Genus Nauclerus.

The single species of this form is remarkably different from all the other Kites. Its more slender structure, lengthened wings, and long forked tail indicate that it possesses vast powers of flight, and that it would experience but little difficulty in making a transit from its native country to even very distant shores, when circumstances force it to leave its own.

30. Nauclerus furcatus.

Swallow-tailed Kite.

This bird is so strictly American that I have not given a figure of it; notwithstanding it has been killed at least five times in our islands, the earliest of these occurrences having been at Ballachulish, in Argyleshire, in 1772, since which others have taken place at Wensleydale, at Farnham, in Cumberland, and on the Mersey.

Subfamily CIRCINÆ.

The Harriers, comprising numerous species, are so widely dispersed over the face of the globe as to warrant the use of the term universal with reference to their distribution. In each of the five great divisions of the globe one or other of the seventeen known species are to be found. In Europe there are four, three of which inhabit and breed in Britain. In habits and economy they do not resemble the Falcons, the Buzzards, or the Kites, but assimilate somewhat to the Strigidæ, or Owls. Their actions, indeed, are peculiar to themselves; and their great flapping wings render them conspicuous objects when flying over a marsh or the sunny side of a moor, with keenly searching eyes, in pursuit of their food, which varies with the nature of the locality. If in the fen, reptiles, from the snake to the newt, are captured and eaten, as are frogs and insects; at the breeding-season young Snipes, Moorhens, or other nestlings are fortunate if they escape their scrutinizing eyes. They nest chiefly on the ground, and lay four or five white eggs. Their flight is somewhat laboured and flapping.

Ornithologists have divided the Harriers into five different genera; and even the three which inhabit Britain have each received a separate generic title, a procedure which may seem superfluous to some persons; but before placing his veto upon it each objector should have all the known species before him, when he would perceive that the great Marsh-Harrier, with its brown plumage, differs considerably from the slender ash-coloured bird with its barred tail, and both from the uniformly coloured and stouter-built Hen-Harrier. Knowing how strong the feeling is against the multiplication of generic terms, I have in this work retained them all in the genus Circus.