death of a chick from a blow of its pointed bill, a considerable portion of the victim being afterwards eaten. No one who has lived much on the Thames, or other localities frequented by this bird, can have failed to be struck by the fury and boldness with which it will attack a rat, a duck, or even so large a bird as a swan, if it approaches its nest.

"At the beginning of July," says H. J. Partridge, Esq., of Hockham Hall, near Thetford, in Norfolk, "the keeper having lost several Pheasants about three weeks old from a copse, and having set traps in vain for winged and four-footed vermin, determined to keep watch for the aggressor, when, after some time, a Moorhen was seen walking about near the copse. The keeper, supposing it only came to eat the young Pheasants' food, did not shoot it, until he saw the Moorhen strike a young Pheasant, which it killed immediately and devoured, except the leg- and wing-bones. The remains agreed exactly with eight found before. Perfect confidence may be placed in the correctness of this statement."—*Zoologist*, 1854, p. 4255.

For further evidence in proof of the correctness of these statements see my account of the Moorhen in the fourth volume.

In case what I have here and there said respecting the pugnacious and carnivorous propensities of the Moorhen should excite surprise, I may mention that they appear to be shared in common with all the other members of the group to which it belongs, from the delicately formed Rail to the most robust *Porphyrio*; and that they are all of a combative disposition is evidenced by the possession of a sharp spur on the wing, short in some of the species, and prolonged in others.

The question has arisen whether, when we consider the present comparative scarcity of the Peregrine and other of their enemies, it will be really advisable to encourage the breeding of the marine or cliff birds, many persons being fearful that such a measure would lead to a great decrease in our edible fish, upon which they solely subsist. The daily quantity consumed by the Gannet and Cormorant, to say nothing of the Guillemots, Terns, &c., is greatly beyond conception, thus showing that both care and judgement are necessary with regard to the new laws about to be enacted.

Had a measure been passed fifty years ago and penalties enforced for killing the Great Auk and the few remaining Bustards that then stalked over our great plains, we should doubtless have still had these two fine birds gracing our islands; as it is, the former (*Alca impennis* or Gare Fowl) is wholly extirpated from the waters, not only of own country, but of the universe. The Bustard still holds its own on the Continent, whence now and then in the course of a few years one strays over the seas, and visits the haunts of those of its kind which formerly existed here; its permanent residence again among us, however, is rendered impossible by the gradual disappearance under cultivation of the vast plains and wolds over which it roamed, whereby they have been rendered incompatible with its existence. The Capercaillie, which probably died