Africa, across the Mediterranean and Asia Minor to Eastern Europe and the shores of the Black Sea, for the purpose of breeding. It mostly flies in flocks of twenty or thirty, but sometimes in much greater numbers. While on their way in the daytime they keep at a considerable height, and sail about like Swallows, though not so rapidly, descending at night to roost on trees. They utter a sharp twittering cry, which is often distinctly audible when the birds are almost out of sight."

Lieut. R. M. Sperling says, "this graceful bird is common on the shores of the Mediterranean, and is certainly one of the most beautiful members of their avifauna. In the hottest days their bubbling bell-like notes sound from far off as they float towards you, glittering like green flakes when the sun strikes the varied tints of their plumage. They are generally seen in flocks of about ten or twelve; and I noticed that after they have been in one place about half an hour, they move off and 'beat' in another locality. They leave Africa for Europe about the 10th of April."

In his five months' birds'-nesting in the Eastern Atlas, Mr. Salvin states that "the Bee-eater is plentiful about Djendeli, and breeds, boring the hole for its nest, in banks of the river Chemora and the ditches that drain the low land near the lake. There the soil is alluvial and soft, and the bird finds little difficulty in making its excavation. During our stay, I took several nests, and latterly became an adept at knowing at once which holes were tenanted, and where and when to dig. A little circumspection is necessary at first; for not unfrequently the occupant is a toad or snake. The scratchings made by the bird's feet in passing in and out, and the absence of fresh earth beneath the orifice, are generally sure indications of the excavation having been completed, and consequently of the probability of there being eggs within. The holes usually consist of a horizontal passage about three or four feet in length, with the entrance at various heights from the level ground. This passage, at first a circular opening, gradually enlarges horizontally, and ends in a domed chamber of about a foot in diameter; here the eggs are frequently deposited. Should, however, none be found, it becomes necessary to feel all round the chamber, when in many instances another passage of about a foot in length will be found communicating with a second chamber in all respects similar to the first, in this, if it exists, the eggs are placed. The bird makes no nest; but the floor of the chamber is strewn with the legs and wings of *Coleoptera* in such abundance that a handful may be taken up at once. In most instances I caught one of the old birds in the chamber containing the eggs; while the hole was being enlarged, it every now and then attempted to escape. The eggs are laid early in June, and are usually six in number."

"At Jaffa Mr. Chambers fell in with large flocks of *Merops apiaster* flying during the whole day at a great elevation, and only coming down late in the evening to roost in the orange-groves." Lord Lilford states that "the Bee-eater arrives in Corfu and Epirus in great numbers during the month of April, and breeds in the latter country on the banks of the Kataito River, near Mursyah, and many other similar localities. In all the holes examined, the eggs were laid on the bare sand, without any attempt at a nest. I several times observed three, and once or twice four birds fly from the same hole. The parents leave the country as soon as the young are able to fly. I have never seen them later than the beginning of August, and I observed also, during the same month in 1858, that although the banks of Guadalquivir, near San Juan de Alfarache, where there was a large colony of this species, were mined in every direction, and exhibited signs of recent occupation, not a Bee-eater was to be seen."

Dr. Henry Giglioli, in his paper on the birds observed at Pisa and in its neighbourhood in 1864, says, "During the first days of May large flocks of the Common Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) passed over the place, flying northwards. They continually betray their presence by their loud rolling whistle, but rarely stop near here, unless in the olive-plantations at the foot of the Monte Pisano."

Little more need be said except that the sexes are very similar in colour, the female being merely a trifle less brilliant than the male, and that the young assume a plumage like that of the adult from the time they leave the nest; but two years elapse before the central tail-feathers become as long as those of their parents.

The Plate represents an adult male, of the size of life, and a young bird in the distance.