interest, since it affords us an insight into the natural habits and economy of this destructive though noble bird; at the same time it must be admitted that this trait in its character, that of killing in mere wantonness or sport, is not commendable. Independently of Ducks, Coots, and Moor-hens, many other birds fall to the powerful stroke of the Peregrine's hind claw, such as Grouse, Partridges, Plovers, Pigeons, &c. When used in falconry, it is flown at Herons, Crows, and other birds of equal magnitude; but as these are usually victims selected by the falconer, any details respecting its prowess in these cases would be somewhat out of place in a memoir on its natural history: but I may mention that there is no bird which is more easily tamed or rendered subservient to the desires of man, nor one that becomes more docile; for not only will it, at his will, pursue the quarry until it becomes a mere speck in the heavens, but from that altitude will respond to his lure and immediately descend, to be fed, and blinded by its stiff and uncomfortable hood; the cravings of its appetite appeased, it sits content on its accustomed block of wood, or rides with equal patience on the hand of the falconer or its "faire ladye."

The whole structure of the Peregrine is admirably adapted for aërial progression, its powerful pectoral muscles, unparalleled among birds of its size, together with its long and pointed wings, enabling it ordinarily to pass through the air with a rapidity estimated by some writers at the rate of 150 miles an hour; but this rate of progression is as nothing compared with the impetuosity of its stoop when descending upon its quarry. Wonderful indeed is the rapidity with which this winged thunderbolt descends from aloft on any bird which may unwittingly pass beneath the rock or mountain escarpment upon which it has been reposing. Such a stoop as this I once witnessed in the Highlands. A flight of Ducks, which I had driven across the moor, caught the piercing eye of a Peregrine seated on a high rock about a mile distant. Down he came with meteor-like swiftness, when the Ducks, as if aware that it was their only chance of safety, doubled at once in the direction of the water they had left, both Ducks and Peregrine passing immediately over my head with the quickness of lightning and a rushing sound not easily to be described. Such a momentary scene as this can only be understood by those who have witnessed it; Mr. Wolf has endeavoured to convey some idea of it in the accompanying illustration. It will be seen that a Mallard has been struck dead, its back being ripped open by a stroke of the Peregrine's hind claw—a mode of striking in the air which I believe it always adopts. If perchance its aim should not be certain and effective, the Falcon usually mounts gracefully, sulkily seats itself on some neighbouring rock or tree, and patiently awaits another opportunity for repeating the same manœuvre. During my travels over the plains of Australia, Falcons frequently followed me for days together, on the chance of my raising a quail or other bird; and many fine stoops have I there witnessed.

Before leaving this part of the bird's economy, I may mention a remarkable stoop witnessed by my friend John Fowler, Esq., while shooting in Scotland. A small pack of Grouse being flushed, they descended to cross one of the deep gorges between the hills of the upper Findhorn, when a Peregrine, which had been quietly seated on a neighbouring high rock far above the birds, immediately gave chase, and almost with the quickness of thought was down upon his bird, and bore it away in his talons in face of the spectators above him. The consternation this sudden attack produced, not only in the pack of birds alluded to, but among all the Grouse on the hill-side, was such, that Mr. Fowler had excellent shooting for the next hour, whereas before the Grouse laid so badly that he could get no sport.

Few birds differ more in the size of the sexes than the Peregrine, and I have been very careful in ascertaining the relative weight of each whenever an opportunity offered; in this respect I have been most kindly aided by Mr. Benjamin Leadbeater, of Brewer Street, London, who has always submitted to my inspection any freshly killed specimens that have been sent to him; and I should be wanting in courtesy were I not to state that not only in this but in many other instances has Mr. Leadbeater been most obliging to me. The average weight of several females was  $2 \text{ lbs. } 5\frac{1}{2} \text{ ozs.}$ ; and the total length 19 inches, of the wing  $14\frac{1}{2}$ , of the tail  $7\frac{3}{4}$ , of the tarsi  $2\frac{3}{8}$ , and of the middle toe and nail  $2\frac{7}{8}$ . There is no difference in the colour and markings of the male, of sufficient importance to be noticed. The average weight is 1 lb. 7 ozs., and the total length 16 inches.

The Peregrine breeds in April and May. The nest is usually placed upon the shelf of a rock, or near the top of a lofty tree; it is composed of sticks, sea-weed, hair, and other materials. The eggs are two or three in number, somewhat round in form, and of a deep russet-red, blotched and lined with a deeper hue.

The accompanying illustration represents an adult female about three-fourths of the natural size. It will be seen that the back is of a nearly uniform deep-blue grey, while the feathers of the abdomen and flanks are buffy white, barred with blue-grey. The young of the year is very differently marked,—all the upper surface being slaty brown, with a rufous border to each feather; the tail dark grey, crossed by five rows of sandy-buff spots assuming on the inner webs the form of bars; the breast and abdomen buffy white, with a broad longitudinal stripe of dark brown down the centre of every feather; the axillaries, too, which are regularly barred in the adult, are marked on each web with large spots of buffy white. This plumage is carried to the first moult, when it is exchanged for that of the adult.