him many curious particulars as to the habits of the Ash-coloured Harriers, "their action in choosing a nest, the male selecting a spot, the female approving or disapproving of it as she thought fit; of the male coming to feed the female, and of her sometimes going to meet him, turning on her back and catching the prey he brought her, which, however, was occasionally dropt on the nest; of the young pecking one of their fellows to death when bloody; of the habits of the old birds, their cries, and the like." It is unfortunate that Mr. Newton should not have published these particulars in extenso, but contented himself with alluding to them in the above cursory manner, as their perusal could not have been otherwise than interesting.

The nest is placed upon the ground, generally among furze, and the eggs are usually four, but sometimes five, in number; they are of a bluish white, one inch and seven lines in length by one inch and four lines in breadth; they are laid in May, and, according to the Rev. L. Jenyns, the young are hatched out about the second week in June. The Rev. John Daubuz tells me that a nest taken on his estate at Killion, in Cornwall, in 1862, was composed chiefly of dried grasses, placed on the ground among furze and heath, and contained four white eggs. Mr. Alfred Newton informed Mr. Hewitson that "the Harriers, like the Owls, the Eagles, and probably all the Hawk tribe, begin to sit as soon as the first egg is laid; and as it is most likely that there is an interval of some days between the production of the eggs, the young are of very different ages, and therefore much more easily supplied with food."

The late Mr. Yarrell was of opinion that, as the name given to this species by Montagu had by mistake or an error of the press been spelt in three different ways, it would be an advantage, as well as a gratification, to designate the bird in future by the specific name of *Montagui*, assigned to it by Vieillot; but this the law of priority forbids; and we must therefore adopt that of *cineraceus*, applied to it by Montagu, who, as the first discriminator of the species, would naturally have wished the name he proposed to be retained for it. And here let me say a word in praise of a departed ornithologist, whose writings must always be regarded with interest. Colonel Montagu was a true lover of nature, who employed his discriminating faculties to a good and useful purpose, and in no instance more effectually than when he pointed out the distinctions between the present bird and the Hen Harrier, except perhaps when he so clearly described the changes of plumage which take place in the latter bird. Nor are the details of the measures he took to ascertain whether or not the Hen Harrier and Ringtail were sexes of the same species less interesting; these I shall quote to show how painstaking was this worthy country-gentleman and gallant soldier, and because they are equally descriptive of the changes which take place in the present species.

"I undertook," says Montagu, "the care of a brood of three young Hen Harriers found in a nest in a furzebush, and only covered with white down. At this time the two largest had thrown out many feathers, sufficient in fact to discover the plumage of the Ringtail approaching; the other, by its appearance, must have been hatched much later. In about a month it was evident from the size that there was but one male; so that all my hopes rested on this single life. As they became full-feathered there was at first no distinction in plumage; but the eyes of the supposed male were always lighter than those of the others, whose irides were so dark as not to be distinguished at a small distance from the pupil. In the dress of the Ringtail the whole continued through the winter, when the one which had been weakly from the first died. This circumstance induced me to force a premature change in some of the quill- and tail-feathers of the others, fearing some accident might frustrate my earnest desire of bringing the matter to a decisive proof; and about the middle of June I was highly gratified by discovering an appearance of new feathers in the place of those which had been plucked out, that clearly proved the smaller bird to be a Hen Harrier, and the larger a Ringtail. Thus I had compelled nature to disclose her secrets before the appointed time; for in every other respect their plumage was yet similar, excepting about the sides of the face, which were paler in colour in the former, in which also the irides were of a dull yellow, somewhat mottled, whereas in the latter they still continued dark. About the 20th of July the male had thrown out many of the new feathers naturally, especially the greater coverts of the wings and a few grey feathers in different parts of the body. On the 20th of August the greater part of the quill- and tail-feathers were grown to their full length, and a gradual increase of grey feathers appeared on most other parts; the eyes also became more orange; but it was not till the middle of October that it had attained that state which made it desirable to be retained as an existing proof of the change. It was then killed, and placed in my museum.

"From the account here given it is quite clear that the change of plumage is affected in the autumn of the year after the bird leaves the nest, and not in the same year."

The Plate represents an adult male, of the natural size, and a reduced figure of a female, or a young male, in the distance. The quadruped under the foot of the male is the common mole, Talpa europæa.