

retire to Norway and other northern regions for the purpose of breeding, and who are impelled to visit our country solely to obtain the food necessary for their existence. But whilst regarding the species visiting us from the north during the winter months, such as the Woodcock, Ducks, Fieldfares, Redwings, &c., as true migrants only, it must be recollected that the Swallow, Chaffinch, Cuckoo, &c., species leaving us at the same portion of the year, are migrants so far as the countries they respectively winter in are concerned.

Could a census be taken of the smaller birds inhabiting Great Britain, such as Sparrows, Chaffinches, Buntings, &c., and of the same birds frequenting a similar area on the Continent, there can be little doubt that the former would greatly outnumber the latter—a circumstance which may be partly due to our islands affording many more favourable localities, and partly to the fact that our smaller birds are not, as a rule, killed or captured for the purpose of the table, a practice which prevails abroad. Of these the Wheatear and the Lark are almost the only kind that are thus utilized; but to form an estimate of the numbers of the latter obtained by means of the trammel nets of the birdcatcher, or of the former captured on the downs of Sussex and Kent, is quite impossible. The numbers of many species are, indeed, so great that no just estimate of the whole can be formed. Thus it has been computed that the Gannets frequenting the Bass rock cannot be less than twenty thousand; how vast, then, must be the number of that species alone around our coasts, when we take into consideration that they are proportionally as numerous on Ailsa Craig and the other rocks on which they are known to breed! the myriads also of the Dunlin and other strand-loving birds frequenting our bays and inlets are beyond all computation.

Unfortunately, however, of late years vast numbers of certain species have been destroyed, either wantonly, or for senseless purposes of decoration instigated by fashion; and to such an extent has this been carried that it has become necessary to enact laws for their protection. Whether such enactments will tend to prevent the wholesale and cruel destruction of Robins, Kingfishers, Chaffinches, &c., is yet to be seen; at all events, if a law can be framed to put a stop to these proceedings, it will be most desirable. The magistrate, however, should have the power of acting according to his judgment when such malpractices are brought under his notice; for to say that the St.-Kildan (for whom, however, special exception has been made) should not take the Fulmar or its eggs, which constitute almost his sole subsistence, or that the proprietor of the Farn Islands should not collect the down of the Eider, though it may interfere with the health of the birds, or that those delicate morceaux, Plovers' eggs, should not be taken, would be absurd. Bird-catching should be restricted to certain seasons; the idler who spreads his net for the capture of the Swallows that skim over the mead, or who hangs his invisible snare across the brook for the beautiful Kingfisher to fly into, the man who professedly catches every Chaffinch in a lane, and the clever scamp who prowls round the edge of every shrubbery at daybreak for the newly arrived Nightingale should be made to know that such practices