like England, occasionally visited by the young birds. Out of Europe, the Atlas range of mountains in North Africa is one of its places of abode, while in the East it frequents the great ranges of the Himalayas, and doubtless the Steppes of Tartary; for it is probably the "Bear-coot" so frequently spoken of by Atkinson, as standing at the tents of the wandering Kirghises and other tribes of that country. Mr. Gurney has no doubt that it also frequents all the countries of North America that are favourable to its habits, from Labrador to Texas, but believes that it is never found on the Pacific side of that continent.

The powers of flight of this king of British birds are commensurate with its large size and ample wings. It may often be seen in fine weather sailing to a vast height toward the blue vault of heaven, apparently for no other purpose than that of pleasure; and its evolutions are graceful and majestic while thus engaged; at other times it may be observed hunting the hill-side in couples and in concert, one flying directly over their intended prey, and the other following near the ground; and it has been known to stoop and carry off a hare from before the hounds. Such is the alarm its presence creates, that the swift-flying Golden Plover and the fleet Mountain-Hare appear as if spell-bound when overshadowered by the wings of their terrible enemy. It preys alike upon Grouse, black game, Curlews, Partridges, and Plovers among birds, to which may be added the flesh of hares, rabbits, lambs, fawns, moles, and carrion of all kinds, particularly stranded sheep, fatally struck deer, &c.; and I see no reason for doubting the possibility or probability of its occasionally pouncing upon and carrying off a sleeping infant or shepherd's child, if left unprotected on the hill-side: many such occurrences have been recorded, and doubtless some of them are founded in truth. Lord Hill informs me, on the authority of the shepherds on his fine estate in Ross-shire, that the Golden Eagle, while hunting the hill-side, will frequently swoop down upon a lamb, playfully take it up in his talons, and drop it again, and then another and another, apparently trifling with its victim after the manner of a cat with a mouse. The shepherds also assert that it occasionally takes the lambs over to the smaller islands between the mainland and Skye; and as no sheep are kept on those islands, there can be no doubt that the lambs occasionally found there are thus conveyed thither.

The situations selected by the Golden Eagle for the purposes of nidification are very varied: sometimes a bold precipitous overhanging rock is selected; at others merely an escarpment on the hill-side, where, without any great amount of prowess or trouble on the part of the collector, the nest may be robbed of its eggs or young; at other times, and doubtless formerly more frequently than at present, the large stump or forked branch of a towering tree is chosen for the site of its large plateau of sticks, branches of heather, and other materials, the centre being usually formed of finer substances, such as wool, moss, ferngrass, and tufts of Luzula sylvatica. If left unmolested, the birds frequently resort to the same eyrie for years, annually adding fresh materials, until at length, like the huge structures of their representative the Wedge-tailed Eagle of Australia, the nests become of gigantic dimensions. The eggs, mostly two and sometimes three in number, vary considerably in their markings, some being of a nearly uniform dull white, while others are most beautifully blotched and clouded with grey and brown over a light stonecoloured ground. To give a minute description of any one egg would answer no good end, they are so variable; the reader will find some splendid varieties figured in Mr. Hewitson's fine work on the eggs of our native birds, and in the 'Ootheca Wolleyana.' Those who take especial interest in British oology should endeavour to gain access to the collection formed by the late Mr. John Wolley, which was bequeathed by him to Alfred Newton, Esq., and contains a very large series of the eggs of this species. Besides varying so much in colour, the eggs also differ considerably in size and shape; Mr. Alfred Newton informs me that the largest egg in his collection measures 3.23 inches by 2.59, and the smallest 2.85 by 2.16.

When first hatched, the eaglets are covered with white down, in which state they remain for a considerable period, day by day increasing in strength and stature; brown stub feathers next begin to appear in their wings and tail; and if the eggs have been hatched about the usual time the end of April, the summer has far advanced before they have gained sufficient power to exercise their pinions.

The young, during the first two years of their existence, present a marked difference from the adult in the colouring of the tail,—the basal three-fourths of its length being white, and the apical fourth of a rich brown, which has obtained for the bird the trivial name of the Ring-tailed Eagle. As they increase in age, the white gradually darkens into the hue of the tip; and when fully adult, the tail is of a uniform dark brown, except at the base, where it is marbled with grey.

The female, as is usual with birds of prey, is by far the largest, often attaining a weight of fourteen pounds. When adult, the whole of the body and wings are of a dark rich vinous brown; the lanceolate feathers clothing the head and neck rich golden brown; tarsi, which are covered with feathers to the toes, greyish white; tail the same as the body, except at the base, where it is grey marbled with brown; bill horn-colour; cere and toes yellow; irides brown.

The front figure of the Plate represents the bird about one-third of the size of life, taken from an example about three or four years old.