Marsh-Harrier (young).

The draining-operations which have been carried on of late years in various parts of the country have rendered many of the districts formerly adapted for the well-being of this and many other species no longer tenable by them; and from the great antipathy to this bird exhibited by every land-owner and game-keeper, it is now becoming scarce in this country; but in Holland and other low countries of Europe, Africa, India, and China it still holds its own. The plumage of the yearling and that of the adult birds differ so greatly that I have been induced to give two plates in illustration of these peculiar phases in their history.

HEN-HARRIER.

Formerly much more numerous than at present, the all-destroying hand of man being directed towards its extermination; but it still exists in its usual numbers in Scotland, where, Mr. Robert Gray states, it is very common "on all the islands of the Outer Hebrides group, and also throughout the inner islands, Skye, Mull, Islay, Jura, &c., where it is known by the Gaelic name of *Clamhan luch*, signifying mouse-hawk," and adds that he has "seen twelve or fourteen specimens in one day on Benbecula and North Uist, where its hunting-grounds are of a similar nature."

The following note on the nesting of this species, from the pen of the Duke of Argyll, will be found of interest. Writing to me respecting some nests of two or three species of Falconidæ observed by him at Inverary early in June 1868, his Grace says:—"The Harrier's nest is on the face of a steep bank covered with long heather, and falling into a stream of considerable size. The nest itself is placed on a little bare shelf or ledge of Sphagnum moss, and with none of the heather bending over or concealing it; but the nature of the ground is such that it is not visible from the opposite bank of the stream; and on its own side the face is so steep that it would not be seen unless one were to come a few feet above it; but to birds flying over, the nest must be a conspicuous object. It contained six eggs, pure white, but with a slightly bluish tinge, which, I am told, is deeper when first laid. The nest was composed of dried twigs and stalks of heather as a foundation, and very nicely lined with straw, composed of dried 'sprits' (or a kind of rush) and one or two bits of dried fern. The straws were nicely laid and bent round so as to take the shape of the nest. The bulk of the whole was small; but the cup was decided though shallow.

"The hen rose from the nest when we came nearly opposite to her, about 150 yards off. She was a fine