

note from a Berg-ufo, who no doubt had seen the stranger bird. This was very encouraging, and it did not take long to arrange the order in which the various likely rocks were to be visited. An active woodman accompanied me axe in hand. When we were fairly in the cliffs, we came to a point where some large bird was in the habit of sitting to tear its prey, and feathers and white feet of hares were lying about. A great Owl flew below us, showing a beautiful expanse of back and wings; and as we proceeded in the direction from which it came, another large Owl rose from the face of the cliff, flew a hundred paces forward, turned its wide face towards us, and came a short distance back. I stopped to examine it with my glass, to be quite certain it was *S. bubo*. Satisfied on this point, we had only to walk a few paces along a ledge before the family group was in sight—two blind little puffs covered with down just tinged with yellow, and an egg with the prisoner inside, uttering his series of four or five chirps through the window he had made in the shell, with a voice scarcely more feeble than that of his older brothers. There did not seem to be much difference in the ages of the three: they were lying upon a small quantity of compressed fur, principally of rats, the remains of the castings of the parent birds, their bed nearly flat, for there was not more than two inches of soil. *Uva-ursi* and several other plants grew near, and a small Scotch fir tree had its bark curiously flattened to the perpendicular rock at the back; the ledge was not more than two feet wide, and terminated abruptly just beyond the nest; the rock beneath was also perpendicular. A party of village ladies watching us from below were very successful in imitating the Owls, but the Owls themselves would not answer. We waited at the nest a long time in the hope that they would show themselves; but it was not till we had left it that we saw them again, sitting on the topmost shoots of spruce firs, with their ears finely relieved against the sky; and when we were nearly in the village again, they hooted with a troubled note. I have visited three other sites of nests of this bird; and they were all of the same character, upon ledges in or over the cliffs. They were all unsheltered overhead. Sunshine seems to be courted rather than avoided."

"Although," says Mr. Wheelwright, "I neither saw the bird nor obtained its nest in Lapland, it bred on a high mountain just opposite Quickiock, on the other side of the river; and the deep-measured 'boo, boo' of the old bird, resembling the distant bark of a gruff old watch-dog, might be heard on any evening when we were out in the neighbourhood of its eyrie. I have not unfrequently taken the nest in Wermland, and it breeds commonly both around Gothenburg and in the south of Sweden; but I think its proper home is more in the midland than in the northern districts of the country. The egg is the largest of all the European Owls' eggs, often measuring  $2\frac{3}{8}$  by 2 inches."

The Eagle Owl, however, does not always breed on rocks. A nest containing young ones and a single addled egg is mentioned by Mr. A. Newton in his '*Ootheca Wolleyana*' (p. 164).

In his notes on the birds observed by him in the Ionian Islands, Lord Lilford says, "I very often heard and occasionally saw this species in Epirus and Albania proper, in which provinces it is common and breeds. One of our party killed a fine specimen near Prevesa, on the Gulf of Arta, in March 1857. I shot a female near Butrinto, in February 1858, and was in at the death of another near Santa Quaranta shortly afterwards. I was watching a pair of Bonelli's Eagles one day near Butrinto, when an Eagle Owl came flying past me in a much more hurried manner than is its wont, and took refuge in a thorn-bush, about a gun-shot from where I stood. He had hardly reached this shelter before a Peregrine Falcon stooped at, and just missing him, rose and 'made her point.' I drove the Owl out, and was witness of a beautiful flight across an open plain of considerable extent—the Falcon making repeated feints, the Owl flying low and dodging round the scanty thorn-bushes, till he at length reached a hillside thickly covered with wild olives, and set his pursuer at defiance." ('*Ibis*,' 1860, p. 133.)

No person in England has been so successful in breeding this bird as Mr. Edward Fountaine, who informs me that he has reared thirty-five birds out of forty-six eggs—a fact of considerable interest.

The localities in the British Islands in which this bird has occurred are, according to Mr. Yarrell, Kent, Sussex, and Devonshire, Suffolk, Yorkshire, and Durham. It does not appear to have been seen in Scotland, and the only record of its occurrence in Ireland appears in Mr. Stewart's '*Catalogue of the Birds of Donegal*,' in the following words:—"Four of these birds paid us a visit for two days after a great storm from the north, when the ground was covered with snow. They have not been seen since."

The colouring of the soft parts of the young at one day old is as follows: cere and bill purplish blue, with a distinct white projecting knob about an eighth of an inch from the point; body covered with buffy white down; soles of the feet flesh-colour.

The sexes are alike in colour; but the female is somewhat smaller than the male.

The figures in the Plate are about two-thirds of the natural size.