means to an end (that of continuing its existence unaided), the young Duck is as perfect as the old bird, though destitute of the power of flight, to be accorded to it hereafter. What the webbed feet and swimming-capabilities are to the immature birds above mentioned, the organs of flight are to the chick of the Gelinotte or Hazel-Hen, which, within a day of its exit from the shell, is endowed with such a development of its primaries and secondaries that it can fly from branch to branch, or dart after its parents through the wood, with an ease and rapidity equal to that of any other little bird. At this early stage the Gelinotte appears all wings, and, from the down which alone covers its body, presents somewhat the appearance of a gigantic moth. The young of the Heron exhibits a very low degree of perfection; but those of the Crane, the Bustard, and the Plover are agile on exclusion. The colouring of the downy stage of young birds is, in many instances, very beautiful, and fantastic indeed in form-exhibiting itself in stripings amongst the Grebes, yellow moss-like marblings amongst the true Plovers, paintings on the face of the Coot, and tortoiseshell blotches on the Black-headed Gull. This peculiar phase in bird-life exists but for a short period, six or eight days; a change then takes place, in the course of which the downy dress, with all its pretty markings, is thrown or, rather, pushed off by a succession of real feathers. In the Starling, among the Insessorial birds, it is exchanged for a uniform coat of brown, which, before the summer is over, is again transformed into a spangled dress of great beauty. In the Golden Plover the moss-like marbling is exchanged for a yellow speckled plumage; the Grebe loses its dorsal stripes, and assumes a silken white breast; the young Coot, deprived of its painted face, soon presents an approach to the colouring of its parent; the grey middle dress of the young Heron gradually merges into that of the adult; and the newly hatched Falcons, which are blind, sprawling creatures covered with white down, pass through a variety of changes between their birth and the commencement of the second year of their existence, when they attain their perfect adult plumage, never again to be altered. Changes of a similar description also occur among the Owls. Many, if not most, birds, in fact, undergo a succession of alterations in their costume between birth and maturity; but as there is no rule without an exception, so there are some birds which are not subject to any great change of this kind: for instance, the Kingfisher from the first is nearly as fine in colour as when adult, as are also the Roller, the Waxen Chatterer, the Tree-creeper, and the Nuthatch.

In the foregoing passages I have described some of the remarkable changes which birds undergo between youth and maturity; but however interesting and curious may be the details of their infantine states, their progress through middle life is not less so; while the culminating point, so far as costume is concerned, has not yet been reached; for, wonderful as are the phases through which they have progressed, these are as nothing compared with the assumption of the richer dress and colouring that obtains at the pairing-season. The transformations that take place in the Plovers and many other species at this period are indeed most remarkable, and, I believe, little known to any but ornithologists. The white breasts of the Golden and Grey Plovers now become of a jetty black, and the same part of the Godwits of a rusty red;