habits of the bird, the word 'kite' was often used as a term of reproach. For example:—'You kite' (Anthony and Cleopatra, Act III. Scene 2); and 'Detested kite' (King Lear, Act I. Scene 4).
"The intractable disposition of the bird is thus noticed in the 'Taming of the Shrew,' Act IV. Scene 1:—

* * "Watch her as we watch these kites That bate and beat and will not be obedient.

"Another curious fact in its natural history is adverted to in the 'Winter's Tale' (Act IV. Scene 2), where it is said:—'When the kite builds look to lesser linen.'

"This line may perhaps be best illustrated by a description of a Kite's nest taken in Huntingdonshire, and still in the possession of a friend at Newcastle. The outside is composed of strong sticks; the lining of small pieces of linen, part of a saddle-girth, a bit of a harvest-glove, part of a straw bonnet, pieces of paper, and a worsted garter; and in the midst of this singular collection of materials were deposited two eggs."

"The Rev. H. B. Tristram, speaking, in his work entitled 'The Great Sahara,' of the habits of the Egyptian Kite (Milvus Ægyptius), says:-"Its nest, the marine-store-shop of the desert, is decorated with whatever scraps of bournouses and coloured rags can be collected; and to these are added on every surrounding branch the cast-off coats of serpents, large scraps of thin bark, and perhaps a Bustard's wing."—' Zoologist,' 1866, p. 409 et seq. In olden times the Kite was not only around and in the metropolis, but the citizens could not take a jaunt to Highgate or Epping Forest without witnessing its charming aërial flight and circling evolutions between them and the azure sky, a sight that would gladden the eyes of every naturalist, but which is not now to be seen. Of course in the great forests and large clumps of trees in every English county the bird was equally numerous, and not less so in most parts of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; sanitary science, the clearance of woods and forests, extended cultivation, and the preservation of game have, however, so thinned its numbers that it is almost extirpated. From the moment these measures commenced, the fate of the bird was sealed; and were I to affirm that now, in 1868, there are not five pairs of Kites in the British Islands, I should scarcely exceed the chances of probability; and where to look for a breeding pair, either in the New Forest or in any part of the Highlands, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland, I know not: but that the bird still clings to some of its old haunts is certain; for Mr. Henry Nicholls, jun., records in the 'Zoologist' for 1863 the shooting of a fine old male on the banks of the Avon, near Kingsbridge, in Devonshire, on the 13th of October, 1862; and in a communication to the same volume, p. 8441, by W. Christy Horsfall, Esq., dated Horsforth Low Hall, near Leeds, Jan. 2, 1863, that gentleman says, "We have had a Kite in the woods here for the last eighteen months. I gave orders that it should not be molested, in the hope it would find a mate; but although it is still about, it has not yet met with one."

Montagu, when he wrote, had seen but one in Devonshire in twelve years; and Mr. Couch mentions two instances of its appearance in Cornwall. Waterton has noticed the bird and its habits in Yorkshire; and Selby stated forty years ago that, "though rare in Northumberland and Durham, it is more frequent in Westmoreland and Cumberland. Dr. Heysham says that the Kite bred about the same period in the woods near Armathwaite, and also in those near Ullswater." In the interval that has elapsed, all this has become changed, and Lincolnshire is the last part of the eastern portion of England in which it has bred; several instances are mentioned in Professor Newton's 'Ootheca Wolleyana,' to which my readers are referred.

The persecution to which the bird has been subjected in Britain has been less relentlessly carried out on the continent of Europe; and in North Africa and many other countries it still holds its own. Lord Lilford observed it to be rather abundant in Acarnania, and states that it is very common and a constant resident in Sicily and Calabria. It is not found so far to the eastward as India, its place there being occupied by the *Milvus govinda*. Species of the same form inhabit China, Japan, Africa, and Australia; but, so far as I am aware, no true Kite (*Milvus*) occurs in Polynesia or America.

To this short history of our Kite I may add that it is the finest species of its genus, that the sexes are very similar in colour, that it usually builds its nest on the fork of a large tree, of sticks, lined with dry grass, wool, and other soft materials, and lays two, and sometimes three eggs, which are subject to much diversity of colouring: they are of a short oval form, measuring two inches and two lines in length by one inch and nine lines in breadth; of a dull white hue, marked with a few reddish spots over the larger end. Mr. Hewitson mentions one that was closely covered all over with light rufous blotches, and another with beautiful tints of lilac and purple relieved with brown.

The Plate represents a male about two-thirds of the size of life, from a beautiful sketch made for this work by Mr. Wolf.