Guidhim air an da Ostal deug
Gun mise dhol eug a nochd.
A Chriosta chumhachdaich na gloire,
A mhic na h-Oighe 's gloine cursa,
Seachainn sinn bho thigh nam pian,
Tha gu h-iosal, dorcha, duinte.
Fhad's a bhios a' cholluinn na cadal
Biodh an t-anam air bharraibh na firinn*
An co-chomunn nan Naomh. *Amen.*

20th March 1885.

At the meeting on this date the Secretary, on behalf of Mr Charles Fergusson, Cally, Gatehouse, Kirkcudbright, author of the Gaelic Names of Plants, &c. (*vide* Transactions Vol. VII.), read a paper entitled—"The Gaelic names of birds, with notes on their haunts and habits, and on the old superstitions, poetry, proverbs, and other bird lore of the Highlands." The paper was as follows:—

THE GAELIC NAMES OF BIRDS.

Part I.

The collecting and preserving of the Gaelic Names of Birds is a most important but much neglected work, and one which is getting every day more difficult, from their being less used now, and from the death of old people who knew them. Not only are the Gaelic names dying out, but I am sorry to say many of the birds themselves are dying out as well. Many of our noblest native birds—the Great Auk, the Bustard, Stork, Bittern, &c., are totally extinct in the Highlands; whilst the Golden Eagle, Sea Eagle, Osprey, Ger Falcon, Goshawk, and a score of other noble birds, though quite common in every glen half a century ago, are now only to be found in the most remote and inaccessible corners of the Highlands and Islands; and if the ruthless slaughter that has been going on for the last generation goes on a few years longer, they will soon all be as extinct as the Great Auk, or the Dodo of New Zealand. I am glad to say, however, that some of the more patriotic proprietors in the Highlands are now trying to preserve the eagles, and other large birds of prey. One great cause of their destruction is the large price offered by sportsmen and collectors to gamekeepers and shepherds for the eggs of those rare birds, as well as for the birds themselves for stuffing.

**Air bharraibh na firinn*—On the roads of truth.

How numerous the breeding places of the eagle used to be in the Highlands can be seen by the number of rocks still called "Creag-na-h-iolaire" (Eagle's Rock). I know a dozen rocks of that name in Athole alone.

So far as I am aware, there is as yet no complete list of the Gaelic Names of Birds published. Alex. Macdonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alastair), in his "Gaelic Vocabulary," published in 1741, gives a list of about 80 of the more common birds; and Lightfoot, in his "Flora Scotica," published in 1777, gives about the same number, which may be thoroughly depended on, as they were supplied by that famous Gaelic scholar and naturalist, Dr Stewart, of Killin and Luss. In Grey's "Birds of the West of Scotland," a good many of the Gaelic names are given, as also, I believe, in Professor Macgillivray's work on Birds, whilst most of the common names are to be found in the Gaelic dictionaries, and in the works of our Gaelic bards. I first began collecting and noting down the Gaelic names of birds when a boy amongst the Grampians, and I have continued doing so to this day, but the idea of making them the subject of a paper for the Gaelic Society was first suggested to me by reading in Vol. VIII. of the Transactions the Rev. Mr Mackenzie of Kilmorack's speech at the annual dinner of 1879, in which he urged me to take up this subject, which I did. I was then in the wilds of Ireland, away from all assistance, but since I came to Galloway I have had the able help and advice of our worthy Sheriff Nicolson, who not only gave me all the aid he could himself, but took my list of Gaelic names with him to Skye and the North, and got several gentlemen there to add many of the names of sea birds which I had not got. To his splendid work on Gaelic Proverbs I am also indebted for many. I am also under obligation to another good Gael and able naturalist, Mr A. A. Carmichael, whose long residence in the Hebrides gave him a thorough knowledge of the many rare birds of the West Coast, and of the Gaelic names by which they are known to the Islanders. He very kindly lent me a mass of notes on birds, which I have freely used.

Shortly after I gave the Gaelic Society my paper on "The Gaelic Names of Trees, Plants, &c.," Cameron's complete work on that subject appeared, and I shall be very glad, indeed, if the same thing happens again, and if some learned member of the Society, far more able to do justice to this important subject than I am, will now follow me up with a complete work on our Highland Birds and their Gaelic Names.

I have much pleasure in giving the Society the result of my

labours, by giving the following Gaelic names for about 240 different birds, making up, as in many cases there are several different names for the one bird, about 600 Gaelic names altogether. I will begin with the King of Birds—

THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

Latin—*Aquila chrysaetos.* Gaelic—*Iolair-dhubh, Iolair-bhuidhe, Iolair-mhonaidh, Fireun.* Welsh—*Eryr Melyn, Eryr tinwyn.*

The eagle seems to have been, in all ages and by all nations, honoured as a royal bird, and as much so perhaps in the Highlands as anywhere. From the earliest ages the eagle has been the emblem of swiftness, boldness, strength, and nobility. Our early bards delighted in comparing their heroes to the eagle. In *Cumha an Fhir Mhoir,* or Lament for the Great Man in *Dan an Deirg,* we have—

> "Bha t' airde mar dharach 'sa' ghleann,
> Do luaths, mar *iolair* nam beann, gun gheilt."

And in Tiomna Ghuill—

> "Luath mar *fhireun* an athair,
> 'S an ioma-ghaoth na platha fo sgiathaibh."

Again, in the same poem, the bard shows fine poetic imagination, in likening his wounded hero, the mighthy Gaul Mac Morni, to an eagle wounded by lightning—

> "Mar *iolair* leont air carraig nan cnoc,
> 'Sa sgiath air a lot le dealan na h-oidhche."

From the earliest ages, eagles' feathers—"Ite dhosrach an fhirein"—have been the distinguishing emblem of rank amongst the Gael. In more modern times, as Logan tells us, three eagles' feathers adorned the bonnet of a chief, two that of a chieftain, and one that of a gentleman.

The old Highlanders also used eagles' feathers for their arrows, the best for that being got from the eagles of Loch-Treig, in Lochaber, as we are told in the old rhyme—

> "Bogha dh' iughar Easragain,
> Ite *firein* Locha-Treig,
> Ceir bhuidhe Bhaile-na-Gailbhinn,
> 'S ceann bho'n cheard Mac Pheadarain."

This is an example of how the old Highlanders always put their wisdom and knowledge into verse, being well aware how much more easily poetry was remembered than prose. Another example

of this habit alludes to the age of the eagle as compared with that of man, other animals, and an oak tree—

Tri aois coin, aois eich ;
Tri aois eich, aois duine ;
Tric aois duine, aois feidh ;
Tri aois feidh, aois *firein ;*
Tri aois *firein*, aois craoibh-dharaich."

Now, according to this, if we put the age of man at his promised threescore and ten, a deer's age will be 210 years, and that of an eagle 630 years—a very respectable age indeed. No wonder though it gave rise to the old belief that the eagle renewed his age, as the Psalmist puts it—

"Tha d' aois air a h-ath-nuathachadh
Mar *iolair* luath nan speur."

In olden times, long before the invention of firearms, no Highlander was counted a real finished sportsman till he had with his bow and arrow shot an eagle, a royal stag, and a wild swan, the three monarchs of the air, the earth, and the water. The sportsman of to-day may easily get the stag, but the eagle or the wild swan is now truly a "rara avis," though the eagle was so very common during last century, that we find Lightfoot, who accompanied Pennant on his famous tour in 1772, writing then in his "Flora Scotica" of the Golden Eagle—"In Rannoch eagles were, a few years ago, so very numerous that the Commissioners of the Forfeited Estates (after 1745) offered a reward of five shillings for every one that was destroyed ; in a little time such numbers were brought in that the honourable Board reduced the premium to three shillings and sixpence ; but an advance in proportion as these birds grew scarcer might in time perhaps have effected their extirpation." I am afraid in most cases that the Golden Eagle would prove rather a bad neighbour, however, as even the worst neighbours have some redeeming point, so had the eagle, for Logan tells of a pair that had built their eyrie near a gentleman's house in Strathspey, and collected so much game to feed their young that they kept the laird's larder well supplied, and on the arrival of any visitors, however unexpected, he had only to send some one to the eagle's eyrie where an ample supply of all kinds of game could be speedily obtained. I have found different versions of the same story common all over the Highlands. In Strathardle, during one of the great famines so common long ago, a poor man kept a very large family so fat and flourishing on the

spoil of an eagle's nest, and prolonged the supply so long by clipping the young eagle's wings, when his neighbours were dying of hunger that at last, he was supposed to "hae dealins wi' the Deil," and accused of witchcraft, and only saved himself from being burnt by conducting his accusers to the eagles' nest, and showing them the source of his supply. He must have gone to the nest at night, or when he was very sure of the old birds being absent, as the eagle has courage enough to attack even an armed man, attempting to rob its nest. Numerous instances of this are on record, of which I need only give two from Goldsmith :—"A respectable person from Sutherland relates that two sons of a man named Murray, having robbed an eagle's nest, were retreating with the young, when one of the parent birds, having returned, made a most determined attack upon them. Although each had a stick, it was with great difficulty that they at length effected their escape, when almost ready to sink under fatigue." "The farmer of Glenmark, in Angus, whose name was Miln, had been out one day with his gun, and, coming upon an eagle's nest, he made a noise to start her and have a shot. She was not at home, however, and so Miln, taking off his shoes, began to ascend gun in hand. When about half way up, and in a very critical situation, the eagle made her appearance, bringing a plentiful supply to the young which she had in her nest. Quick as thought she darted upon the intruder, with a terrific scream. He was clinging to the rock by one hand, with scarcely any footing. Making a desperate effort, however, he reached a ledge, while the eagle was now so close that he could not shoot her. A lucky thought struck him, he took off his bonnet, and threw it at the eagle, which immediately flew after it to the foot of the rock. As she was returning to the attack, finding an opportunity of taking a steady aim, he shot her ; and no doubt glad that he had escaped so imminent a danger, made the best of his way down." When the eagle has the courage to attack even the lord of the creation himself, it is not so surprising that it would sometimes attack even the most powerful of the lower animals, and as an example I may mention the account that lately went the round of the papers of an attack by a golden eagle on a very large, powerful, and well-antlered stag in Strathglass, when, after a desperate and very prolonged struggle, the stag got the worst of it, and would certainly have been killed had he not managed to escape into the thick woods of Glassburn. I may mention, in passing, that the eagle is very destructive to deer, killing many of their young. Lightfoot says of the Golden

Eagle—"Most destructive to deer, white hares, and ptarmigans, has almost destroyed the deer of the Isle of Rum." I have given those examples, and I could give many more did space permit; of the daring courage, strength, and ferocity of the eagle, as I find in several of the later works on birds, that many of our carpet naturalists, most of whom I am afraid have never even seen a live eagle, do not believe in an eagle ever attacking a man, even when robbing its nest. To all such my advice, from experience is, if ever they exchange their cosy arm-chairs by the fireside, where most of their experience is gained, for the vicinity of an eagle's nest, even though they be able for the climb, they had better not try, unless they are both able and willing to do battle with the eagle-papa, or, what is worse, with the very much larger and more ferocious mamma; for in all rapacious birds the female is very much larger and bolder than the male. To the daring robber of her nest, the eagle's challenge on defiance, as given by the old Gaelic bard in "Tiomna Ghuill," in the Sean Dana, is significant enough—

> "Co dhireas am mullach? no dh' fhogras
> M' eoin riabhach na 'n leabaidh sheimh."
> Who dare climb the eyrie's height? or disturb
> My young grey birds in their quiet bed?

Many writers also deny the possibility of an eagle being able to carry away a child, and say that there is no authentic case on record of such ever having happened. There is scarcely a glen in the Highlands without its story, with plenty proof of such having happened, and that not so very long ago; and in Ireland I found the similar stories quite common, and in both countries I was always glad to find a happy end to such exciting stories, as in every case I have come across the child was always happily recovered unhurt, generally by the heroic efforts of his mother. The longest distance I ever heard of an eagle carrying a child is the old tradition of an eagle carrying a child across the stormy Minch, from the Isle of Harris to Skye, a distance of over twenty miles. Grey mentions a MS. account, written by Matthew Mackaile, apothecary in Aberdeen, in 1664, and preserved in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, which says—"I was very well informed that an eagle did take up a swaddled child a month old, which the mother had laid down until she went to the back of the peat-stack at Honton Head, and carried it to Choyne, viz., four miles, which, being discovered by a traveller, who heard the lamentations of the mother, four men went presently thither in a boat, and, knowing the eagle's nest, found the child without any prejudice done to

it. The following story I got from Mr Colin Chisholm, Inverness :—

"Duncan Mor Macpherson, who lived at Inchully, Crochail, Strathglass, about the latter half of last century, when a young lad, entered the eyrie of an eagle in a rock above Crochail. No sooner had he got into the nest than the old eagle appeared, and, making a swoop, clutched the boy with him in its claws, and flew away with him across the River Glass, which happened to be in flood at the time, and dropped the boy into the water at a head or creek called Lon-an-t-siugail, where, fortunately, the water was shallow, so that he managed to wade ashore. Whether it was that the boy got too heavy for the eagle there, or that it really intended to drop him in the water, I cannot pretend to decide. However, the good people of Strathglass to this day give that eagle credit for having the sense to really intend drowning the boy by dropping him in the water."

Though so bold and ferocious in a wild state, the eagle can be easily tamed, and is then very docile, as will be seen by the following story, kindly sent to me from Uist by Mr Carmichael :—

"A few years ago Dr Macgillivray, of Barra, brother to the eminent ornithologist, got a young golden eagle, which became a most interesting pet with the Doctor's two boys. It had a house made for it on the face of the hill, about a hundred yards from the house, where it spent the night, but it spent most of the day with the Doctor's boys, to whom it seemed greatly attached. It would come at their call, and feed out of their hands, and walk about with them, and fly after them wherever they went. Nothing seemed to delight it so much as to get the boys away amongst the hills rabbit hunting. On these occasions it would always accompany them, and 'bark' with seeming delight. It would fly about their heads high in the air and perform the most graceful aerial evolutions. When an unfortunate rabbit showed itself, it swooped down upon it like a whirlwind, and triumphantly bore it away in its talons. The most perfect confidence, understanding, and attachment seemed to exist between it and the boys, but unfortunately this was soon snapped asunder. A young gentleman from Glasgow was on a visit to Dr Macgillivray at Eoligary. The morning after his arrival he went out about the house, and immediately the eagle came flying over his head, calling for its breakfast, and—'a' cur failte'—giving a friendly welcome to the stranger. The young gentleman, thinking this a good chance for practising at a big bird on the wing, ran back to the porch where the Doctor always kept several guns, and

without consulting anyone carried away the gun and shot the eagle. He then triumphantly returned to the house, and roused the whole household in his excitement to ascertain the name of, and to show the splendid bird he had shot. Fancy the vexation of the Doctor and the grief of the boys on finding their noble pet in the agonies of death, and the unlucky sportsman still more to be commisserated." I shall finish those notes on the king of birds with the old Highland nursery rhyme, imitating the cry of the eagle, and referring to the royal bird's superiority over all the feathered race—"Glig, glig, glig, ars an iolair 's e mo mhac sa 's tighearn oirbh"—"Glig, glig, glig, says the eagle, it is my son who is lord over you all."

THE SEA OR WHITE-TAILED EAGLE.

Latin—*Halietus Albicilla.* Gaelic—*Earn, Iolair-mhara, Iolair-bhan, Iolair-bhuidhe, Iolair riabhach, Iolair-chladaich, Iolair Suil-na-greine, Iolair-fhionn.* Welsh—*Mor-Eryr, Eryr Cynffonwyn.*

The Sea Eagle used to be very common all over Scotland, especially in the Isles, and is now much more frequently met with than the Golden Eagle. Till recently, the Erne was thought to be quite a distinct bird. Now, however, it is found to be only the young of the Sea Eagle in the immature plumage. So numerous and destructive were those birds in Orkney and Shetland, that special laws were framed for their extirpation, one of them being, that any person destroying an eagle is entitled to a hen from every farm in the parish where it occurred. Grey quotes the following Act of Bailiary, for the county of Orkney—

"Act 31.—Anent slaying of the Earn.
Apud Kirkwam, 8vo die 9bris. 1626.

"The which day it is statute and ordained by Thomas Buchanan, Sherreif-deput of Orknay, with consent of the gentlemen and suitors of Court present for the time. That whatever persone shall slay the earn or eagle shall have of the Baillie of the parochine where it shall happen him to slay the eagle, 8d. from every reik within the parochine, except from cottars that have no sheep, and 20 shill. from ilk persone for ilk earn's nest it shall happen them to herrie; and they shall present them to the Baillie, and the Baillie shall be holden to present the head of the said earn at ilk Head Court."

On Herrmann Moll's map of Scotland, published 1714, I find the following note on the Shetland Isles—"These islands also

produce many sheep, which have two or three lambs at a time; they would be much more numerous did not the eagles destroy them." Mr Carmichael gave me the following anecdote of the Sea Eagle—"A servant girl of Sir Norman Macleod of Bearnaraidh was tending cattle on the small island of Hamarstray, Sound of Harris. She saw what she conceived to be a *currach*, or curricle, with sail set, coming before a smart breeze towards the island on which she was. She could not conceive what kind of craft it was till it touched the shore, when, to her astonishment, she found that the craft was the dead carcase of a cow and the sail the spread wings of an eagle, that had its talons so deeply embedded in the carcase that it was utterly unable to extricate itself or escape. The girl unfixed its talons and took hold of the bird, but no sooner had she done this than the ferocious bird fixed its talons in the girls thigh, and tore out the flesh from the bone. The wound healed up, but a hollow large enough to hold a large apple remained as the effect of the injury. The woman lived to an advanced age, and was an ancestress of Captain Malcolm Macleod who told me this."

Grey, in his "Birds of the West of Scotland," writes :—"In South Uist there is an eyrie every year on Mount Hecla. Mr D. Lamont informed me when I crossed to the locality with him last year (1869) that he had seen the old birds of this hill coming almost daily from Skye, with a young lamb each for their eaglets. The distance is about twenty-five miles. They never, he says, destroy the flocks in South Uist itself; hence the maintenance of their family does not add to the local taxation." Mr Carmichael gave me the following—"When I was at Barra Head last June (1868) I was told of an eagle which carried away a lamb from that island in autumn many years ago. The eagle was seen going away with the lamb in its talons, a chase was given, the people throwing down their sickles, but to no purpose. The eagle with its booty took to sea, to the utter astonishment of those who were in chase. Nothing more was thought of the matter, but two or three years after, when the owner of the lost lamb was driven in to Tiree on his way from Bearnaraidh, Barra Head, to Greenock, with a skiff full of fish, flesh, eggs, and fowl, the man in whose house "Iain Mac Dhonuill ic Ghilleaspic Mhic Illeain" found shelter had a few sheep, which were sharing with their owner the benefit of the fire at night. The sheep were of a peculiar breed, and as they resembled those John Maclean had at home, he asked his host where he got the breed. The Tiree man told him that two or three years before, while he and his

family were at the harvest near the shore one day, they saw an eagle with something white in its talons coming from the sea and alighting on a knoll hard by. They ran to the eagle, which was so exhausted that it was scarcely able to escape. They found that the white thing they saw the eagle carrying was no less than a ewe lamb, which was rather badly torn by the talons of the eagle, but was still alive. It was carried home and tenderly fed and reared. It grew and prospered, and in due time became the mother of lambs. When the Barra man and his entertainer compared notes, they came to the conclusion that the lamb brought by the eagle to Tiree, and now the dam of a thriving family, could be none other than the one carried away from Barra Head. This is said to have occurred about 90 years ago." The distance the eagle carried that lamb would be about 40 miles, and a lamb by harvest time must have been a great weight.

SPOTTED EAGLE.

Latin—*Aquila Nœvia.* Gaelic—*Iolair-bhreac.* Welsh—*Eryr Mannog,*

A very rare bird, but found several times in Skye.

BALD EAGLE.

Gaelic—*Iolair-mhaol.*

I do not find this eagle mentioned in any book on British birds, its visits being so rare that it may have escaped notice. I have it on very good authority that a couple of those birds frequented Glenlyon for several seasons some years ago. I hope they may be there still.

OSPREY.

Latin—*Pandion Haliaëtus.* Gaelic—*Iolair-uisge, Iolair-iasgair, Iolair-iasgaich.*

The Osprey used to be very common in the Highlands, but is now almost extinct. So late as 1840 it is mentioned in the New Statistical Account of the Parish of Dunkeld as a common bird. Now it is only very rarely seen there on some of the wild upland lochs. I got the following anecdote of the Osprey's devotion in defence of its mate from Mr Carmichael—"Capt. Malcolm Macleod, Lochmaddy, a most intelligent, observant man, told me the following incident, of which he was an eye-witness:—Upon one occasion when crossing with the Lochmaddy packet from Dunvegan, and when two or three miles from Gob-an-Iroid, Dunvegan Head, he saw something strange fluttering on the water

two or three hundred yards to leeward. He bore down upon it, and found that it was a large Iolair Iasgaich or Osprey which had exhausted itself in its endeavours to carry away a large codfish it had secured, and which now lay floating on the surface of the sea. The noble bird lay exhausted beside its victim, and with extended wings and feathers saturated with brine screamed loudly. When the vessel was within about a hundred yards of the bird, the people on board saw its companion coming from Dunvegan Head. It was screaming loudly, as if defying its foes to injure its mate. It kept at an elevated height till within a few yards of the exhausted bird, when it swooped down with the noise of distant thunder and the speed of lightening, and with unerring aim secured its companion in its claws. It then began to ascend in a circle, gyrating, and extending the higher it went. When it got up to a very high altitude with the helpless bird still in its claws, it relaxed its hold, and down tumbled headlong and confusedly the exhausted bird, like Vulcan when he was kicked down from Heaven by his injured father. The falling bird seemed to make no effort to arrest its downward course till it almost touched the water, when, with one beat of its powerful pinion, it stopped its fall, and majestically sailed away and joined its companion in its flight towards the precipices of Dunvegan Head, where they had their nest."

GER FALCON

Latin—*Falco Greenlandicus.* Gaelic—*Seobhag-mor, Seobhag-mor-na-seilge, Seobhag mor ban. Gearr-sheobhag.* Welsh—*Hebog chwyldro.*

This large and very beautiful falcon, though almost extinct now, used to be quite common in the Highlands, and was very much prized as a hunting hawk. It is mentioned by Sir R. Sibbald in 1684, also by Pennant in his tour in 1772. Fair Isle used to be a favourite breeding place for the Ger Falcon. In Hermann Moll's map of Scotland (1714) in a note on Fair Isle, that famous geographer says—"Faire Isle, famous for the best hawks that are to be had anywhere." McGillivray mentions it as breeding in St Kilda a few years ago, its only known breeding place then in Britain, but I doubt now if it will be allowed even there to breed in peace. And if a solitary specimen of this noble and very conspicuous bird appears in any district of the Highlands, the gamekeepers make short work of him, and, in their ignorance, don't generally know even the value of this very rare hawk to collectors, so that fine specimens have even been known

to have been nailed to a kennel wall for the sake of the sixpence, which most keepers get for every head of so-called vermin from their employers, and which is the cause of the rapid extirpation of so many of our native beasts and birds. To most keepers of the sixpenny-a-head class all are vermin, from the Royal Eagle and noble Ger Falcon, down to the useful and harmless Kestrel or owl, whose sole food generally consists of mice, moles, and insects. There are now a few enlightened proprietors in the Highlands, who strictly forbid the wholesale destruction of our rarer birds of prey. May their number increase !

ICELAND FALCON.

Latin—*Falco Islandicus.* Gaelic—*Seobhag-mor-gorm, Seobhag Lochlannach.*

This is a rarer hawk in the Highlands than even the Ger Falcon. I do not believe it ever breeds in this country now, and is generally only a winter visitor.

PEREGRINE FALCON.

Latin—*Falco Peregrinus.* Gaelic—*Seobhag, Seobhag-gorm, Seobhag-mor-gorm, Seobhag-na-seilge, Seobhag-sealgair, Sealgair, Facon.* Welsh—*Hebog Tramor, Cammin.*

Though for its ravages amongst game the Peregrine is more hunted after by keepers than any other hawk, yet, I am glad to say, it has bravely held its ground, and is now perhaps the commonest of all our large hawks in the Highlands. I also find it regularly breeding in Galloway, both on the hills and the sea-shore cliffs. As its Gaelic name implies, this is the real hunting hawk of this country. For though the Gyr and Iceland Falcons were used for hunting the Crane, Heron, and other large game, the Peregrine was generally used for ordinary game, and is so to this day where hawking is carried on. I well remember my first acquaintance with the Peregrine began when a boy, being employed to take the young out of the rocks of Strathardle for the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh to hunt the moors of Loch-Kinnaird, where for a time he revived the ancient sport of hawking.

Buchanan mentions the Isle of Muic as being a very famous breeding place of the falcon about 1550, and in the Old Statistical Account mention is made of the famous falcons which for ages built their nests in the rock above Moulin, and which were reckoned the best hunting hawks in the Highlands, and about which the following curious tradition still lingers in Athole, which I never came across anywhere else, viz., that of there

being a king of birds, not, of course, in the sense that we use in English when we call the eagle the king of birds or the lion the king of beasts, but a distinct individual bird that was king of all the feathered race and decreed justice amongst the different tribes. The story I got from an old Athole sennachie long years ago :— "For ages before the foundations of the old Black Castle of Moulin were laid (and its history lies before all written record) these famous falcons under the king's special protection built their nests undisturbed in that rock above Moulin every season, till once upon a time, just as the falcon was preparing to lay, a huge old raven came from Badenoch, from the haunted forest of Gaick, and by its superior strength drove the poor falcon from its newly finished nest. Of course more than the raven tried that game in those days, for were they not the good old days that Rob Roy many centuries afterwards mourned when he said—

> 'The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.'

So, perhaps, the old raven was not so much to blame after all. However, there seems to have been more justice going on then amongst the fowls of the air than amongst men, for, after the falcon had used every possible means to dislodge the raven without success, it at last rose in wheeling circles higher and higher till it was almost out of sight, then it flew straight away southwards, and the good men of Athole thought they had seen the last of their famous hawks. Such, however, was not to be, for, on the seventh day after, the falcon reappeared, coming from the south, accompanied by a 'smart, slim, long-winged, white bird' —'Ian caol, sgairteil, fad-sgiathach, geal'—making straight for the nest. As soon as the old raven saw them coming, it rose in a great flurry off the nest, and flew to meet them, croaking out an apology to the stranger for his misbehaviour to the falcon. This apology, however, seemed of no avail, as the stranger with one stroke of his powerful wing dashed out the raven's brains, at the same time losing a feather from his own wing. Then he flew round for a little time, till he saw the falcon once more take possession of her hereditary nest, and then rose above the clouds and flew southwards, and was never seen in Athole since. The lost feather was picked up, and found to be so hard that, as my old informant put it—'Bha an iteag sin cho cruaidh 's gu'n tugadh i sliseag as a' mhaide dharaich a bu chruaidhe bha 'n Lagan Mhaolainn'—'That feather was

so hard that it would cut a shaving off the hardest oak plank in the Howe of Moulin," and he used always to conclude the story by saying very earnestly—'Agus 's e Righ nan Eun a bh' ann,'—'And that was the King of Birds.'" This story seems to point to an old belief, that somewhere away in southern lands there reigned a king over all the birds, to whom all the rest could apply for protection or redress when they had a just cause.

Another old belief somewhat similar, also common in Athole, was that an Albino or pure white rook was regarded and obeyed as a king by all the black rooks. Of course a pure Albino is so rare amongst rooks that it was sure to draw special attention, and get its special share of romance. An uncle of mine, who is a great authority on birds, told me that when a young man, about 50 years ago, in Strathardle, he spent some days trying to stalk and shoot a pure white rook, but as it always kept in the middle of a large flock of black ones, he could never get within shot of it, as the black ones always warned it of the approach of danger.

Many of the Highland clans carry a falcon on their arms, and in Gaelic poetry and proverb this noble bird is very often mentioned, either as an example of swiftness and nobility, or in reference to its use in hawking. Alex. Macdonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alastair), in his Gathering of the Clans to Prince Charlie, says of the Macleods—

> "Gu'n tig na fiurain Leodach ort
> Mar *sheobhgan* 's eoin fo 'n spag."

And of the Frasers—

> "Thig ris na Frisealaich,
> Gu sgibidh le neart garbh,
> Na *seobhagan* fior-ghlan togarrach
> Le fuaths blair nach bogaichear."

Alex. Macdonald again, in a verse which has now become proverbial, in alluding to the difficulty of changing the nature of things, and of the many impossible things that might happen before a fool could be changed into a wise man, puts the difficulty of changing the lazy carrion-eating buzzard into a noble falcon first—

> "Cha deanar *seobhag* de 'n chlamhan,
> Cha deanar eala de 'n ròcas,
> Cha deanar faoileann de'n fhitheach,
> Cha deanar pithean de thomas;

Cha mho nitear sporan sioda
De fhior-chluais na muice;
'S duiliche na sin filidh fior-ghlic
Dheanamh de chli-fhear gun tuigse."

The old Gaelic proverb says, alluding to the falons habit of always killing its quarry on the wing—"Mar a's àirde theid an calman, 's ann a's dòcha 'n t-seobhag breith air." From another old Gaelic proverb we learn that our ancestors were aware of a fact which a good many of their posterity seem to forget, viz.—That all birds could not be noble falcons, neither could all men be great men—"Is beò na h-eòin, ged nach *seobhagan* uil' iad."

THE HOBBY.

Latin—*Falco Subbuteo*, Gaelic—*Obag, Gormag, Seobhag-nan-uiseag* Welsh—*Hebog yr Hedyad.*

This is another beautiful little hawk that has of late become very rare, and the few that are left are rapidly finding their way to the bird-stuffer. Dr Stewart mentions it in the Old Statistical Account as a common bird in the parish of Luss in 1795. It was much used in hawking for hunting small birds, especially the lark from which it got one of its Gaelic names.

RED-FOOTED FALCON.

Latin—*Falco rufipes.* Gaelic—*Seobhag-dhearg-chasach.* Welsh—*Hebog-big-goch.*

MERLIN.

Latin—*Falco æsalon.* Gaelic—*Seobhag-gorm-an-fhraoich, Meirneal.* Welsh—*Corwalch, Llymysten.*

This the smallest, but the most active of all our native hawks, is still quite common in most districts of the Highlands. As it always builds its nest on the ground amongst the heather, like a grouse, it has more chance of escaping notice than the rock or tree building hawks, whose nests are generally easily found. The Merlin was much used in olden times, especially by ladies, for hunting patridges, plovers, and other small game.

KESTREL.

Latin—*Falco tinnunculus.* Gaelic—*Deargan-allt, Croman-luch, Clamhan-ruadh.* Welsh—*Cudyll coch.*

The Kestrel gets his very appropriate Gaelic name, Dearganallt, from his reddish colour, and from the fact of his so often

building his nest and frequenting the rocky banks of burns in the Highlands, and that of Croman-luch, from his living almost entirely on mice if he can get them; and when hunting for them who has not seen and admired him as he pauses and hovers in one spot high in the air, sometimes for many minutes, watching till he gets the mouse far enough from its hole, and then darting down with such rapidity as to have given rise to the Hebridean phrase—"Abhsadh a' Chromain-luch,"—Shortening sail, Kestrel fashion, —applied to awkward handling of a sail, letting it down too suddenly like the descent of a Kestrel.

I may here give a wonderful instance of the instinct of the Kestrel and the great care it takes of its young, of which I was a witness when a boy, but of which I have never seen any notice of in any work upon birds:—A pair of Kestrels had their nest in Kindrogan Rock, and as I was then a lad of 15 at school, and knew every hawk's nest and most other nests for miles round about, and was therefore very useful in that line to the keeper, he took me with him to shoot the Kestrels. When we got under the nest the old hen at once rose, and was shot, but the cock was wild, and kept out of range all day. Before leaving I scrambled to the nest, and found four very young birds in it, one of them blind of an eye. Next day the keeper did not get back, but I went, and as I was lying on the top of the rock a little to the east of the nest, the cock passed close by me with something white in his claws. I did not take any particular notice of this at the time, as I had often seen Kestrels carrying empty skins of small rabbits and moles, skeletons of birds, and other refuse out of their nests in their claws and dropping them at some distance, so as not to draw attention to their nests by such refuse lying about—all hawks do so. On the second day the keeper returned with me to try and shoot the cock, but as there was no signs of him I was again sent to the nest, when I found it empty, and we concluded that the young had died and being eaten by prowling hooded crows, so we proceeded eastward into the wood in search of sparrow-hawks' nests.

About half-a-mile on the keeper made a noise at a tree where there was an old hooded crow's nest, when out flew a Kestrel cock, at which he fired but missed. I was very much surprised, as not only had I never seen a Kestrel build in a tree before (they always build in rocks in the Highlands, but generally on trees in the Lowlands), but I had been up at that very nest three days before and found it empty. However, I was soon up the tree again, when, to my utter astonishment, I found the four young Kestrels, including the

one-eyed one I had seen in the nest in the rock. I at once remembered then seeing the old cock coming in that very direction with the white thing in his claws, and had no doubt but what he was then carrying his young ones carefully away, from their former dangerous home to this ready-made place of safety. The keeper had never come across such a case before, called the Kestrel an "artful dogder," or, perhaps, even something stronger, and was more determined than ever to slay him, so next day we returned very quitely expecting to get a shot at him on the nest, but, to our amazement, found the nest again empty. Judging from the former experience, and knowing of an old sparrow-hawk's nest a few hundred yards to the north, I made for it, and snug enough in it found my one-eyed young friend and his three downy brethren, while high overhead circled the gallant cock, beyond reach of the gun of the vengeful keeper. Next day an underkeeper was sent to the nest with orders to conceal himself at the foot of the tree, and await the cock's coming and shoot him on the nest. However, he might have waited there yet, for after losing all patience he ascended the tree, and found the nest once more empty. Where that much persecuted and devoted bird carried his young the third times I never knew, but I suspect he took them a long distance, for though I searched diligently, far and wide, I could get no further trace of them, only I hope he got them reared in safety as he so richely deserved. This is the only instance I ever knew or heard of, of a bird carrying its young to another nest out of the way of danger, and, as I am positively certain, that there is no mistake about it, I think it worth recording.

GOSHAWK.

Latin—*Astur palumbarius.* Gaelic—*Gos-sheobhag* (Alex. Macdonald), *Glas-sheobhag, Seobhag-mor, Seobhag-riabhach.* Welsh —*Hebog Marthin.*

The Goshawk is very rare now, though once common enough in all the wooded districts of the Highlands. Lightfoot mentions it as breeding in the forests of Invercauld in his time, and Pennant also tells of its nesting in the woods of Rothiemurchus and Glenmore in 1772. Grey mentions several places in the Highlands where it bred within the last few years. He also mentions a charter of the Avenel family, dated 1235, granting the estates of Eskdale to the monks of Melrose, but reserving the breeding places of the falcons and the very trees on which the Goshawks built, and which were not to be cut down, till it would be seen whether they came back to them next year or not. The Goshawk was the

most highly prized of all the short-winged class of hawks for hunting. I am very much inclined to think that the name Gossheobhag and its English equivalent are simply corruptions of its other name "Glas-sheobhag," which certainly is very descriptive of the bird's colour.

SPARROW-HAWK.

Latin—*Accipiter Nisus.* Gaelic—*Speireag, Speir-sheobhag.* Welsh—*Gwepia.*

The Gaelic name of this hawk is very descriptive, meaning literally, "the hawk with long or sharp claws," and certainly to any one seeing this bird for the first time, its long legs and very sharp curved claws are the most striking feature about it. The English name is simply a corruption of "speireag," and has no connection at all with "sparrow," as most people think. This hawk may take an odd sparrow occasionally, but so rarely that it never could have given it its name, as a plump partridge or fat pigeon is far more to its taste, and it is impudent and bold enough to attack and kill a bird three times its own weight and size. A singular instance of daring in a sparrow-hawk occured at Dingwall in November 1870. The hawk seeing a caged canary suspended near a window in the house of Mrs Grigor, from whom I learned the details, dashed through a pane of glass, broke the cage with the impetus of the same blow, and killed its pray as if the deed had been accomplished without any such obstruction as glass or wires. When apprehended, it was found that the hawk had, some time before, been trapped by one of its legs, which was wholly gone from the thigh downwards. I saw both birds about three weeks after the incident happened. I also know a gentleman's house in the North, where a few years ago, a wild pigeon closely followed by a sparrow-hawk dashed through the dining-room window, and so much at home did the hawk feel in its strange quarters, that when discovered he was coolly plucking the feathers off the pigeon and scattering them all over the carpet.

KITE OR SALMON-TAILED GLED.

Latin—*Milvus vulgaris.* Gaelic — *Clamhan-gobhlach, Croman-luchaidh, Croman-lochaidh, Croman-lachdunn.* Welsh—*Barcud.*

This distinct and very beautiful bird from being one of our commonest hawks has within the last 20 years become one of the rarest, and in a few years I am afraid it will be amongst "the things that have been" in the Highlands. It is oftener mentioned

in the poetry and proverbs of the Gael than any other hawk, caused doubtless by its being distinguished from all others by its beautiful forked tail, which seems to have drawn attention at a very early age, as Pliny mentions that the invention of the rudder arose from the observation men made of the various motions of that part when the kite was steering through the air. The kite used to be a great torment to the thrifty Highland housewives, as he was very fond of making a swoop on the barnyard and carrying off a fat fowl as often as he got the chance, to which bad habit the following old Gaelic proverbs refer:—

B'e sin faire '*chlamhain* air na cearcan ;
Gleidheadh a' *chlamhain* air na cearcan ;
Tha 'n *clamhan gobhlach* 'n am measg.

One of Duncan Ban Macintyre's most humerous songs refers to a practical joke by a certain Patrick on a farm in Glenorchy, who one night about dark saw a very fine favourite cock go to roost on the top of the house, and then went in and told some young fellows that it was a large kite that was roosting on the housetop. One of them at once got out an old rusty gun and shot the poor cock. This untoward incident inspired Duncan Ban's muse to write the "Marbhrann Coilich."

COMMON BUZZARD.

Latin—*Buteo Vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Gearr-chlamhan, Clamhan, Bleideir.* Welsh—*Bod teircaill.*

Any one who studies the Gaelic names of birds, as well as of plants, &c., must be struck with the very appropriate and descriptive names given them by our early ancestors, and with the knowledge of the nature and habits of the birds they must have had at the early date when those names would be given, as will be seen, not only in the names themselves, but in our ancient poetry and proverbs as well. The Gaelic name for the Buzzard—"Am Bleideir"—is very appropriate, as it is a very lazy, cowardly bird: all writers on birds blame him for that. One says—"The Buzzard just as frequently seems to wait until its prey comes to it, as trouble itself to go far in search of it." An old Gaelic proverb says "Cha'n ann gun fhios c'arson a nian *clamhan* fead," alluding to the buzzard's habit of whistling when hunting for his prey, which, of course, is as seldom as possible. And as he is a carrion-eating hawk, and will devour all sorts of rubbish, he did not get credit for bringing up his family in a cleanly way, for does not another old proverb say—"Cha d'thainig ian glan riamh a nead a' *chlamhain*"—ap-

plied to people from whom very much good is not to be expected, owing to the stock from which they are sprung.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.

Latin—*Buteo lagopus.* Gaelic—*Bleideir-tonach, Bleideir-molach.*

The name of Bleideir-tonach, by which this bird is always known in Athole, is very descriptive, as his very rough feathered legs, which give him his English name, make him look rather heavy and clumsy behind. To any bulky, clumsy, bungling fellow the old forcible Athole phrase is applied—"Nach e am Bleideir-tonach e." In the New Statistical Account of Dunkeld mention is made of the great number of Rough-legged Buzzards that appeared in that parish during the winter of 1840.

HONEY BUZZARD.

Latin—*Pernis apivorus.* Gaelic—*Bleideir-riabhach, Clamhan-riabhach, Para-riabhach.* Welsh—*Bod-y-mel.*

The last Gaelic name, "Grey Peter," is that by which this bird is known in Glenlyon.

MARSH HARRIER.

Latin—*Circus rufus.* Gaelic—*Clamhan-loin, Puthaig.* Welsh—*Bod y gwerni.*

HEN HARRIER.

Latin—*Circus cyaneus.* Gaelic—*Breid-air-toin, Eun fionn* (*male*) *Clamhan-fionn, Clamhan-luch.* Welsh—*Barcud glas.*

The last Gaelic name, signifying mouse-hawk, is the name given to this bird in the Hebrides, as those mischievous little animals form a great part of its food there.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER.

Latin—*Circus Montagui.* Gaelic—*Clamhan-luch.*

This is known as the mouse-hawk on the mainland of Scotland.

EAGLE OWL.

Latin—*Bubo maximus.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag-mhor, Cailleach-oidhche-mhor.* Welsh—*Y Ddyllnan fawr.*

The Eagle Owl is very rare now. One was shot near the Pass of Killicrankie a few years ago.

LONG-EARED OWL.

Latin—*Otus vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Comhachag, Cumhachag-adhar-aiche.* Welsh—*Dylluan gorniog.*

SHORT-EARED OWL.

Latin—*Otus Brachyotus.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag-chluasach.* Welsh —*Dylluan glustiog.*

BARN OWL.

Latin—*Strix flammea.* Gaelic — *Cumhachag, Cailleach-oidhche, Cailleach-oidhche-bhan, Cumhachag-Bhan.* Welsh—*Dylluan wen.*

The hooting of this owl is supposed in the Highlands to foretell rain, hence the old saying "Tha '*chomhachag* ri bron, thig tuiltean oirnn"—the owl is mourning ; rain is coming.

25TH MARCH 1885.

On this date G. H. Campbell, grocer, Church Street, Inverness, and Duncan Macmillan, assistant grocer, High Street, do., were elected ordinary members. The Secretary read a paper by Mrs Mary Mackellar, Bard of the Society, on the Educational Power of Gaelic Poetry. Mrs Mackellar's paper was as follows :—

THE EDUCATIONAL POWER OF GAELIC POETRY.

When a stranger visits the Highlands for the first time, he must be to some extent forgiven for concluding that the shaggy and rudely-clad natives are ignorant and miserable. He sees a people dwelling too often in smoky huts that are dingy and comfortless, and living on a diet so plain as to seem to the educated palate near akin to starvation. Then he considers their language a jargon that keeps him from any spirit contact with the speaker thereof ; and, worse than all, he has probably read the remarks of some travelled Cockney who took a run through some district of the Highlands, and considered himself so well informed as to air his knowledge, or rather his ignorance, of the people and their habits in the pages of some periodical, or in the columns of a newspaper. All who read these come, as as matter of course, in contact with our people with preconceived ideas ; and we all know that preconceived ideas set a traveller at a very serious disadvantage. I, at least, found it so on my first visit to London. I was very much disappointed to find that, though the Royal Augusta wore an imperial crown, and was clothed in purple, she had naked feet that were anything but clean, and the hems of her robes were torn and muddy. I had expected a glorious vision of glittering

diocesan episcopacy under the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, until the time of King David the First. To trace the process of its decay would be interesting, but this paper has already extended to too great a length.

16th December 1885.

At the meeting on this date the following new members were elected, viz.:—Miss Marion Ferguson, 23 Grove Road, St John's Wood, London, honorary member; Mr George Black, National Museum, Edinburgh; and Dr Thomas Aitken, Lunatic Asylum, Inverness, ordinary members.

Some routine business having been transacted, the Secretary read the second* instalment of the paper on "The Gaelic Names of Birds," by Mr Charles Fergusson, Cally, Gatehouse, Kirkcudbright. Mr Fergusson's paper was as follows :—

GAELIC NAMES OF BIRDS.

Part II.

LONG-EARED OWL.

Latin—*Otus vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Comhachag, Cumhachag-adharcaich.* Welsh—*Dylluan gorniog.*

SHORT-EARED OWL.

Latin—*Otus brachyotus.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag-chluasach.* Welsh—*Dylluan glustiog.*

BARN OWL.

Latin—*Strix flammea.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag, Cailleach-oidhche, Cailleach-oidhche-bhan, Cumhachag-bhan.* Welsh—*Dylluan wen.*

The hooting of this owl is supposed in the Highlands to foretell rain, hence the old saying—"Tha '*chomhachag* ri bron, thig tuiltean oirnn"—The owl is mourning, rain is coming.

TAWNY OWL.

Latin—*Syrnium-strodch.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag-dhonn, Cumhachag-ruadh, Bodach-oidhche, Cailleach-oidhche.* Welsh—*Dylluan frech.*

This owl is very common in the wooded parts of the Highlands, and his melancholy hooting at night has been the cause of

* For the first part of Mr Fergusson's paper, see "Transactions," Vol. XI., page 240.

many a good fright to people coming from the unwooded glens, where they are not acquainted with this mournful bird of night, and also the origin of many a ghost story. Alluding to this, the old phrase says—"Tha mi na's eolaiche air coille na bhi fo eagal na caillich-oidhche"—I am more accustomed to a wood than to be afraid of an owl.

SNOWY OWL.

Latin—*Surnia nyctea.* Gaelic—*Comhachag bhan, Caillcach-bhan, Comhachag-mhor.* Welsh—*Dylluan manev.*

This very beautiful bird may be said to be common in parts of the Highlands, especially the Hebrides, during the spring generally.

HAWK OWL.

Latin — *Surnia funerea.* Gaelic — *Seobhag-oidhche, Seobhag-fheasgair.*

This is a very rare bird, but I have often seen it on the Strathardle hills, hunting in broad daylight. I remember seeing a very fine specimen shot in Glenderly when out grouse shooting about twenty years ago. The day was clear and sunny, and we saw it hunting abroad for its prey a good while before it came within shot

LITTLE OWL.

Latin—*Noctua passerina.* Gaelic—*Cumhachag-bheag.* Welsh—*Coeg dayllvan.*

This finishes the Raptores, or rapacious birds, and brings us to the second order—the Insessors, or tree-perchers.

INSESSORS.

Group I.—Dentirostres. Family I.—Laniadæ.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE, OR BUTCHER BIRD.

Latin—*Lanius excubitor.* Gaelic—*Buidseir, Pioghaid-ghlas* (Grey Piet). Welsh—*Cigydd Mawr.*

The first Gaelic name, which I must say looks suspiciously like a mere translation from the English, is that given by Alexander Macdonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alastair) in his Gaelic Vocabulary, published in 1741. The second is the name by which the bird is known in Strathardle, where it is often found, and where I well remember shooting a very fine male specimen—amongst the very first birds ever I shot—with an old flint gun,

with which in my boyish days I shot many a rare bird, though it did sometimes take a very long time puffing and fizzing from the time I pulled the trigger till the shot went off.

Group II.—Muscicapidæ.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

Latin—*Muscicapa grisola.* Gaelic—*Breacan-glas, Beicein-glas, Breacan-sgiobalt, Glac-nan-cuileag.* Welsh—*Y Gwybedog.*

Group III. Merulidæ.

COMMON DIPPER OR WATER-OUZEL.

Latin—*Cinclus aquaticus.* Gaelic—*Gobha-uisge, Gobha-dubh, Gobha-dubh-nan-allt, Gobhachan, Gobhachan-allt, Gobhachan-dubh, Gobhachan-uisge, Lon-uisge, Feannag-uisge, Bogachan, Bog-an-lochan.* Welsh—*Mwyalchen y dwfr.*

This lively little gentleman with the many titles, in full evening dress, black suit and white shirt front, is to be found on the banks of every burn in the Highlands, and has a different name almost on every burn. In some districts it is a much maligned and much persecuted bird, through the ignorant belief that it lives entirely on fish spawn, a very great mistake. Grey says—"Instead of doing harm in this way, it is in fact the anglers' best friend by devouring immense quantities of the larvæ of dragon-flies and water-beetles—creatures which are known to live to a great extent upon the spawn, and even the newly hatched fry of both trout and salmon." He also adds, that to this day a reward of sixpence a head is given in some parts of Sutherlandshire for water-ouzels. And we read in the New Statistical Account that the slaughter of one of those innocent birds was counted such a meritorious deed that "formerly, any person who succeeded in killing one of these birds was allowed, as a reward, the privilege of fishing in the close season; but for a long time back this has been lost sight of." Not, I am sorry to say, because the poor water-ouzel gets more justice, or is now counted innocent by the class of people that slaughter it, but because the fishings are more valuable, and sharper looked after.

MISSEL THRUSH.

Latin—*Turdus viscivorus* Gaelic—*Smeorach-mhor, Smeorach-ghlas, Sgraicheag, Sgraicheag-ghlas.* Welsh—*Tresglen, Pen y Llwyn.*

FIELDFARE.

Latin—*Turdus pilarus.* Gaelic—*Liatruisg, Liatrasg.* Welsh—*Caseg y ddryccin.*

MAVIS OR COMMON THRUSH.

Latin—*Turdus musicus.* Gaelic—*Smeorach, Smeorach-bhuidhe.* Welsh—*Aderyn Croufraith.*

Of all singing birds in the Highlands the mavis is the favourite, and reckoned the sweetest singer. All our bards, late and early, delight in comparing their sweet singers to the mavis, which is the highest praise they can give, hence the saying—"Cho binn ri smeòrach air geug"—as tuneful as a mavis on a bough. It is the first bird that begins to sing in the Highlands, often beginning, on an occasional fine day, before the storms of winter are over. As the old proverb says—"Cha'n 'eil port a sheinneas an smeòrach 's an Fhaoilleach, nach, caoin i mu'n ruith an t-Earrach"—For every song the mavis sings in February she'll lament ere the spring be over. Another says, "Cha dean aon smeòrach samhradh"—One mavis makes not summer. One of the most ancient styles of composition in the Gaelic language, and a very favourite one with most Highland bards, is that in which they represent themselves as the "smeorach," or mavis of their respective clans, to sing the praises of their chiefs and clans. Of this curious species of composition we have many examples, notably "Smeorach Chlann Raonuill"—The Mavis of Clan Ranald, by Alex. Macdonald (Mac Mhaighistir Alastair):—

"Gur 'a mis an smeòrach chreagach,
An déis léum bharr cuaich mo nidein
Sholar bidh do m' ianaibh beaga,
Seinneam ceòl air barr gach bidein.

'S smeorach mise do Chlann Dónuill,
Dréam a dhiteadh a 's a leonadh;
'S chaidh mo chur an riochd na smeoraich,
Gu bhi seinn 's ag cur ri ceol dhaibh.

'S mise 'n t-ianan beag le m' fheadan
Am madainn-dhriuchd am barr gach badain,
Sheinneadh na puirt ghrinn gun sgreadan—
'S ionmhuinn m' fheadag fead gach lagain."

There are also smeorachs by Mac Codrum, Macdougall, Maclachlan, Macleod, and others—all admirable compositions of their kind.

RED-WING.

Latin—*Jardus iliacus.* Gaelic—*Sgiath-dhearg, Ean-an-t-sneachda,*[1] *Smeorach-an-t-sneachda. Dearg-an-sneachda.* Welsh—*Soccen yr lira, Y dresclen goch.*

BLACKBIRD.

Latin—*Jurdus merula.* Gaelic—*Lon-dubh, Eun-dubh.* Welsh—*Mwyalch, Aderyn du.*

The blackbird has always been reckoned a mournful bird in the Highlands, partly, perhaps, from its sombre colour, and more especially because of its sweet plaintive song, the rapid warbling notes of which the Highlanders likened to some of their most mournful piobaireachd laments, whilst the mavis' song resembled the salute or welcome class of piobaireachd—"An smeorach ri failte, 's 'n lon-dubh ri cumha"—"The mavis sings a welcome, and the blackbird a lament." Ewan MacColl, the Lochfyne bard, expresses this old Highland belief very beautifully in his address to a blackbird, some of the verses of which I may quote—

"A loin-duibh, a loin-duibh, 's fada dh' imich uait surd—
Ciod e so, 'chuir mulad 'na d' dhàn-s?
Tha 'n samhradh a' tighinn, tha 'choille 'fas domh'il,
'S gach eun innt' le sunnd 'cur air failt.

"A loin-duibh, a loin-duibh, 'n uair tha'n uiseag 's an speur,
'Cur gean air Righ aobhach an Lò,
'Nuair tha 'n smeorach 's a leannnan 'comh-shodan ri d' thaobh,
'M bi thusa 'n ad aonar ri bròn?

"A loin-duibh, tha do thuireadh a' lotadh mo chri—
'S ioghnadh leam ciod a chradh thu co ghoirt:
'N e namh 'an riochd caraid a ghoid uait do shith?
'N e gu 'n d' mhealladh 'n ad dhochas thu 'th' ort?

"A loin-duibh, a loin-duibh, 'm beil do leannan riut dur?
Cha 'n urrainn do 'n chuis bhi gu brath:
Co ise air thalamh 's an cuireadh tu uidh,
Nac mealladh 's nach maoth'cheadh do dhàn?

"A loin-duibh, a loin-duibh, dearc 'us suthag nam blàr,
Bi'dh deas dhuit gun dàil air son bidh:
Tha 'n clamhan 'san t-seobhag fad', fada o laimh?
Nach sguir thu, ma ta, de do chaoidh?

"A loin-duibh, a lion-duibh, tha mi 'cuimhneachadh nis!
Bha 'n t-eun'dair an rathad so 'n dè—
O an-iochd an trudair! do leannan thuit leis—
Eoin ghrinn, 'se so 'ghuin thu—nach e?"

Fond blackbird, fond blackbird, sad, sad is thy song—
The cause of thy grief I would learn;
Bright summer is coming, hear how the woods ring,
And welcome his kingly return.

Fond blackbird, fond blackbird, the lark, soaring high,
Salutes the bright orb of the day;
The cuckoo and thrush sing together for joy,
Why then art *thou* joyless, O say?

Fond blackbird, thy plaint makes my heart almost bleed;
Dire, dire must indeed be thy doom;
Has the friend of thy bosom proved false? or did fade
Each young hope that once promised to bloom?

Fond blackbird, fond blackbird, say, lov'st thou in vain,
Or is thy fair consort unkind?
Ah, no—could she listen to that melting strain,
And leave the sweet warbler to pine!

Fond blackbird, fond blackbird, the berry and sloe
Will soon be thy banquet so rare;
The buzzard and falcon are far out of view,
To wail, then, sweet mourner, forbear.

Fond blackbird, fond blackbird, now, *now* do I mind—
The fowler yestreen sought the brake;
Thy partner's soft plumage he strew'd on the wind!
Nought else could such deep woes awake.

Very curiously the Gaelic name of the huge and long extinct deer, the elk, is the same as that of the blackbird, Lon-dubh, and most certainly it is the elk that is referred to, and not the blackbird in the very ancient saying—"An Lon-dubh, an Lon-dubh spàgach! thug mise dha coille fhasgach fheurach, 's thug esan dhomh an monadh dubh fàsach." Sheriff Nicholson translates this—The blackbird, the sprawling blackbird! I gave him a sheltered grassy wood, and he gave me the black desolute moor. Mackintosh in his Gaelic Proverbs translates it—The ouzel, the club-footed ouzel, &c., (which, of course, is wrong, as the ouzel has no claim to this name), and adds a note—"Some say that this alludes to the Roman invasion, and others refer it to the Scandinavian incursions, when the Gael left the more sheltered spots and pasture ranges, and fled to the fastnesses of the Grampian hills." I have no doubt the proper translation is—The elk, the bow-legged, or club-

footed elk, &c.; for who could possibly apply the word, "spagach" to the straight, slender, genteel feet of the blackbird? whereas nothing could be so descriptive of the great clumsy club-feet of the elk, whose hoofs are so much and so loosely divided that when it puts its weight on them, they spread out so wide that when it lifts its foot, the two divisions of the hoof fall together with a loud clattering noise, which would be sure to draw the attention of our remote ancestors to them, and what would be more likely than that they would in derision liken the hated Roman soldiers, with their great broad sandals on their feet, to the clumsy lumbering elk; certainly they would be more likely to do so than to liken them to the sprightly blackbird. If the saying does refer to the elk, which was extinct in Britain ages before all written history, it is another proof added to the many, of how the ancient lore of the Celts, though unwritten, was handed down through so many generations of the children of the Gael.

RING OUZEL.

Latin—*Tardus torquatus.* Gaelic—*Dubh-chraige, Druid-mhonaidh Druid-dhubh.* Welsh—*Mwyalchen y graig.*

Group IV.—Sylviadæ.

HEDGE SPARROW.

Latin—*Accentor modularis.* Gaelic—*Gealbhonn-nam-preas, Sporag, Donnag.* Welsh—*Llwyd y gwrych.*

I have no doubt the common English country name of this bird—Dunnock (Rev. J. C. Atkinson)—is simply a corruption of the Gaelic name, Donnag—Brownie, or little brown bird.

ROBIN.

Latin—*Erythaca rubecula.* Gaelic—*Bru-dhearg, Bru-dheargan, Broinn-dhearg, Broinn-dheargan, Broinileag, Nigidh, Ruadhag, Roban-roid.* Welsh—*Yr hobi goch, Bron-goch.*

Here also one of the English country names given by the Rev. J. Atkinson seems to come from the Gaelic—Ruddock, Ruadhag, little red bird—and as the English borrow from the Gaelic, it is only fair that we should do the same from their language (in modern times, of course, as everybody knows most of our Gaelic names of birds were in use many centuries before the English language had an existence). So, very curiously, one of our greatest bards, Alexander Macdonald, has done in this case, for though in his Gaelic Vocabulary he gives the Gaelic name of the robin as Broinn-dhearg, yet in his poems he always calls

this bird by the names of Richard and Robin. In his "Song of Summer," "Oran an t' Sambraidh," he says—

"Agus *Robin* 'g a bhéusadh
Air a' ghéig os a chionn,
Gur glan gall-fheadan *Richard*
A' seinn nan cuisleannan grinn."

And in "The Sugar Brook," "Allt-an-t Siucair"—

"Bha Richard 's Robin bru-dhearg
Ri seinn, 's fear dhiubh 'n a bhéus."

Macintyre again uses Bru-dhearg, in Coire-Cheathaich. He says:—

"An druid 's an bru-dhearg, le móran uinich,
Ri ceileir sunntach bu shiubhlach rann."

I have never heard the name Nigidh, for the robin, anywhere in common use, but it is given in the Highland Society's Dictionary. The common name in Perthshire is Roban-roid. Most writers on birds have taken notice of the many wonderful places in which this bird will sometime build its nest. I remember, when a boy, preserving as a curiosity for several years a robin's nest which was actually built inside the ribs of a dried skeleton of a buzzard hawk, which the keepers had nailed to the back wall of a stable many years before. The impudent bird reared its young brood in that strange nesting place to the astonishment of the natives. Had that hawk known the fate that was before it, it might well say with Napoleon that there was only one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.

BLUE-THROATED WARBLER.

Latin—*Phœnicura Suecica.* Gaelic—*Ceileiriche, Oranaiche.*

REDSTART.

Latin—*Phœnicura ruticilla.* Gaelic—*Ceann-deary, Ceann-dhearg-an, Earr-dhearg, Ton-dhearg.* Welsh—*Rhonell goch.*

STONE-CHAT.

Latin—*Saxicola rubicola.* Gaelic—*Cloichearan, Clacharan* (Grey). Welsh—*Clochder y cerrig.*

Sheriff Nicolson gives the following old Lismore saying, which, he adds, is suggestive of the development theory:—"Cloicheirean spagach, ogha na muile-máig."—The waddling stone-chat, the frog's grand-child.

WHIN-CHAT.

Latin—*Saxicola rubetra.* Gaelic—*Gochdan, Gochcan.* Welsh—*Clochder yr eithin.*

WHEATEAR.

Latin—*Saxicola œnanthe.* Gaelic—*Cloichearan, Bru-gheal, Crithachan, Bogachan.* Welsh—*Tinwyn y cerrig.*

This bird no doubt got its two last Gaelic names from its constant habit of shaking or quivering its tail. Grey gives the following old Hebridean superstition about this bird:—"There is a very curious superstition prevalent in North and South Uist regarding the bird on its arrival. When seen for the first time in the season, the natives are quite unhappy if it should happen to be perched on a rock or a stone—such a circumstance, as they say, being a sure sign of evil in prospect; but should the bird be seen perched on a bit of turf, it is looked upon as a happy omen."

SEDGE WARBLER.

Latin—*Salicaria phragmitis.* Gaelic—*Glas-eun, Uiseag-oidhche.* Welsh—*Hedydd yr helyg.*

This bird got its Gaelic name—Uiseag-oidhche, Night-lark—from its well-known habit of singing all through the night, which makes so many people mistake it for the nightingale.

NIGHTINGALE.

Latin—*Philomela Luscinia.* Gaelic—*Spideag, Beul-binn, Ros-an-ceol.* Welsh—*Eos.*

The first Gaelic name is that given by Alex. Macdonald in his vocabulary, also in the Highland Society's Dictionary, which also gives the second name—Beul-binn, sweet mouth; the third is that given by Logan in his Scottish Gael. He says—"The Nightingale, which has now forsaken the northern part of the island, is supposed to have once frequented the woods of Scotland. Its name in Gaelic is beautifully expressive of the sweetness of its song and the character of the bird. In Ros-an-ceol, the rose music, the melody is put for the melodist, the former being heard when the latter is unseen."

BLACKCAP.

Latin—*Curruca atricapilla.* Gaelic—*Ceann-dubh.* Welsh—*Penddu 'r brwyn.*

WHITE-THROAT.

Latin—*Curruca cinerea.* Gaelic—*Gealan-coille.* Welsh—*Y gwddfgwyn.*

WILLOW WREN.

Latin—*Sylviæ trochilus.* Gaelic—*Crionag-ghiubhais.*

GOLDEN CRESTED WREN.

Latin — *Regulus cristatus.* Gaelic — *Dreathan-ceann-bhuidhe, Crionag-bhuidhe, Bigein.*

GREAT TITMOUSE.

Latin—*Parus major.* Gaelic—*Currag-bhain-tighearna* (the lady's nightcap). Welsh—*Y Benloyn fwyaf.*

BLUE TITMOUSE.

Latin—*Parus cæruleas.* Gaelic—*Cailleachag-cheann-ghorm, An Snoileun* (Grey). Welsh—*Y Lleian.*

COLE, TITMOUSE, OR BLACKCAP.

Latin—*Parus ater.* Gaelic—*Smutag, Cailleachag-cheann-duibh,* Welsh—*Y Benloyn lygliw.*

This bird got its name of "Smutag" no doubt from its habit of spitting and puffing, like an enraged cat, when on its nest, in a hole on a wall or tree, if disturbed.

MARSH TITMOUSE.

Latin — *Parus palustris.* Gaelic — *Ceann-dubh.* Welsh — *Benloyn y cyrs.*

LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

Latin—*Parus Condatus.* Gaelic—*Ciochan, Ciochan-fada, Miontan.* Welsh—*Y Benloyn gynffonhir.*

Group I. Family VII.—Motacillidæ.

PIED WAGTAIL.

Latin—*Motacilla Yarrellii.* Gaelic—*Breac an t-sil, Glaisean seilich.* Welsh—*Brith y fyches, Tinsigl y gwys.*

GREY WAGTAIL.

Latin—*Motacilla boarula.* Gaelic—*Breacan-ban-tighearna* (spotted lady). Welsh—*Brith y fyches lwyd.*

YELLOW, OR RAY'S WAGTAIL.

Latin—*Motacilla flava.* Gaelic — *Breacan-buidhe.* Welsh—*Brith y fyches fellen.*

Group 1. Family VIII.—Anthidæ.

TREE PIPIT.

Latin—*Anthus arboreus.* Gaelic—*Riabhag-choille.*

MEADOW PIPIT, OR HEATHER LINTIE.

Latin—*Anthus pratensis.* Gaelic—*Snathag, Riabhag-mhonaidh* (Grey). Welsh—*Hedydd y cae.*

The first is the Gaelic name always given in Athole to this bird, and a story is told in Strathardle of an English gentleman, who had asked an old shepherd what were the commonest birds on his hill, getting for answer—"Needleag, whistleag, heatheraig-hen, and rashirag-horn;" being the best English the old man could muster for snathag (heather lintie), feadag (golden plover), cearc-fhraoich (grouse), and adharcan-luachrach (green plover).

ROCK PIPIT.

Latin—*Anthus petrosus.* Gaelic—*Gabhagan, Bigein, Glas-eun* (Grey).

Group II—Conirostres. Family 1.—Alaudidæ.

SKY-LARK, OR LAVEROCK.

Latin—*Alauda cplestris.* Gaelic—*Uiseag, Riabhag.* Welsh—*Hedydd, Uchedydd.*

The Douglas said that he would rather hear the laverock sing than the mouse squeak. The old Highlanders expressed the same sentiment in their old proverb—"Cha 'n 'eil deathach 'an tigh na h-uiseige"—There is no smoke in the lark's house. Sheriff Nicolson says—"The bird of most aspiring and happy song has untainted air in its lowly home." As the mavis was honoured as the prima donna of song in the woods and bushy glens, so the lark was reckoned the sweetest songster in the open moors and meadows. As the bard says—

"Bidh uiseag air lòn
Agus smeorach air gèig."
The lark on the meadow
And the mavis on the tree.

WOOD LARK.

Latin—*Alauda arborea.* Gaelic—*Uiseag-choille, Riabhag-choille* (Grey). Welsh—*Hedydd y coed.*

The wood lark is mentioned by Macintyre and amongst his other woodland birds in "Coire-cheathaich"—

"Bha eoin an t-sleibhe 'nan caltainn gle-ghlan,
A' gabhail bheusan air gheig sa' choill,
An uiseag cheutach, 's a luinneag fein aice,
Feadan speiseil gu reidh a' seinn:

A chuag, 'sa smeòrach, am barr nan òg an,
A' gabhail òrain gu ceolmhor binn :
'Nuair ghoir an cuannal, gu loinneil guanach,
'Se 's glain a chualas am fuaim sa' ghleann."

Group II. Family II—Emberrizdæ

SNOW BUNTING.

Latin—*Plectrophanes nivalis.* Gaelic—*Eun-an-t-sneachdai.* Welsh—*Golfan-yr-eira.*

COMMON BUNTING.

Latin—*Emberiza miliaria.* Gaelic—*Gealag-bhuachair, Gealabigein.* Welsh—*Bras y ddruttan, Bras yr yd.*

BLACK-HEADED, OR REED BUNTING.

Latin—*Emberiza schœniclus.* Gaelic—*Gealag-dubh-cheannach, Gealag-loin.* Welsh—*Golfan y cyrs.*

YELLOW HAMMER.

Latin—*Emberiza citrinella.* Gaelic—*Buidheag-bhealaidh, Buidheag-bhuachair, Buidhean.* Welsh—*Llinos felen.*

This beautiful bird is of very evil repute in the Highlands, where it is counted a very meritorious deed to harry its nest, from the old superstition that this bird is badly given to swearing ; also that it sang on Calvary during the time of the crucifixion. In the lowlands one of its country names is the yellow yeorling, and the old rhyme says—

"The Brock, the Toad, and the Yellow Yeorling
Get a drap o' the deil's bluid ilka May morning."

So that, if it imbibes much of that blood, it will account for its swearing as well as for the evil reputation it has gained.

Group II. Family III.—Fringillidæ.

CHAFFINCH.

Latin—*Fringilla Cœlebs.* Gaelic—*Bricean-beithe Breacan-beithe.* Welsh—*Asgell arian, Winc.*

Alex. Macdonald in his Allt-an-t Siucair, says—

" Am-bricein-beithe 's lub air,
'Se gleusadh luth a theud."

MOUNTAIN FINCH.

Latin—*Fringilla Montifringilla.* Gaelic—*Lu-eun, Breicean-coatrainn.* Welsh—*Bronrhuddyn y mynydd.*

TREE SPARROW.

Latin—*Passer Montanus.* Gaelic—*Gealbhonn Gealbhonn-nan-craobh Glass-enn.* Welsh—*Golfan y mynydd.*

HOUSE SPARROW.

Latin—*Passer Domesticus.* Gaelic—*Gealbhonn, Sporag.* Welsh—*Aderyn y to, Golfan.*

GREENFINCH.

Latin—*Coccothraustes Chloiis.* Gaelic—*Glaisean-daraich.* Welsh—*Y Gegid, Llinos werdd.*

HAWFINCH.

Latin—*Coccothraustes Vulgaris.* Gaelic — *Gobach.* Welsh—*Gylsfinbraff.*

GOLDFINCH.

Latin—*Carduelis elegans.* Gaelic—*Lasair-choille, Buidhean-coille.* Welsh—*Gwas y Sierri.*

COMMON LINNET.

Latin—*Linota cannabina.* Gaelic—*Gealan-lin, Gealan.* Welsh—*Llinos.*

COMMON REDPOLE.

Latin—*Linota linaria.* Gaelic—*Deargan-seilich, Ceann-dearg an.* Welsh—*Llinos bengoch leiaf.*

MOUNTAIN LINNET.

Latin — *Linota Montium.* Gaelic — *Riabhag-mhonaidh, Riabhag-fhraoich, Bigean-bain-t'ighearna* (Uist). Welsh—*Llinos fynydd.*

BULLFINCH.

Latin—*Pyrrhula vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Corran-coille, Deargan-fhraoich.* Welsh—*Y Chwybanydd, Rhawn goch.*

PINE GROSBEAK.

Latin—*Pyrrhula enucleator.* Gaelic—*Cnag, Lair fligh.*

Of this bird Logan says—"The Cnag, or Lair fligh, a bird like a parrot, which digs its nest with its beak in the trunks of trees, is thought peculiar to the county of Sutherland."

COMMON CROSSBILL.

Latin—*Loxia curvirostra.* Gaelic—*Cam-ghob, Deargan giubhais.* Welsh—*Gylsingroes.*

Group II. Family IV.—Sturnidæ.

STARLING.

Latin—*Sturnus vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Druid, Druid-dhubh, Druid-bhreac, Druidean.* Welsh—*Drydwen, Drydwy.*

Group II. Family V.—Corvidæ.

CHOUGH, OR RED-LEGGED CROW.

Latin—*Fregilus graculus.* Gaelic—*Cathag-dhearg-dhearg-chasach* (Skye). Welsh—*Brân big*

This bird, from some unaccountable cause, is getting rarer in the Highlands every season, for in many districts where it used to breed in flocks it is now utterly unknown, even though quite undisturbed by man. Don mentions it as a common bird in Glen Clova, and Pennant as very common in Glenlyon and Breadalbane. Within the last forty years it used to breed in flocks in the Islands of Rum, Coll, Canna, and Tyree, where now it is never seen. Its gradual disappearance without any known cause is one of those problems which naturalists sometimes find so difficult to solve.

RAVEN.

Latin—*Corvus corax.* Gaelic—*Fitheach, Fiatach* (Uist and Skye). Welsh—*Cigfran.*

Even the raven, once so common in every glen in the Highlands, is becoming, from constant persecution, rare there now, except in the wilder and more remote districts; though in general the raven, from his cunning and keen scent, is pretty well able to take care of himself. Every one knows the old saying that there is a Scotchman, a raven, and a rat to be found in every clime and country under the sun, from the equator to the pole. However, one would be inclined to think that it prefers the colder parts, from the old Gaelic saying so often quoted on a very warm day—"Am fitheach a' cur a mach a theanga leis an teas," The raven putting out his tongue for heat (*i.e.*, like a dog). Being rather a bird of evil omen, the raven is seldom mentioned by our Gaelic bards, except sometimes that they compare the hair of the heroes and heroines in blackness to the raven. For instance, in the very ancient poem of Fraoch, given in Gillies' collection, we have—

"Bu duibhe na 'm fitheach a ghruag,
Bu deirge a ghruaidh na fuil laoigh;
Bu mhine na cobhair an t-sruth,
Bu ghile na'n sneachd corp Fhraoich."

Blacker than the raven his hair,
Redder than calf's blood his cheek,
Softer than the froth on the stream,
Whiter than snow the body of Fraoch.

Though seldom mentioned in the poetry, there is no other bird I know of so often mentioned in the proverbs of the Gael, generally not to its credit, though all showing an intimate knowledge of the nature and habits of the raven. Alluding to the ravages it commits amongst lambs, the old nursery rhyme, imitating the croak of the raven, says—"Gròc, gròc', ars am fitheach, 'se mo mhac-sa chrimeas na h-uain"—Groc, groc, says the raven, it is my son that will pick the lambs' bones. From its being a great glutton, which often leads it into danger, we have—"Meallaidh am biadh am fitheach bho'n chraoibh"—Food will lure the raven from the tree; and from its so quickly finding out any carrion or carcase we have—"Fios fithich guròic"—The raven's boding of a feast. And also—"Cruinnichidh na fithich far am bi a chairbh"—Where the carcase is the ravens will gather. We cannot blame it for this, as we have it on the high authority of the Bible that the eagle, the king of birds, does the same—"Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together"—Matthew xxiv. 28. From its well-known habit of always attacking the eyes of an animal first, we have—"Am fitheach a dh' eireas moch, 's ann leis a bhios sùil a' bheothaich a tha 's a' phóll" —The raven that rises early gets the eye of the beast in the bog. So very fond is the raven of the eye of an animal that it wont even share that tit-bit with its own young, so the old saying is—"Cha toir am fitheach an t-suil dha 'isean fhèin"—The raven wont give the eye to his own chicken. When a raven happened to perch on a house-top, or on a tree near a house, it was supposed to portend death to one of the inmates, which explains the old saying—"Fitheach dubh air an tigh, fios gu nighean an dathadair"—A black raven on the roof, a warning to the dyer's daughters. This dyer's daughter was a famous Athole witch, who lived to an extreme old age, and when she was dying an old raven came and perched on the top of the house, and croaked there till she died, and was supposed to have been the messenger sent to claim her by the Evil One, to whom she had sold herself nearly a century before. If the old witch and her master were the company the raven kept, no wonder though another old Gaelic proverb says—"Ma' s olc am fitheach, cha'n fhearr a chomunn"—If bad be the raven, his company is no better. Another common old saying is—"Tha fios fithich agad"—You have a raven's knowledge. Of this Sheriff

Nicolson says—"That is, knowledge more than is natural. The raven was believed to possess supernatural knowledge, and of coming events in particular. This was also the Norse belief. Odin was said to have two ravens which communicated everything to him." There was also an old Highland superstition that the young ravens killed the old ones, which is the origin of one of the bitterest wishes or curses in the Gaelic language—"Bas fithich ort"—A raven's death to you, *i.e.*, May you be killed by your own child. The raven being rather a tyrant over the crows and other weaker birds, gave rise to the saying—"Ceist an fhithich air an fheannaig"—The raven's question to the crow; which Sheriff Nicolson explains—"The sort of question sometimes asked by a 'Great Power' of another, or perhaps smaller Power, in cases of annexation, oppression, &c." Having now given so many of the proverbs of the Gael about the raven, I may give an example of their prophecies as well. The famous Coinneach Odhar Mackenzie, the Brahan Seer, in one of his predictions regarding the Clan Mackenzie, speaking of the famous stone—"Clach an t-Seasaidh," near the Muir of Ord, says—"The day will come when the ravens will, from the top of it, drink their three fulls, for three successive days, of the blood of the Mackenzies." Another version has it—

"A's olaidh am fitheach a thri saitheachd
De dh-fhuil nan Gaidheal, bho Clach-nam-Fionn,"

"And the raven shall drink his three fills
Of the blood of the Gael from the Stone of the Feinne."

Let us hope, for the sake of the Clan Mackenzie, that this bloody feast for the raven may never come, like the still more bloody one promised to the ravens by Alex. Macdonald (Mac Mhaighster Alastair), in his Oran nam Fineachan, or Gathering of the Clans, when all the Clans were to rise for the "Auld Stuarts," and to triumph—

"Over the necks of the foes o' Prince Charlie;"

and in one great battle to convert "the foes o' Prince Charlie" into food for the ravens—

"S mòr a bhios ri corp-rusgadh
Nan closaichean 's a' bhlàr:
Fithich anns an rochdadaich,
Ag itealaich, 's ag cnocaireachd;
Ciocras air na cosgarraich,
Ag òl 's ag ith an sàth.
Och, 's tùrsach, fann a chluinnear moch-thrath,
Ochanaich an àir.

Having given so many old sayings unfavourable to the raven, I think I must in justice now give other two more favourable ones, which say, "Féumaidh na fithich fhéin a bhi bèo"—The ravens themselves must live; and, "Ge dubh am fitheach, is geal leis 'isean"—Black as is the raven, he thinks his chickens white. Here, of course, the white raven's chicken is used figuratively, but as the old saying holds good that "truth is stranger than fiction," so we have even pure white ravens in the flesh, as will be seen from the following quotation from Grey's Birds of the West of Scotland:—"In Macgillivray's work on British Birds, it is stated that as many as two hundred ravens have been known to assemble in a flock on the Island of Pabby, in the Sound of Harris, a large herd of grampuses which was driven ashore there having been the means of attracting them. Afraid of their prolonged stay, and not liking the company of so many birds of evil repute, the inhabitants resorted to the extraordinary expedient of capturing a few and plucking off all their feathers, except those of the wings and tail, in which plight they were set adrift as scare crows. The main flock then left in a fright and did not return. In this unusual congregation of ravens, an albino (or pure white one) was observed, and a pied specimen was noticed some time afterwards in Harris by Macgillivray. . . . These pied birds have been observed of late years in one or two of the Outer Hebrides." This mention of a white and pied raven reminds me of a story common in Strathardle, of a farmer who had a shepherd, who thought the only way to gain favour with his master was to say with him in everything right or wrong, a practice, I am sorry to say, far too common. However, after a time the farmer began to have his suspicions that the constant backing up of his opinions and sayings was not genuine, so to try the truth of them, he one day, on his return from the hill, said to the shepherd, "Chunna mi fitheach geal, am braighe a mhonaidh n' duigh"—I saw a white raven to-day on the top of the hill. Now, this was a staggerer, for even the obsequiousness of the shepherd, who, afraid to go quite that length, yet still true to his nature, answered, "Creididh mi sin, oir chunna mi fear breac n' de ann!"—I can well believe that, for I saw a spreckled one there myself yesterday—an answer which soon convinced the farmer how far his servant could be relied upon The raven is the first bird to breed in the Highlands, which was noticed and put into rhyme by our ancestors, like so much else of their knowledge, as being more easily remembered:—

"Nead air Brighde, ubh air Inid, ian air Chaisg;
Mar bi sin aig an fhitheach, bithidh am bas."

Nest on Candlemas, egg at Shrove-tide, bird at Easter ;
If the raven have them not, death then is his lot.

Another old proverb about the raven's nest says—"Ciod a b'àill leat fhaighinn 'an nead an fhithich ach am fitheach féin ?"—What would you expect to find in the raven's nest but the raven itself. The well-known crest of the Macdonells of Glengarry is a raven perched upon a rock, and the slogan or war-cry of that gallant clan was—"Craggan-an-Fhithich"—The Raven's Rock.

CARRION CROW.

Latin—*Corvus corone.* Gaelic—*Feannag, Cnaimheach ; Garrag, Garrach*—the young. Welsh—*Brân dyddyn.*

A good friend of mine in Galloway, when questioned lately about his religion, defined it—"That he aye tried to do as little ill and as muckle guid as he could," but I am afraid the conduct of the carrion crow is just the very reverse, as he seems "aye to do as muckle ill and as little guid as he can ;" an opinion in which Grey agrees with me, as he says, in his Birds of the West of Scotland—"On one occasion, when walking along the banks of Loch-Eck, in Argyllshire, I observed a small party of carrion crows in a rye-grass field, busily engaged in catching moths as they clung to the stems of grass. The birds drew up their bodies, and appeared as if wading at some disadvantage, the tall grass obliging them to jump occasionally off the ground to reach their prey. This is the only instance I can recollect in which it can be said that their repast was not a work of mischief." The only redeeming trait in this bird's character is the extreme care it takes of its young, and its untiring exertions in feeding them, a fact taken notice of and expressed by our ancestors in the old sayings : "Is toigh leis an fheannaig a h-isean garrach gorm"—the crow likes her greedy blue chick ; and "Is beidheach leis an fheannaig a gorm garrach fhéin"—the crow thinks her own blue chick a beauty. We have also two other old sayings imitating the cry of the crow :—"Fag, fag ! thuirt an fheannaig, 's i mo nighean a gharrag dhonn"—go, go ! said the crow, that brown chick is my child ; "'Gorach, gorach', ars an fheannag, 's e mo mhac-s' an garrach gorm'"—gorach, gorach, said the crow, it is my son that is the blue chick. Other the old proverbs referring to the crow are :—"An taobh a théid an fheannag, bheir i 'feaman leatha"—Wherever the crew goes, she takes her tail with her ; and "Is dithis dhuinn sin, mar thuirt an fheannag ri 'casan'"—That's a pair, as the crow said to her feet.

HOODED CROW.

Latin--*Corvus cornix.* Gaelic--*Feannag-ghlas, Garrag-ghlas, Garrach-young, Starrag-young, in Harris.* Welsh—*Bran yr Iwerddon.*

Bad as the character of the carrion crow is, I am afraid that the hoodie is worse, as will be seen from the following quotation from Grey—"The hoodie has got a terrible name, and his best friend could hardly say one good word in his favour, supposing he ever had such a thing as a friend, which is improbable. A greedy, cowardly, destructive creature, his appearance is ugly, and his voice hateful. But though no doubt ready enough to commit any villainy against eggs, young game, chickens, and even young lambs, yet in these wild districts where there is not much game to injure, he subsists almost entirely on the bountiful provision afforded by the receding tide, and upon this multiplies exceedingly." A well-known habit of the hoodie is that, when it gets a crab or shell-fish with too strong a shell to break with its bill, it carries it high up in the air and lets it fall on the rock to break it, and, if it does not succeed in the first attempt, it goes much higher the second time. There is a very old Gaelic proverb common in Atholl—Cha tig olc á teine, ach ubh na glas fheannaig. —Nothing evil will come out of the fire but the grey crow's egg. Sheriff Nicolson explains—"There is a strange story in Rannoch about the great wizard, Michael Scott, to account for this saying. It is said that, fearing his wife, to whom he had taught the Black Art, would excel him in it, he killed her by means of hoodie crows' eggs, heated in the fire and put into her arm-pits, as the only thing against which no counter charm could prevail!" So common and so destructive were the hoodies at one time in the North that they gave rise to the old Morayshire proverb—

"The Guil, the Gordon, and the Hooded Craw
Were the three worst things Moray ever saw."

The gule is well-known weed, even yet too common amongst growing crops, but at one time so very abundant that most tenants were bound by their leases to eradicate it. The Gordon was the famous Lord Lewis Gordon, who so often plundered Moray, and whose example seems to have been followed with a vengeance by the hoodie crow.

ROOK.

Latin — *Corvus frugilegus.* Gaelic — *Rocus, Creumhach, Garrag* (Athole). Welsh— *Ydfran.*

Cho Gaidhealach ris na garragan – as Highland as the rooks—is a very common saying in Athole, where, from the wooded

nature of the country, rooks have always been very common, though never great favourites, for though such familiar neighbours in the every day life of the Gael, yet we very seldom find the rook mentioned, either in their proverbs or poetry, excepting when some disagreeable noise is likened to their noisy cawing in their rookeries—as, for instance, when the bard Mac Codrum, disgusted with the bad pipe music of Donald Bane, likens it to the cawing of rooks.—

" Ceol tha cho sgreataidh
Ri sgreadail nan rócus."

In many parts of the Highlands, especially in Easter Ross, rooks have become so numerous that measures have been taken to reduce their numbers. However, rooks have been long accustomed to persecution, and it does not seem to affect their numbers much. As early as May 1424, we find an Act of the Scots Parliament against "Ruikes biggan in trees"; and again in March 1457, James II. passed the following strict Act against rooks and "uther foules of riefe":—"Anent ruikes, crawes, and uther foules of reife, as eirnes, bissettes, gleddes, mittales, the quhilk destroyis baith cornes, and wild foules, sik as pertrickes, plovares, and utheris. And as to the ruikes and crawes, biggand in orchards, trees and uther places: It is seen speedeful that they that sik trees perteinis to, let them to big and destroy them with all their power, and in no waies that their birdes flee awaie. And quhair it is tainted that they big and their birdes flee, and the nest be founden in the trees at Beltane: the tree shall be faulted to the King: bot gif they be redeemed fra him be them that they perteined first, and five shillinges to the King's unlaw. And that the said foules of reife all utterly be destroyed be all maner of men, be all ingine of all maner of crafts that may be founden. For the slaughter of them sall cause great multitudes of divers kinds of wilde foules for man's sustentation." Grey quotes the following original plan for catching rooks, from a curious old work called the "Gentleman's Recreation," published in 1678—"How to take rooks when they pull up the corn by the roots. Take some thick brown paper and divide a sheet into eight parts, and make them up like sugar loaves; then lime the inside of the paper a very little (let them be limed three or four days before you set them); then put some corn in them, and lay three-score of them or more up and down the ground; lay them as near as you can under some clod of earth, and early in the morning before they come to feed, and then stand at a distance and you will see

most excellent sport, for as soon as rooks, crows, or pigeons come to pick out any of the corn, it will hang upon its head, and he will immediately fly, bolt upright so high, that he shall soar almost out of sight, and when he is spent, come tumbling down as if he had been shot in the air."

JACKDAWS.

Latin—*Corvus gladarius.* Gaelic—*Cathag, Cathag ghlas, Cnaimhfhiach* (Alex. Macdonald), *Corrachan* (Iona and Mull). Welsh—*Cogfran.*

Pennant, in his "Tour in Scotland in 1772," mentions as a curious fact that he found jackdaws breeding in rabbit holes in the Farne Islands. They do so still by the hundred amongst the rocks of Strathardle, especially in Kindrogan Rock, not only in ready-made rabbit holes, but in holes of their own making—about two feet deep—in the earth amongst the very steep precipices, where it is utterly impossible for a rabbit to reach. Almost as far back as I can remember, I used to spend many a happy boyish day taking them out of those holes in the breeding season; and an uncle of mine did the same a generation before me. One day in particular he had provided himself with a long string, to which he knotted the leg of every jackdaw he got out of a hole till he had some dozens, when the string broke, and off they went fluttering and screaming, each one wanting to go its own way, in a body continually changing in shape, and so noisy, and so big and so black, that had many of the good country folks seen it they would at once have concluded that it was something very uncanny. However, they had not gone very far; for some time afterwards he came across their bodies hanging in a tree in which they had got entangled.

MAGPIE.

Latin—*Pica caudatag.* Gaelic—*Pioghaid, Cadhag, Aaid.* Welsh—*Pioen.*

This is another bird of evil omen, which even to this day is disliked in most districts of the Highlands. The old rhyme says—

"Aon aig breth, dha aig bron,
Tri aig banais, ceithir aig bas."
One at a birth, two at a grief,
Three at a wedding, four at a death.

Though the magpie is, perhaps, in the words of the old song, "Na sae guid 's it should hae been," still it is a very beautiful bird, which no doubt is the reason why some of our ladies, who not

being quite perfect, are sometimes likened in our old songs and proverbs to magpies. For instance, Duncan Lothian, the Glenlyon bard, in his proverbs in verse, likens a young woman who, though she had great flocks and wealth, was so headstrong that her husband had no peace with her, to a magpie—

"Pigheid chaileig air bheag céill,
Ged robh feudail aic 'us stòr,
Cha'n fhaod a fear a bhi sona,
Ma bhios i gnogach anns an t-sròin."

An old Strathardle saying, not very complimentary to either party, used sometimes when an old bachelor from that strath takes a wife from the Vale of Athole, goes—

"Cuiribh bonaid air bioran,
'S gheibh e pioghaid a Adholl."
Put a bonnet on a stick,
And it will get a magpie (wife) from Athole.

One of the old prophecies of Coinnich Odhar, the Brahan Seer, was that—"When a magpie shall have made a nest for three successive years in the gable of the church of Ferrintosh, the church will fall when full of people." Regarding this, we read in the prophecies of the Brahan Seer—"There were circumstances connected with the church of Ferrintosh in the time of the famous Rev. Dr Macdonald, the Apostle of the North, which seemed to indicate the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy, and which led to very alarming consequences. A magpie actually did make her nest in the gable of the church, exactly as foretold. This, together with a rent between the church wall and the stone stair which led up to the gallery, seemed to favour the opinion that the prophecy was on the eve of being accomplished, and people felt uneasy when they glanced at the ominous nest, the rent in the wall, and the crowded congregation, and remembered Coinneach's prophecy, as they walked into the church to hear the Doctor. It so happened one day that the church was unusually full of people, insomuch that it was found necessary to connect the ends of the seats with planks in order to accommodate them all. Unfortunately, one of those temporary seats was either too weak or too heavily burdened; it snapped in two with a loud report, and startled the audience. Coinneach Odhar's prophecy flashed across their minds, and a simultaneous rush was made by the panic-struck congregation to the door. Many fell and were trampled under foot, while others fainted, being seriously crushed and bruised."

JAY.

Latin—*Garrulus glandarius.* Gaelic—*Sgraicheag, Sgraichag choille.* Welsh—*Screch y coed.*

Group III.—Scansores. Family I.—Picidæ.

GREEN WOOD-PECKER.

Latin—*Picus viridis.* Gaelic—*Lasair-choile* (Lightfoot). Welsh—*Cnocell y coed, Delor y derw.*

This beautiful bird, now very rare, if not extinct, in the Highlands, seems to have been quite common in olden times. Pennant mentions it in 1777. Lightfoot gives its Gaelic name in 1772. It is mentioned as a common bird in Dunkeld parish in the Old Statistical Account in 1798, also in Don's Fauna of Forfarshire, 1812. This is an example, like the nightingale and several others, of how some birds, without any known cause or reason, have left Scotland entirely, or else become very rare, within the last fifty years, while many others seem to be getting much more common.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

Latin—*Picus Major.* Gaelic—*Snagan-daraich* (Grey), *Snagan-mor, Snag* (Alexander Macdonald). Welsh—*Delor fraith.*

WRYNECK.

Latin—*Yunx torquilla.* Gaelic—*Geocair, Gille-na-cubhaig.* Welsh—*Gwas y gôg, Gwddfdro*

Very curiously I find that in most countries this bird is reckoned the cuckoo's forerunner, or attendant, and so gets that name in most languages.

In English—*Cuckoo's mate.* Gaelic—*Gille-na-cubhaig.* Welsh—*Gwas y gog.* Swedish—*Gjoktyta, &c.*

In the Highlands we have the old nursery rhyme—

Le theanga fad biorach
Thug Gille-na-cubhaig, smugaid na cubhaig,
A beul na cubhaig, gu brog-na-cubhaig.
With his long sharp tongue,
The cuckoo's attendant carried the cuckoo's spittle
From the cuckoo's mouth to the cuckoo's shoe.

The wryneck has an extremely long tongue, which it can dart out to a great length to catch an ant or insect, and it was supposed to carry the "cuckoo's spittle," the well-known white frothy substance so often seen on plants, and to deposit it on the "cuckoo's

shoe," which is one of the names by which the corn-cockle, the cowslip, and the wild hyacinth are known in Gaelic. If the wryneck had anything at all to do with the cuckoo's spittle, I should say it would be to dart its long tongue into it for the sake of the insect always to be found in it.

Family II.—Certhiadæ.

CREEPER.

Latin—*Certhia familiaris.* Gaelic—*Snaigear, Meanglan, Streapach.* Welsh—*Y Grepianog.*

WREN.

Latin—*Troglodytes vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Dreathan, Dreathan-donn, Dreollan.* Welsh—*Dryw.*

The lively little wren—"An dreathan surdail"—with its brisk, active, and sweet song, which it pours out even in winter, was a great favourite with our ancestors, and is very often mentioned in our poetry and proverbs. In fact, our best Gaelic bards seemed to think no picture of rural scenery complete unless this restless little songster figured in it. Macintyre, in his "Coire-Cheathaich," says—

"An dreathan surdail, 's a ribheid chiuil aige,
A' cur nan smuid dheth gu lughor binn."
And the lively wren, with his tuneful reed,
Discourses music so soft and sweet.

And in his "Oran-an-t-t Samhraidh," or "Song of Summer"—

"San dreathan a' gleusadh sheannsairean
Air a' gheig is aird a mhothaicheas e."
And the wren then tunes his chanter
And sings on some high bough.

Alexander Macdonald mentions him in his "Allt-an-t-Suicair;" also says in his "Song of Summer"—

"Bidh an dreathan gu baileeant;
Foirmeil, tailcearra, bagant',
Sior-chur fàilt' air a' mhadainn,
Le rifeid mhaisich, bhuig, bhinn."
And the little wren is ready
The morning light to greet,
So cheerfully and gladly,
With his reed so soft and sweet.

Again in his "Allt-an-t-Siucair" the same bard says—

"An dreathan-donn gu sùrdail,
'Sa rifeid chiuil 'n bhéul."
And the wren there sings so briskly
With his musical reed in tune.

Now let me draw attention to the curious fact that, in those four quotations from the masterpieces of our two best modern Gaelic bards, the song of the wren is always likened to pipe music or the sound of the chanter reed, and certainly there is nothing to which I can compare the rapid warbling song of this bird so much as to the quick running notes in the crunluath of a piobaireachd when played on the small chanter. Alexander M'Donald, in his "Failte na Morthir," also mentions the wren by its other name—

"Chiteadh Robin 'seinn a's sog air,
Agus frog air dreollan."

Though so much admired as a songster, and so often mentioned in our poetry, yet when we turn to our proverbs, we find that they, in a good humoured, bantering sort of way, generally make fun of the consequential little wren. For instance, we have—"Is bigid e sid, is bigid e sid, mar thuirt an dreathan, an uair a thug e lan a ghuib as a mhuir"—'Tis the less for that, the less for that, as the wren said when it sipped a bill-full out of the sea. Seemingly, the wren repented of the damage done to the sea, and hastened to repair it. As another proverb says—"Is moid i sid, is moid i sid, mu'n dubhairt an dreathan-donn, 'n uair a rinn e dhileag 's a mhuir mhoir"—It's the bigger of that, the bigger of that, as the wren said when it added a drop to the sea. Small things and small-minded men are generally compared to the wren, as when one receives a paltry gift he says—Cha d' thainig ubh mòr riamh bho 'n dreathan-donn—Large egg never came from the wren. And when a small man tries to make himself very big, the saying is applied—Is farsuinn a sgaoileas an dreathan a chasan 'n a thigh fhéin—The wren spreads his feet wide in his own house. Sheriff Nicolson says—"There is something felicitous in the idea of a wren spreading his legs like a potentate at his own hearth." Another old saying has it—Is farsuinn tigh an dreathainn—Wide is the wren's house. Alluding to the great number of the wren's young, we have—Ged 's beag an dreathan, 's mor a theaghlach—Though little is the wren, yet big is the family.

HOOPOE.

Latin—*Upupa epops.* Gaelic—*Calman-cathaiche* (Alex. Macdonald).
Welsh—*Y Goppog.*

An old saying, which Sheriff Nicolson says is applied to sick children, goes—Gob a' chalmain-chàthaidh, bith tu slàn mu 'm pòs thu—Beak of hoopoe, you'll be well before you marry.

NUT-HATCH.

Latin—*Sitta Europea.* Gaelic—*Sgoltan.* Welsh—*Delor y enau.*

This is mentioned as one of the rarer birds in the parish of Killin in the New Statistical Account in 1843. It would be interesting to know whether it has increased or decreased there since then.

CUCKOO.

Latin—*Cuculus canorus.* Gaelic—*Cuthag, Cuach, Cuachag.*
Welsh—*Cog.*

The note of the cuckoo, being so very uniform, has been the cause of its having taken its name from it in all languages, and also the fact of its not rearing its own young, but leaving them to the care of other birds, has made most nations take more notice of it than of most other birds, generally not to its credit, as Pennant informs us that the name of the cuckoo is used as a term of reproach, arising from this bird making use of the nest of another to deposit its eggs in, leaving the care of its young to the wrong parent. There was also an old belief that the cuckoo, no doubt from its resembling some of the small hawks, changed into a hawk, and devoured its nurse on quitting the nest, whence the French proverb—Ingrat comme un coucou. The way the French retaliate on the cuckoo, for eating its nurse is the very characteristic one of their eating him, as they are very fond of a dish of cuckoos, and so were the Romans before them, as Pliny says that there is no bird to compare with them for delicacy. Even in the English language the name of the cuckoo is used in a reproachful sense by Shakespeare and other writers, and has given at least one word to the language—cuckold. But I can find no trace of this feeling in the Gaelic, for, though the Highlanders had many curious ideas and superstitions about this bird, they were all favourable to it. They watched its coming and its going, especially the former, for to them it was the herald of summer. "Gug, gug," ars a chubhag, latha buidhe Bealtainn—"Coo, coo," says the cuckoo, on yellow May day. Luath no mall g 'an tig am Maigh, thig a' chubhag—Late or early, as May comes so comes the cuckoo. And Macintyre in his Song of Summer says—

"Thig a' chuthag sa' mhios Cheitein oirnn."
And the cuckoo will come in the month of May.

A very common superstition in the Highlands was, that it was very unlucky to hear the cuckoo, for the first time in the season, before breakfast or while fasting, whence the old rhyme—

"Chuala mi 'chubhag gun bhiadh 'am bhroinn,
Chunnaic mi'n searrach 's a chulaobh rium,
Chunnaic mi'n t-seilcheag air an lic luim,
'S dh'aithnich mi nach rachadh a' bhliadhn'ud leam."

I heard the cuckoo while fasting,
I saw the foal with its back to me,
I saw the snail on the flag-stone bare,
And I knew the year would be bad for me.

On the 1st April, All Fools' Day, when any one is sent on a fool's errand, it is in Gaelic—A chuir a ruith na cubhaig—sending him to chase the cuckoo—because, of course, there are no cuckoos on that early date; and in broad Scotch it is—to hunt the gowk, the word gowk being merely a corruption of the Gaelic cubhag, the pronunciation of both words being almost identical. And in some other languages the name of the cuckoo is even nearer to the Scotch word gowk—as in Swedish, gjok; and in Danish, gouk. So that the Scotch gowk, though originally only applied to the 1st of April cuckoo-hunting fool, is now applied to any fool during any of the other 364 days of the year. If we can rely upon Pennant, time was when even a fool might hunt up a cuckoo on 1st April or before, as he says—"I have two evidences of their being heard as early as February: one was in the latter end of that month, 1771, the other on the 4th February 1769: the weather in the last was uncommonly warm." Truly, these were the good old days, especially for the cuckoos. Alex. Macdonald generally in his poems calls it the blue-backed cuckoo—

'S goic-mhoit air cuthaig chùl-ghuirm,
'S gug-gùg aic' air a' gheig.

And

Cuthag chul-ghorm cur na'n smuid d' i
Ann an duslainn challtainn.

Another Gaelic bard, William Ross, in a well-known song, makes a pathetic appeal to the cuckoo to sympathise with him in his grief—

"A chuachag nan craobh nach truagh leat mo chaoidh
'S mi a g' osnaich ri oidhche ceodhair."
O cuckoo on the tree, won't you lament with me,
And join in my grief, on a misty eve.

And in another old song we have a mountain dairymaid likened to the cuckoo of the wilderness—

"A bhanarach dhonn a' chruidh,
Chaoin a' chruidh, dhonn a chruidh
Cailin deas, donn a chruidh
Cuachag an fhasaich."

Group IV.—Fissirostres. Family I.—Meropidæ.

ROLLER.

Latin—*Caracias garrula.* Gaelic—*Cuairsgean.*

Family II.—Halcyonidæ.

KING-FISHER.

Latin—*Alcedo ispida.* Gaelic—*Biorra-cruidein, Biorra-an-t-iasgair* (Alex. Macdonald), *Gobhachan-aisge* (Alex. Macdonald). Welsh—*Glâs y dorlan.*

Family III.—Hirundinidæ.

SWALLOW.

Latin—*Hirundo rustica.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-gaoithe, Ainleog* (Alex. Macdonald). Irish—*Ailleog.* Manx—*Ghollan-geaise.* Welsh—*Gwennol, Gwensol.*

The old proverb, that one swallow makes not summer, is common to all European languages. In Gaelic it is—Cha dean aon ghobhlan-gaoithe samhradh. In Irish—Cha deannan aon ailleog samhradh; and in Manx—Cha jean un ghollan-geaye sourey.

MARTIN.

Latin—*Hirundo urbica.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-gaoithe, Gobhlan-taighe.* Welsh—*Marthin penbwl.*

SAND MARTIN.

Latin—*Hirundo riparia.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-gainmhiche, Fallag* (Grey). Welsh—*Gennol y glennydd.*

SWIFT.

Latin—*Cypselus apus.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-mor, Ainleog-mhor, Ainleog-dhubh, Ainleog-mhara* (Alex. Macdonald). Welsh—*Marthin dû.*

ALPINE SWIFT.

Latin—*Cypselus alpinus.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-monaidh, Ainleog-mhonaidh, Gobhlan-nan-creag.*

This is a very rare bird. The Rev. J. E. Atkinson, in his "British Birds' Eggs and Nests," says—"A bird which is known to have visited us (in Britain) on some half-dozen occasions or so." However, I am inclined to believe that, in several parts of the Highlands, the Alpine Swift is to be found, though mistaken for the common swift. I know a very high precipice amongst the rocks of Strathardle, about 1400 feet above sea level, in which, in a crack or rent in the face of the cliff, the Alpine Swift has bred, and never missed a single season, from my earliest remembrance up till I left the district a few years ago, and I have no doubt they breed there still. My uncle has told me that, when he was a boy, over fifty years ago, they bred there then, and had been there from time immemorial. I do not wish to give the exact locality, for if I did, collectors would very likely have them shot this very season, and exterminate them, like so many more of our rarer birds and even wild flowers, when their few habitats become known to the public. The common swift generally lays two eggs, but sometimes three or four. How many the Alpine Swift lays I do not know; however, it must either lay a large number, or else there must have been several pairs nesting together in the crack in the rock to which I refer, for I have lain for hours watching them, after the young ones had flown, in a flock of twelve or sixteen, flying about high in the air, and then all darting down suddenly into the crack in the rock, in which they held a chattering, screeching concert for a minute or so, and then all pouring out in a torrent quicker than the eye could almost follow them, screeching very loudly, and, after a while circling about, repeating the same performance again and again. I could not be mistaken about this being the Alpine Swift, as its white belly at once distinguishes it from the common swift. Old and young keep together in a flock till they leave the country early in August. I have never seen them anywhere else.

NIGHT-JAR OR GOAT-SUCKER.

Latin—*Caprimulgus Europæus.* Gaelic—*Sgraichag-oidhche, Seobhag-oidhche.* (Grey.) Welsh—*Aderyn y droell. Rhodwr.*
Order III.—Rasores. Family I.—Columbidæ.

RING-DOVE OR WOOD PIGEON.

Latin—*Columba palumbus.* Gaelic—*Calman-fiadhaich, Calman-coille-Fearan, Smudan, Duradan, Guragug.* Welsh—*Ys-guthan.*

We have in Gaelic, as will be seen by several examples I have already given, many old nursery rhymes which cleverly imitate the cry of the different birds. That about the ring-dove closely imitates its cooing—Cha 'n ann de mo chuideachd thù, cha 'n ann de mo chuideachd thu, ars an calman—You are not of my flock, you are not of my flock, said the pigeon.

STOCK-DOVE.

Latin—*Columba œnas.* Gaelic—*Calman-fiadhaich, Calman-gorm.*

ROCK DOVE.

Latin—*Columba livida.* Gaelic—*Smudan, Smud, Calman-nan-creag, Calman-mara.*

A very common bird in the Hebrides and all along the West Coast. Grey says, in his "Birds of the West of Scotland"—"In Iona alone, though only a small island, we have as many as nine or ten caves frequented by pigeons, and in nearly every island of the Hebrides there is sure to be one called, *par excellence*, Uamh nan Calman—The Pigeons' Cave."

TURTLE-DOVE.

Latin—*Columba turtur.* Gaelic—*Turtur* (Alexander Macdonald), *Gearrcach.* Welsh—*Colommen fair.*

The last Gaelic name I find given in the vocabulary of words not in common use given at the end of Kirk's Testament, published in 1690.

Family II.—Phasianidæ.

PHEASANT.

Latin—*Phasianus Colchicus.* Gaelic—*Easag.*

Though not a native British bird, the pheasant has been long established amongst us in the wooded straths of the Highlands. Grey says—"The first mention of the pheasant in old Scots Acts is in one dated June 8th, 1594, in which year a keen sportsman occupied the Scottish throne (James VI.) He might also have been called 'James the Protector' of all kinds of game. In the aforesaid year he ordained that quhatsumever person or persones at ony time hereafter sall happen to slay deir, harts, phesants, foulls, partricks, or uther wyld foule quhatsumever, ather with gun, croce bow, dagges, halkes, or girnes, or be uther ingine quhatsumever, or that he is found schutting with any gun therein,' &c shall pay the usual 'hundreth punds,' &c."

Family III.—Tetraonidæ.

CAPERCAILLIE, OR COCK OF THE WOOD.

Latin—*Tetrao urogallus.* Gaelic—*Caper-coille, Capul-coille* (Lightfoot), *Auer-coille* (Pennant). Welsh—*Ceiliog coed.*

The Cock of the Wood, the king of British game birds, is a native of the Highlands, and of old was very common there, but it became extinct, about 1760 until it was introduced again from Norway by the late Marquis of Breadalbane, about thirty years ago. It is mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, Boethius, Bishop Lesly, Pennant, and many other old writers. Pennant says—"This species is found in no other part of Great Britain than the Highlands of Scotland, north of Inverness; and is very rare even in those parts. It is there known by the name of Capercalze. Auer-calze, and in the old law books Caperkally. . . . I have seen one specimen at Inverness, a male, killed in the woods of Mr Chisholme, north of that place." In the Old Statistical Account the Rev. John Grant says, in 1794—"The last seen in Scotland was in the woods of Strathglass about 32 years ago." And in the account of the parish of Kiltarlity we read—"The Caperkally, or king of the wood, said to be a species of wild turkey, was formerly a native of this parish, and bred in the woods of Strathglass; one of these birds was killed about 50 or 60 years ago in the church-yard of Kiltarlity." It is also mentioned in the Statistical Accounts of Glen-Urquhart and Glenmoriston. Having been reintroduced first into Perthshire, the capercaillie is now naturally very common there, and that it was also so in olden times will be seen from the following letter of King James VI., after he had become James I. of Britain and gone to England, where he seems to have "hungered after the flesh-pots of Egypt" in the shape of capercaillie (though to our modern tastes it would be the last game flesh likely to be hungered after, owing to its strong flavour of fir, consequent on its living almost entirely on the young shoots of that tree), as he wrote to the Earl of Tullibardine, ancestor of the Duke of Athole, in 1617:—

"James R,—Right trustie and right well-beloved cosen and counseller, we greet you well. Albeit our knowledge of your dutiful affection to the good of our service and your country's credit doeth sufficientlie persuade us that you will earnestlie endeavour yourself to express the same be all the means in your power; yet there being some things in that behalf requisite, which seem, notwithstanding, of so meane moment, as in that regard both you and others might neglect the same if our love and care

of that, our native kingdom, made us not the more to trie their nature and necessity, and accordingly to give order for preparation of everything that may, in any part, import the honour and credit thereof. Which consideration, *and the known commoditie yee have to provide capercaillies and termigantes*, have moved us very earnestly to request you to employ both your oune pains and the travelles of your friendis, for provision of each kind of the saidis foules, to be now and then sent to us be way of present, be means of our deputy thesuarer, and so as the first sent thereof may meet us on the 19th of April at Durham, and the rest as we shall happen to meet and rancounter them in other places on our way from thence to Berwick. The raritie of these foules will both make their estimation the more pretious, and confirm the good opinion conceaved of the good cheare to be had there. For which respectis, not doubting but that yee will so much the more earnestlie endeavour yourself to give us acceptable service, we bid you farewell. At Whitehall, the 14th Marche, 1617."

In my native Strathardle, these birds have increased so much that, over a dozen years ago, I have seen them do a great deal of damage to Scotch fir and spruce trees by cutting off the previous year's leading shoots; though I well remember the first of them that came to the district. When I was a boy at school, about 1860, there came on, in harvest, a tremendous gale from the west; and it being then the holiday season, I was prowling about Kindrogan Rock, a few days after the great storm, when I came upon a great black bird sitting upon a tree, which I mistook for an eagle, only I was very much puzzled about its being so black. I duly informed my friend, the head keeper, about my black eagle, but he poohpoohed me and told me it was only a big raven; however, he saw it shortly afterwards himself, and at once knew what bird it was, and he and the other keepers agreed that it must have been blown eastwards by the great gale from the woods of Athole or Breadalbane—an opinion with which I now quite agree, as I have often seen a capercaillie cock rise to a great height in the air and circle about for a long time like an eagle, when, if a smart gale came on, it might go a long distance before alighting. The woods of Faskally, a dozen miles to the west, and separated by a high range of mountains and bleak, open moors, was the nearest point where the capercaillie was then known. However, come as he may, he was there and stayed there, and was often seen during the winter, but in early spring he disappeared, and it was thought he was gone for good. However, he seemed only to have followed the example of the patriarchs of old, and gone to his own coun

try and his own kin for his wives, for, Jacob-like, he returned with two of them. When the breeding season came on I knew the nests of both hens; however, owing to an accident, only one of them hatched her brood. Next year I knew of several nests, and they soon spread all over the strath, and then eastwards through Glenisla into Forfarshire, thus recapercailling (if I may coin the word) Glenisla, where of old they were very common, as will be seen from an old song (a version of which is given in Gillies' collection, page 136) by James Shaw, laird of Crathinard, in Glenisla, to his future wife, Miss Machardy, niece to the Earl of Mar, and heiress of Crathie. One of the inducements he held out to her to leave her native Braes o' Mar and come and settle with him in Glenisla was that, though he knew nothing about sowing barley, yet he would keep her well supplied with all kinds of game, amongst the rest capercaillies—

"Gar am bheil mis eolach mu chur an eorna,
Gu 'n gleidhinn duit feoil nam mang.

Fiadh a fireach, is breac a linne,
'S boc biorach donn nan carn.
An lachag riabhach, geadh glas nan Iar-inns'
Is eala 's ciataiche snamh.

Eun ruadh nan ciar-mhon', mac criosgheal liath-chirc
Is cabaire riabhach coille."

BLACK-COCK.

Latin—*Tetrao tetrix.* Gaelic—*Coileach-dubh* (male), *Liath-chearc* (female). Welsh—*Ceiliog dû.*

In the song just quoted about the capercaillie it will be noticed the bard gives the black-cock a very poetical name, "Mac criosgheal liath-chirc"—white-belted son of the grey-hen. The capercaillie is almost always found in woods, and the grouse on the open moors, whilst the black-cock is the connecting-link, generally frequenting moors bordering on woods. In the old proverb its fondness for the heather is noted—"Is duilich an coileach-dubh a ghleideadh bho'n fhraoch"—it is difficult to keep the black-cock from the heather. Whilst in many of our old songs he is represented as sitting crowing on the trees at daybreak—

"Bu tu sealgair a' choilich
'S moch a ghoireadh air craoibh."

Thou art the slayer of the black-cock
That crows at dawn on the tree.

The crowing of the black-cock and the reply of the grey-hen are beautifully described by many of our best Gaelic bards. Macintyre in "Coire Cheathaich" says—

"'S a' mhaduinn chiuin-ghil, an am dhomh dusgadh,
Aig bun na stuice b'e 'n sugradh leam ;
A' chearc le sgiucan a' gabhail tuchain,
'S an coileach cuirteil a' durdail crom."

And Macdonald, in "Allt an t-Siucair," says—

"An coileach-dubh ri durdan,
'S a chearc ri tuchan reidh."

Macintyre also describes the black-cock in his "Song of Summer":—

"Bidh an coileach le thorman tuchanach,
Air chnocaibh gorm a' durdanaich,
Puirt fhileanta, cheolmhor, shiubhlacha,
Le ribheid dluith chur seol oirre ;
Gob crom nam poncan lughora,
'S a chneas le dreach air dhublachadh,
Gu slios-dubh, girt-gheal, ur-bhallach,
'S da chirc a' sugradh boidheach ris.

This shows us the handsome black-cock, when full of life and love, crowing his amorous chants to his wives (for he is of the Mormon creed), and that he is beautiful even in death is proved by our old Gaelic proverb—"Na triuir mharbh a's boidh'che air bith : leanamh beag, breac geal, 'us coileach dubh"—The three prettiest dead : a little child, a white trout, and a black-cock. One of the oldest dancing pipe tunes in the Highlands goes :—

"Ruidhlidh na coilich-dhubha,
'S dannsaidh na tunnagan ;
Ruidhlidh na coilich-dhubha
Air an tulaich lamh rium.

The black-cocks will reel,
And the wild ducks will dance ;
The black-cocks will reel,
On the knowe beside me.

I have no doubt the smart black-cock would go through his part of the performance very creditably, but I am afraid the poor duck would make but an awkward attempt at tripping it on the light fantastic toe.

GROUSE.

Latin — *Lagopus Scoticus.* Gaelic — *Coileach-ruadh, Coileach-fraoich, Eun-fraoich* (mas.), *Cearc-ruadh, Cearc-fhraoich* (fem.) Welsh — *Ceiliog Mynydd, Jâr fynydd.*

The grouse is now the bird *par excellence* of the Highlands, so much so indeed that the first inquiry about the value of a Highland estate is the number of grouse that can be annually shot on it. Owing to the almost total extermination of all hawks, hooded crows, foxes, pole-cats, &c., and all such so-called vermin, on grouse-moors, that prey upon the grouse or their eggs, and to the great care and protection given these birds, they have multiplied to such an extent, that in this, as in all other similar cases, dire disease has been the result. On this point Grey says—"The jealous care with which this beautiful bird is protected appears of late years to have materially affected the well-being of the species. I cannot withhold expressing a fear that the Red Grouse of Scotland, if not soon left to its own resources, may ultimately become a victim to over-protection. The great changes that have taken place within the last thirty years in the management of moorland tracks, and the excessive rents now derived from such properties, have induced both land-owners and lessees to clear the ground of all animals that would naturally prey upon those birds which are not strong enough to protect themselves; hence, sickly broods of grouse perpetuate other broods that year by year degenerate until disease ensues, and in some instances almost depopulates an entire district. There can be no doubt that this unwarrantable destruction of hawks and buzzards affects adversely the condition of the birds with which our Scottish mountains are stocked—the number of wounded birds alone which survive the unprecedented annual slaughter, through which the Red Grouse is now obliged to pass, being an argument sufficient to show that such merciful agents are wanted to prevent the spread of enfeebled life." In olden times grouse shooting was a favourite sport, so we therefore find the grouse very often mentioned in old songs, under many poetical names, such as—Eun-ruadh nan ciar-mhon'—red bird of the grey hills; Coileach-ruadh an dranndan—the crowing red cock; An coileach is moiche a ghoireadh 's a bhruaich— the cock that earliest crows on the brae; Eun ruadh nan sgiath caol—red bird of the narrow wing. In a very old song, to a hunter on the hills of Athole, we have:—

'S tric a shiubh'l thu mon' Adholl
Ri la ceathach, fliuch, fuar,

Bu tu sealgair an fhirein
'S eoin chrin nan sgiath ruadh,

'S na circeige duinne
A bheireadh gur as a' bhruaich.

Oft hast thou roamed o'er the hills of Athole
On a cold, wet, misty day,

And there slain the eagle
And the small bird of the red wing,

And the little brown hen
That lays in the heather.

PTARMIGAN.

Latin— *Lagopus vulgaris.* Gaelic— *Tarmachan, Tarmonach* (Lightfoot). Welsh—*Coriar yr Alban* (Scottish Partridge).

I have never heard the last Gaelic name in common use, but as it is given by Lightfoot, who got all his Gaelic names from Dr Stuart of Killin and Luss, we can have no better authority. The ptarmigan is a truly Highland bird, only to be found on the top of our highest mountains, from which it never descends, even in the most severe weather, but burrows and feeds under the snow. This gave rise to the old saying "Gus an tig an tarmachan thigh nan cearc"—till the ptarmigan comes to the hen-house—applied to anything that will never happen. "Cha chuir fuachd no acras an tarmachan gu srath"—neither cold nor hunger will send the ptarmigan down to the strath.

PARTRIDGE.

Latin—*Perdix cinerea.* Gaelic—*Peirlog* (mas., Alex. Macdonald), *Peurstag, Cearc-thomain* (fem.) Welsh—*Coriar, Petrisen.*

The common partridge has increased very much in the Highlands since the introduction of turnips and the increase of arable land. The hill partridge, the Perdix cinera var. montana of Sir William Jardine, is also very common on the hills and higher glens of the Highlands of Perthshire and Forfarshire. It is a much handsomer bird than the common partridge.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

Latin—*Perdix rufa.* Gaelic — *Peurstag-dheary-chasach, Cearc-thomain-dhearg-chasach.*

QUAIL.

Latin—*Coturnix vulgaris.* Gaelic—*Gearradh gort.* Welsh—*Soflar, Rhino.*

The quail is far commoner in the Highlands than it is supposed to be, but, from its retired habits, it is seldom seen, and even when seen, it is generally mistaken for a partridge by ordinary observers. That it visits, and even breeds in, the remotest corners of the Highlands will be seen from the following quotation from Grey:—"When in the island of North Uist in the beginning of August 1870, Mr John Macdonald, Newton, showed me a nest of twelve eggs which had been taken near his residence about ten days previously. These are in the collection of Captain Orde." However, it appears amongst us in very small numbers compared with what it did amongst the ancient Israelites in the Wilderness, or even with what it does to the present day in some countries, according to the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, who says in his "British Birds' Eggs and Nests":—"In some countries its migratory hosts are so great than one hundred thousand are said to have been taken in a day."

Class IV.—Grallatores. Family I.—Charadriidæ.

GOLDEN PLOVER.

Latin—*Charadrius pluvialis.* Gaelic—*Feadag.* Welsh—*Cwtyn yr awr.*

This beautiful bird takes its Gaelic name, feadag (whistler), from its plaintive, melancholy cry; about which I have heard the following old legend in Strathardle:—Once upon a time the golden plover inhabited the low straths and river-sides, and was the sweetest songster of all the birds in the Highlands. It nestled and reared its young under the shelter of the thick bushes on the sunny braes, where it had plenty of food and led a comfortable happy life till there came on a very hot, scorching summer, the like of which was never known before or since. The heat began on "Yellow May-day" (La buidhe Bealltain), and increased more and more every day till midsummer, when every beast and bird began to suffer and complain very much of the heat. But amongst them all none grumbled so much as the golden plover, and it, at last, grew so discontented that it left its old haunts by the river-side and wandered upwards in search of cooler quarters. Up and up it went, over the banks and braes, through the woods and bogs, till at last it came to the open hillside, where it met the partridge, which then inhabited the highest hills and moors. Frenchmen of

to-day laugh at Britons and say that the first thing they do when they meet is to tell each other the very best thing they know—viz., what kind of day it is. Now, however ridiculous this habit may be, it, at least, has the merit of antiquity, for it was the very thing the partridge and the plover did on this hot, hot day, long, long ago, so long ago that the birds could then speak to each other in good Gaelic. So, after they had told each other that it was a hot day, yes, a very hot day, each recounted its sufferings. The plover said it had been nearly stifled with the heat in the close valley below, and if it could only get to the open hill-top to get the fresh breeze it would be all right; whilst the partridge said it had been nearly roasted alive by the glare of the sun on the open hill-side. So the upshot of the matter was that, as treaties were easier settled in those days than now, they decided to exchange places there and then. So the partridge flew downwards and settled under the shelter of the friendly bushes on the low meadows, whilst the plover winged his way upwards, and only stopped when he reached the top of the highest stone on the cairn, where he sang a sweet song in praise of the cool breeze always to be found at such a height. He cared nothing for the heat now, it was quite cool, and, with an extended view round about, and as everything had the charm of novelty, he led a happy life, and sang sweeter than ever, all through the summer and early harvest. But when the frosty nights began to creep on in October he did not begin to sing so early in the morning, and always stopped when the sun went down. When cold November's wintry blasts came on his song ceased altogether, and he could only give a long shrill whistle, but dark December's wild storms reduced even that to the low plaintive wail with which to this day the golden plover laments his folly in making such a hasty bargain. He never sang again, but has been mourning and lamenting ever since; even though the partridge, taking pity on his woeful condition, and touched by his mournful lament, afterwards relaxed the bargain so much as to allow the plover to return in winter to the low ground, on condition that it would keep to the sea-shore, and that the partridge would be allowed to go as far up the hills as it liked in summer. Such is the story as I got it—"Ma 's briag bh'uam e 's briag h-ugam e." From the swift flight of the plover we have the old saying, "Cho luath ris na feadagan firich"—as swift as the mountain plover.

DOTTEREL.

Latin—*Charadrius morinellus.* Gaelic—*Amadan-Mointich.*
Welsh—*Huttan.*

The Gaelic name of this bird—"The Peat-moss Fool"—is singularly appropriate, for, from its exceedingly foolish, simple, and unsuspicious habits, it falls an easy prey to all enemies.

RINGED PLOVER.

Latin—*Charadrius hiaticula.* Gaelic—*Trileachan-traighe, Bothag.* Welsh—*Môr Hedydd.*

GREY PLOVER.

Latin—*Squatarola cinerea.* Gaelic—*Greagag, Trileachan, Feadag-ghlas* (Grey). Welsh—*Cwttyn llwyd.*

LAPWING OR PEEWIT.

Latin—*Vanellus cristatus.* Gaelic—*Adharcan-luachrach, Adharcagluachrach, Pibhinn* (Grey). Welsh—*Cornchwigl.*

I find that in Galloway and many parts of the south of Scotland this bird is universally disliked, ever since the old Covenanting days, when it betrayed many a wanderer on the hills to the blood-thirsty troopers, by its well-known habit of following anyone who may come near its haunts, making a clamorous outcry. Captain Burt also, in his letters from the North of Scotland, mentions another rather curious reason why the peewit was disliked in olden times in Scotland; it is also mentioned by other writers, especially by the Rev. James Headrick in his "Agricultural View of Forfarshire," published in 1813. He says:—"The green plover or peeseweep appears early in spring and goes off in autumn. As they only come north for the purpose of incubation, and are very lean, none of them are liked for food. They return to the fenny districts of England, where they get very fat, and are killed in great numbers. In consequence of the inveteracy excited by the ambitious pretensions of Edward I. to the Scottish crown, an old Scottish Parliament passed an Act ordering all the peeseweeps' nests to be demolished, and their eggs to be broken; assigning as a reason, that *these birds might not go south and become a delicious repast to our unnatural enemies the English.*"

TURNSTONE OR HEBRIDAL SANDPIPER.

Latin—*Strepsilas interpres.* Gaelic—*Gobhachan, Trileachan-traighe.* Welsh—*Huttan y môr.*

SANDERLING.

Latin—*Calidris arenaria.* Gaelic—*Luadhearan-glas, Trileachan-glas.* Welsh—*Llwyd y tywod.*

OYSTER-CATCHER OR SEA-PIET.

Latin—*Hæmatopus ostralegus.* Gaelic—*Gille-bride Gille-bridein, Bridean, Dolid.* Welsh—*Piogen y môr.*

Family II.—Gruidæ.

CRANE.

Latin—*Grus cinerea.* Gaelic—*Corra-mhonaidh.* Welsh—*Garan.*

This fine bird, though now seldom or never seen in the Highlands, used to be very common, and to be reckoned equal in value to a swan. In the rental-roll of the old Abbey of Coupar-Angus, I find the crane often mentioned in old tacks to tenants of the Abbey, who also held the office of fowler. I may give an example of one by Abbot Donald Campbell, son of the Duke of Argyll—an ecclesiastic who had a keen relish for the good things of this life:—Tack to John Sowter, of Mylnhorn, 1541. "Be it kend till all men be thir present letres, we Donald, be the permission of God, Abbot of Cowper. . . . . For the gratitudis and thanks done to ws and our said Abbey, be our familiar seruitor Johane Sowter . . . and for vtheris gude caussis moving ws to have sett and formale latt, to our welebelouittis the said Johane Sowter, and to Isabell Pilmour, his spous, all and hale the tane half of our corn myln and landis of Milnhorn. . . . the entres thairof to begyn at the fest of Witsunday in the zeir if God Im Vc and fourty-ane zeris . . . for three poundis gude and vsuall money, at Witsunday and Mertymes, together with xviii. capones for thair pultre, and ilk tuay zeris arris ane fed bair, guide and sufficient (and every two years one fat boar, good and sufficient) vpoun thre monthis' warnying. And the said Johane sall hunt and vse the craft of fowlarie at all times at his power, and quhat fowlis at happynnis to be slain be him, or be any vtheris at he is pairtisman with, they sall present the saymn to our said place, to cellerar or stewartis thairof for the tyme, vpoun the pricis efter following, that is to say—Ilk wild guiss, tuay schillingis; ilk cran and swan, five schillingis; pluffar, dotrale, quhape, duik, reidschank, schotquhaip, and tele, and all vther sic small fowlis, ilk pece, four penneis; petrik, ilk pece viiid. And in cace that the said Johane Sowter failzies in his said craft, and diligence for using of the samen, or at he absent the fowlis tane be him and vtheris as said is, it being notirlie knawing or sufficientlie preving befor ws, the said Abbot, or that he will nocht purge himself, in that cace the said Johane salbe in ane vnlaw of xxxs. (thirty shillings) for ilk falt beand preving or vnpurgit as said is."

Family III.—Ardeidæ.

COMMON HERON.

Latin—*Ardea cinerea.* Gaelic—*Corra-ghlas, Corra-riabhach, Corra-sgriach, Corra-chrithich, Corra-ghriobhach, Corra-ghlas* (Deut. xiv. 18.) Welsh—*Cryr glâs.*

From the extreme patience of the heron when waiting for fish to come its way arose the old saying:—Iasgach na corra—The heron's fishing, a model of patience.

WHITE HERON.

Latin—*Ardea alba.* Gaelic—*Corra-bhan.* Welsh—*Cryr gwyn.*

COMMON BITTERN.

Latin—*Botaurus stellaris.* Gaelic—*Corra-ghrain, Bubaire, Graineag, Stearnall* (Alex. Macdonald). Welsh—*Aderyn y bwnn, Bwmp y gors.*

WHITE STORK.

Latin—*Ciconia alba.* *Gaelic—Corra-bhan* (Deut. xiv. 18).

SPOON-BILL.

Latin—*Platalea leacorodia.* Gaelic—*Gob-lathainn.*
Family IV.—Scolopacidæ.

CURLEW.

Latin—*Numenius arquata.* Gaelic—*Guilbneach, Crotach-mhara.* Welsh—*Gylfinhir.*

This bird is so very wary in its habits that it gave rise to the old saying—Is sealgair math a mharbhas geadh, 'us corr', 'us guilbneach. He is a good sportsman who kills a wild goose, a heron, and a curlew.

WHIMBREL.

Latin — *Numenius phœopus.* Gaelic — *Eun-Bealltainn, Leth-ghuilbneach.* Welsh—*Coeg ylfinhir.*

The whimbrel, or, as its name means in Gaelic, the May-bird or half-curlew, is now almost, if not altogether, a migratory bird, though once breeding quite common with us. Lightfoot says, in 1772:—"The whimbrel breeds in the heath of the Highland hills, near Invercauld."

RED-SHANK.

Gaelic — *Cam-ghlas, Ridghuilanach* (A. Macdonald), *Gob-labh-arrtha* (A. Macdonald), *Clabhais feach* (Grey). Welsh—*Coesyoch.*

COMMON SANDPIPER.

Latin—*Totanus hypoleuca.* Gaelic—*Trileachan-traighe, Trileach-an-traighich, Earr-ghainmhich, Boag, Luathrain.* Welsh—*Pibydd-y-traeth.*

GREENSHANK.

Latin—*Totanus glottis.* Gaelic—*Deoch Bhingh* (Grey). Welsh—*Coeswerdd.*

BLACK-WINGED STILT.

Latin—*Himpantopus melnnopterus.* Gaelic—*Fad-chasach, Lurganach.* Welsh—*Cwttyn hirgoes.*

This is a very rare bird now in the Highlands, though not so long ago it seems to have been found in many different districts. Don mentions, in his Forfarshire list of birds, that it was found on the mountains of Glen-Clova, also on Ben-Lawers in Perthshire. It is also mentioned in the New Statistical Account of the parish of Glenshell as being a rare bird in that parish in 1836; also in several other districts.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT.

Latin—*Limosa rufa.* Gaelic—*Rhoid ghuilbneach* (Grey). Welsh —*Rhostog rhudd.*

RUFF.

Latin — *Machetes pugnax.* Gaelic— *Gibeagan.* Welsh — *Yr Ymladdgar.*

WOODCOCK.

Latin—*Scolopax rusticola.* Gaelic—*Coilleach-coille, Crom-nan-duilleag, Creobhar, Grailbeag, Uddacag* (A. Macdonald), *Uday* (Uist). Welsh—*Cyffylog.*

I have already had to lament so often that so many of our birds have either become extinct altogether, or else extremely rare, that it is with great pleasure that I now come to one that seems to be increasing vastly with us, and also now staying to breed with us regularly. Pennant says in 1772:—"These birds appear in flights on the east coasts of Scotland about the end of October, and sometimes sooner; if sooner, it is a certain sign of the winter being early and severe; if later, that the beginning of the winter will be mild. Woodcocks make a very short stay on the east coasts owing to their being destitute of wood; but some of them resort to the moors, and always make their progress from east to west. They do not arrive in Breadalbane, a central part of the kingdom, till the beginning or middle of November; and the coasts of Northern Lorn or of Ross-shire till December or January; are very rare in the more remote Hebrides, or in the Orkneys. A few stragglers now and then arrive there. They are equally scarce in Caithness. I do not recollect that any have been discovered to have bred in North Britain." As a proof that woodcocks are not scarce in the Isles now, I may mention that Thompson, in his "Birds of Ireland," tells us that in the winter of 1846-47 one thousand woodcocks were killed on two estates alone in Islay—Ardinmersy and

Islay House. And as for it not breeding in Scotland, whatever it did in Pennant's time it certainly breeds there now by the hundred, if not by the thousand, from Sutherland to Mull of Galloway. Grey, in his " Birds of the West of Scotland," says that it has bred regularly for the last thirty years at Tarbat ; also at Beaufort Castle, and Captain Cash of Dingwall informed him that it nests in the woods of Brahan Castle and Castle Leod. I have known it breed at Raigmore. It has also bred in Kindrogan woods in Strathardle for at least fifty years, and I now find it breeding very commonly in Galloway. The Rev. J. C. Atkinson, Grey, and many other writers, mention the curious fact that the woodcock carries its young between its feet from the coverts to the feeding grounds in the neighbouring bogs ; and Mr Stewart, head-keeper to H. G. Murray Stewart, Esq. of Broughton and Cally, informs me that when he was with the Earl of Mansfield in Perthshire he, one evening about dusk, shot what he took to be a hawk carrying off a bird, but which, when he went to pick it up, turned out to be a woodcock carrying one of its young from a thick covert to a bog to feed. Alex. Macdonald says, in his "Failte na Morthir":—

" Coillich-choille 's iad ri coilleig
Anns an doire chranntail."

Alluding to its migratory habits, coming at the beginning of winter, the old Manx proverb says—" Cha jean un ghollan-geaye Sourey, ny un chellagh-keylley Geurey"—One swallow makes not summer, nor one woodcock winter.

SNIPE.

Latin—*Scolopax gallinago.* Gaelic—*Croman-loin, Buta-gochd, Meannan-adhair, Gabhar-adhair, Gabhar-oidhche, Eun-ghurag Eun-ghabhraig, Leomhrag, Ianrag, Eun-arag, Boc-sac, Bocanloin, Naosg.* Welsh—*Y sm ittan, Y fyniar.*

What a formidable list of Gaelic names—there is a different name for the snipe in almost every glen in the Highlands. No wonder though the old proverb says—The uiread de ainmeannan air ris an naosg—He has as many names as the snipe. It takes its Gaelic names of Gabhar-adhair (sky-goat or air-goat), Meannan adhair (sky or air kid), from its cry being so very like the bleating of a goat.

JACK SNIPE.

Latin — *Scolopax gallimula.* Gaelic — *Croman-beag, Gabhragbheag.* Welsh—*Giach.*

DUNLIN.

Latin—*Tring a variabilis.* Gaelic—*Pollaran, Pollairean* (summer), *Gille-feudaig* (winter). Welsh—*Pibydd rhuddyoch.*

The Gaelic name of the Dunlin—Pollaran, small bird of the mud holes—describes its habits in a single word, as it is always to be found wading in muddy holes left by the receding tide, in search of its food.

Family V.—Rallidæ.

LAND RAIL.

Latin—*Crex prtaensis.* Gaelic—*Treun-ri-treun, Treubhna, Treunna.* Welsh—*Rhegen yr yd.*

A very curious habit of this bird, which does not seem to be generally known, is that if it is quietly approached after dark in a hay field where there is a thick cover, when it is "craking" it will allow one to come so close as to stand right over it, and still continues to utter its harsh cry. I have often followed it so, right across a field; but though I was within a few inches of it I could never see it. I have often tried to catch it, when leaning right over it, by suddenly dropping down upon it. However, it always springs up some yards in front. It glides so very quietly and swiftly through the grass, and is so sharp that it can well allow a very near approach and still feel safe enough.

WATER-RAIN.

Latin—*Rallus aquaticus.* Gaelic—*Snagan-allt, Dubh-snagan, Snagan-dubh.* Welsh—*Cwtiar.*

This is one of the very shiest of British birds. It can slip away or hide itself where there is scarcely a particle of cover; and from this comes the old proverb—B'e sin buachailleachd nan snagan-dubh 's an luachair—That were the herding of the water-rail among the rushes; applied to any impossible undertaking.

WATER HEN.

Latin—*Gallinula chloropus.* Gaelic—*Ceare-uisge.* Welsh—*Dwfriar.*

Family VI.—Lobipedidæ.

COOT, OR BALD COOT.

Latin—*Fulica atra.* Gaelic—*Lacha-bhlar, Eun-snamhtha* (Alex. Macdonald). Welsh—*Jar ddwfr foel fwyaf.*

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.

Latin—*Phalaropus hyperboreus.* Gaelic—*Deargan-allt* (Grey). Welsh—*Pibydd côch llydan droed.*

Order V.—Natatores. Family I.—Anatidæ.

GREY-LEGGED GOOSE, OR GREY-LAG.

Latin—*Anser ferus.* Gaelic—*Geadh-glas.* Welsh—*Gwydd.*

In the old song, already quoted in the article on the Capercaillie, we have—

"An lachag riabhach, geadh-glas nan Iar-innis',
Is eala 's ciatfaiche snamh."

The brown-striped duck, grey goose of the Western Isles,
And the proudly-swimming swan.

The grey-lag may well be called the "grey goose of the Western Isles," as it is a permanent resident there, and is everything but a friend to the crofters. This will be seen from the following quotation from Grey:—"The grey-lag is now almost wholly confined during the breeding season to some of the bleakest bird-nurseries of the Outer Hebrides. There it leads a comparatively quiet life, being but seldom molested, save at the season when the slender crops are being gathered; and even then the native farmers prefer the practice of driving it off by lighting fires to the extreme measure of powder and shot. For the last hundred years, indeed, the flocks of wild geese that collect about that season—and a very important one it is to these isolated husbandmen—have been kept at bay by fires alone. As soon as the breeding season is over the geese gather into large flocks, and are then very destructive to farm produce of all kinds; indeed, it requires the utmost watchfulness on the part of the crofters to keep them in check. Several fires are made in the fields, and kept burning night and day, and by this means the crops are to a great extent saved. But the moment any of the fires are allowed to fail, the geese, which are continually shifting about on the wing, suddenly pitch on the unprotected spot, and often do much mischief before they are discovered."

BEAN GOOSE.

Latin—*Anser segetum.* Gaelic—*Muir-gheadh.* Welsh—*Elcysen.*

WHITE FRONTED GOOSE.

Latin—*Anser-albifrons.* Gaelic—*Geadh-bhlar.* Welsh—*Gwydd wyllt.*

BERNICLE GOOSE.

Latin—*Anser leucopsis.* Gaelic—*Cathan, Cath-ian Leadan.* Welsh—*Gwyran.*

The Gaelic name of this goose means war-bird, fighting-bird,

or warrior-bird. It is only a winter visitor with us, going to the Arctic regions to breed. It was its coming to us in such vast flocks, and yet never being known to lay eggs or breed, that gave rise to the absurd old belief that the Bernicle Goose, instead of being bred from an egg like other birds, came from a shell that grew on trees in the Hebrides. Even so late as the time of Gerald, the herbalist, we find this ridiculous theory still believed, as he tells us "that in the northern parts of Scotland there existed certain trees bearing, instead of fruit, small russet coloured shells which opened at maturity, and let fall little living things which, at the touch of ocean, became bernicles." The worthy botanist then proceeds to relate "what his own eyes had seen and his own hands had touched on a small island strewed with sea-waifs, in the shape of wrecks and the trunks of trees covered with a froth or spume. This froth changed into shells containing something like lace of silk finely woven, as it were, together, one end being attached to the inside of the shell, and the other in a loose mass or lump of matter. When this is perfectly formed the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the foresaid lace or string, next come the legs of the bird hanging out, and as it groweth greater it openeth the shell by degrees, till at length it is all come forth, and hangeth only by the bill; in short space after it cometh to full maturity and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers, and groweth into a fowl bigger that a mallard and lesser that a goose." Wild as this story is, Chambers says it is matched by even a higher authority, Sir Robert Murray, one of His Majesty's Council for Scotland, who records, in the Philosophical Transactions for 1678, how he plucked several shells from a rotten fir tree on the Isle of Uist, and upon opening them found each one containing the rudiments of a bird—the little bill like that of a goose, the eyes marked, the head, neck, breast, wings, tail, and feet formed, the feathers everywhere perfectly shaped and blackish coloured. So widespread was this belief, and so thoroughly believed, that the high authorities of the Roman Catholic Church decreed that as the bernicles were not engendered of flesh they were not to be considered as birds, and might, therefore, be eaten by the faithful on fast days. I may add that the shells from which the bernicle was supposed to come belongs to a variety of mollusks, now know to naturalists as Cirripedia. I suspect the word bernicle, as either applied to the bernicle goose or the shell-fish, comes from the Gaelic Bairnnach—a limpet or shell-fish (Alex. Macdonald)—literally, the notched or nicked shell. The bernicle goose is often mentioned in our old lore. In Gillies' rare work, in an old Iorram, page 50, we have :—

" Bu tu sealgair a' chathain
Theid san athar le scaoim,"

and in the same work we have in an old song by Donald Gorm's daughter to Lachlan og Mackinnon : —

" Gur sealgair geoidh 's cathain thu,
Roin mhaoil re taobh na mara thu,
Theid miol-choin ann an tabhann leat
'S bidh abhaic air an lorg."

BRENT GOOSE.

Latin — *Anser, Greuta.* Gaelic — *Geadh-got, Got-gheadh, Giruenan* (Grey). Welsh—*Gwyran, fanyw.*

HOOPER, OR WILD SWAN.

Latin—*Cyngas ferus.* Gaelic—*Eala, Eala-fhiadhaich, Eala-bhan.* Welsh—*Alarch, gwyllt.*

The wild swan—Nighean uchd-gheal nan sruth —" The white-bosomed maiden of the streams," as it is poetically called by some of our old bards, is perhaps oftener mentioned in the old lore of the Highlands than any other bird. Its graceful form, purity of colour, and majestic and easy motions on the water, made it a theme for the poet and the lover, who compared his lady-love to the graceful swan. Macintyre says of Iseabal Og :—

'S e coltas na h-ainnir
An eal 'air an t-snàmh.

As graceful the maiden
As swan on the lake.

And Macdonald says of Morag :—

Maighdeann bhoidheach nam bas caoine,
'S iad cho maoth ri cloimh na h-eala.

Beautiful maiden, whose hands are as white
And as soft as the down of the swan.

And often when separated by the sea, the ardent lover wished he could swim like the swan, and so reach his beloved, as we have it in C 'aite 'n caidil an ribhinn :—

'S e dh 'iarrainn riochd na h-eala bhain
A shnamhas thar a' chaolas,
'Us rachainn féin troimh thonnaibh breun
A chuir an geill mo ghaoil dhuit.

If, like the swan, I now could sail
Across the trackless ocean ;

Ere break of day my love I'd hail,
And prove my heart's devotion.

From its great size, and extremely wary habits, making it so difficult to capture, the swan was always an object of ambition to the sportsman :—

Bu tu sealgair na h-eala,
'S neul a fal' air a taobh.

As I mentioned before, when at the eagle, no Highlander was reckoned a finished sportsman till he had killed an eagle, a swan, and a royal stag. The wild swans, with very few exceptions, always retire to the Arctic regions in summer to breed, a fact well known to our ancestors, for in "Miann a' Bhaird Aosda"—"The Aged Bard's Wish"—the bard tells us that the swan—the beautiful maiden of the snow-white breast, that swims so gracefully o'er the waves, and rises on a light wing, flies through the clouds to the cold regions of the many waves, where never a sail was spread on a mast, or the waves cut by an oaken prow of ship ; the swan that travelled from the region of waves shall sing her lament for her love to the aged bard :—

"Bithidh nighean aluinn an uchd-bhain
A' snamh le sgriach air barr nan tonn ;
'Nuair thogas i sgiath an aird
A measg nan nial, cha'n fhas i trom.

'S tric i ag asdar thar a chuan,
Gu aisridh fhuar nan ioma toim,
Anns nach togar breid ri crann,
'S nach do reub sron daraich tuinn.

Bithidh tusa ri dosan nan tòm
Le cumhadh do ghaoil ann ad bheul,
Eala thriall o thùr nan tonn,
'S tu seinn dhomh ciuil 'an àird nan speur.

It is a very ancient belief common to most nations, especially the Celts, that the swan sings very sweetly when wounded or before it dies. Most naturalists deny this, but the inhabitants of the remote wild districts now frequented by the wild swans are just as positive that they do sing, and certainly they should know best. On this point Mr A. A. Carmichael sent me the following note from Uist :—"This exceedingly beautiful and graceful bird used to be a constant winter visitor to all those islands. It is not so much now. In a severe winter a flock of swans still comes to

Lochbee in South Uist, but nowhere else that I have ascertained. Lochbee is the largest fresh water lake in the Long Island, but the water was reduced in it some years ago, and since then the swans do not seem to have the same favour for it. It does not seem a settled point yet whether the swan sings or not. Naturalists maintain that it does not, and yet several persons who have had opportunity of judging have assured me that it does. I have minutely examined persons who live near Lochbee, and all maintain that the swan sings. Some of these positively assert that they have often stood spell-bound listening to the music of the swan—'the most beautiful melodist in the "*ealtainn.*"' They sing in part even at a long distance, a mile or more. This is declared by four brothers (Macinnes) at Lochcarnan, South Uist, each of which says that he often stood spell-bound to listen to the singing of the swan in early frosty mornings—when they sing best—ere sunrise. Nothing can exceed the sweet music of the swan. They come in November, and leave at St Bride. The song of the dying swan is often mentioned in our early literature, as in 'Dan an Deirg' we have :—

"Mar bhinn-ghuth eala 'n guin bàis,
No mar cheolan chaich mu 'n cuairt di."

"Like the sweet voice of the swan, in the agony of death,
Or like the songs of the others round about her."

Dr Smith, in his "Sean Dana," in a note on these lines, says :—"Some naturalists deny the singing of the swan, so often mentioned by the Greek and Latin, as well as by the Celtic poets. If the singing of the swan is to be reckoned among the vulgar errors, it has been a very universal one. Over the west of Scotland, it is still frequently affirmed, as a fact, that the swans that frequent those parts in winter are heard to sing some very melodious notes when wounded or about to take their flight. The note of the swan is called in Gaelic, Guileag; and a ditty called "Luinneag na h-eala," composed in imitation of it, begins thus :—

"Guileag ì, Guileag ò,
Sgeula mo dhunach
Guileag ì;
Rinn mo léireadh,
Guileag ò
Mo chasan dubh, &c."

BEWICK'S SWAN.

Latin—*Cygnus Bewickii.* Gaelic—*Eala-Bheag.* Welsh—*Alarhc, Lleiaf*

Of this bird, Mr Grey says:—In the Outer Hebrides this, the smallest of our British swans, is well recognised. It frequents the same lakes as the Hooper, and is easily distinguished from that species, even at a distance. Sometimes a flock is seen to remain together in a compact body, and continue for some time feeding on the shallower parts of the loch, thus affording a good "family shot" to the watchful sportsman. In the east of Scotland it has likewise been noticed from Berwickshire to the Shetlands, where it is known as a regular visitant, appearing at the same time as the Hooper.

MUTE SWAN.

Latin—*Cygnus olor.* Gaelic—*Eala.* Welsh—*Alarch.*

COMMON SHIELDRAKE.

Latin—*Tadorna vulpanser.* Gaelic—*Cradh-gheadh.* Welsh—*Hwyad yr eithin, Hywad fruith.*

The shieldrake, one of the most beautiful of all our wild fowl, is very common all over the Hebrides, so much so in Uist as to have given it the name of Ubhaist nan cradh-gheadh—Uist of the shieldrakes. Ian Lom, the bard, says:—

"Dol gu uidhe chuain fhiaghaich
Mar bu chubhaidh leam iarraidh
Gu Uidhist bheag riabhach nan cradh-gheadh."

Going to the passage of the ocean wild
As seemingly as we could desire
To little brindled Uist of the shieldrakes.

SHOVELLER.

Latin—*Anas clypeata.* Gaelic—*Gob-leathan.* Welsh—*Hwyad lydanbig.*

GADWALL.

Latin—*Anas strepera.* Gaelic—*Lach-ghlas.* Welsh—*Y gors hywad lwyd.*

WILD DUCK.

Latin—*Anas boschas.* Gaelic—*Lach, Lach-a-chinn-uaine Lach-ghlas, Lach-ruadh* (Uist), *Lach-riablach* (mas.), *Tunnag fhiadhaich, Tunnag-riabhach* (fem.) Welsh—*Cors Hwyad, Garan Hwyad, Hydnwy.*

This being the most common of all the duck tribe, is very often mentioned in our old bird lore. Alex. Macdonald says in Allt-an-t-Siucair:—

"An coire lachach, dràcach.

In olden times Glenlyon seems to have been famed for wild ducks, for in that ancient poem, "Oran na Comhachaig," or "Song of the Owl," we have—

Thoir soraidh nam thun an loch,
Far am faic mi 'bhos 's thall,
Gu uisge Leamhna nan lach.

TEAL.

Latin—*Anas crecca.* Gaelic—*Crann-lach, Crion-lach* (little duck), *Siolta* (A. Macdonald), *Darcan* (A. Macdonald). Welsh—*Cor Hwyad, Crach Hyad.*

WIDGEON.

Latin—*Anas Penelope.* Gaelic—*Glas-lach.* Welsh—*Chwiw.*

EIDER DUCK.

Latin—*Somateria mollissima.* Gaelic—*Lach-lochlannach, Loch-mhor* (Harris), *Lach-Cholonsa, Lach-heisgeir* (Uist), *Calcach.* Welsh—*Hwyad fwythblu.*

This duck gets its first Gaelic name—Scandinavian duck—from its being so common in these northern regions; that of Lach-mhor—big duck—from its large size; and its third and fourth names from its being so common on the islands of Colonsa and Heisker. Mr Grey says—"The extraordinary number of Eider Ducks found on the island of Colonsa has gained for this bird the local name of Lach-Cholonsa over a considerable portion of the western districts of Scotland." Colcach seems to be the ancient name, for Dean Munro, who wrote his "Description of the Hybrides" in 1594, describes it under the name of Colcach. Martin uses the same name in 1716, in his "Description of the Western Islands." Of Martin's description of the eider Mr Grey says— "Martin also mentions the bird which he describes by the name of colk (the Gaelic one still in use) and gives a most glowing and exaggerated description of its plumage, which he compares to that of the peacock! At the close of his ornithological records, however, he makes the following highly curious remark, which may, to some extent, account for his magnified description—'The air is here moist and moderately cold, the natives qualifying it some times by drinking a glass of *usquebaugh.* The moisture of this place is such that a loaf of sugar is in danger to be dissolved.' The precise nature of the humidity is not explained, nor yet the cause, though the melting of the sugar is rather suggestive."

VELVET SCOTER.

Latin — *Oidemia fusca.* Gaelic — *Lach-dhubh, Tunnag ghleast.* Welsh—*Hwyad felfedog.*

COMMON SCOTER.

Latin—*Oidemia nigra.* Gaelic—*Tunnag-dhubh* (Grey) Welsh—*Y Fôr-Hwyad ddû.*

POCHARD, OR DUN BIRD.

Latin—*Fuligula ferina.* Gaelic—*Lach-mhasach, Lach-dhearg-cheannach, Tunnag-dhearg-cheannach.* Welsh—*Hwyad bengoch.*

TUFTED.

Latin—*Fuligula cristata.* Gaelic—*Currachag, Ceann molach.* Welsh—*Hwyad goppog.*

LONG-TAILED DUCK.

Latin—*Fuligula glacialis.* Gaelic—*Eun-buchuinn, Ian-buchain, Lach-bhinn.* Welsh—*Hwyad gynffon guennol.*

Mr Grey says:—"The cry of this bird is very remarkable, and has obtained for it the Gaelic name of Lach-bhinn—or musical duck—which is most appropriate, for when the voices of a number of them are heard in concert, rising and falling, borne along by the breeze between the rollings of the surf, the effect is musical, wild, and startling. The united cry of a large flock sounds very like bagpipes at a distance; but the note of a single bird when heard very near is not so agreeable." The long-tailed duck is often mentioned as a sweet singer by our old bards. Alexander Macdonald says, in Allt an t-Siucair:—

"Bidh guileag eala 'tuchan,
'S eoin-bhuchuinn am barr thonn,
Aig ionbhar Alt an t-Siucair,
'Snamh luth chleasach le fonn;
Ri seinn gu moiteil cuirteil,
Le muineil-chiuil 's iad crom,
Mar mhala pioba 's lub air;
Ceol aoifidh, ciuin, nach trom."

He also says, in "Oran Rioghail a' Bhotail:—

'S binne na luiuneag eoin-bhuchuinn,
Bhiodh ri tuchan am barr thonn,
Guileag do mhuineil a's giuig ort—
Cuisle-chiuil a dhuisgeadh fonn.

GOLDEN EYE.

Latin—*Fuligula clangula.* Gaelic—*Lach-a-chinn-uaine, Lach-bhreac* Welsh—*Llydad aur.*

SMEW.

Latin—*Mergus albellus.* Gaelic—*Sioltaiche-breac, Sioltan-ban, Sioltan-breac.* Welsh—*Lleian wen.*

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.

Latin—*Mercus serrator.* Gaelic—*Sioltaiche* (Lightfoot) *Sioltan, Siolta-dhearg* (Grey). Welsh—*Trochydd danheddog.*

GOOSANDER.

Latin—*Mergus merganser.* Gaelic—*Lach-fhiacillach. Tunnag-fhiacillach, Sioltaiche, Sioltan, Siolta-bheag* (Grey). Welsh—*Hwyad ddanheddog.*

Family II.—Colymbidæ.

LITTLE GREBE, OR DABCHICK.

Latin—*Podiceps minor.* Gaelic—*Spag-ri-ton, Spagaire-tuinne, Goblachan-uisge* (Grey), *Fad-monadh* (Hebrides). Welsh—*Harri gwlych dy big.*

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.

Latin—*Colymbus glacialis.* Gaelic—*Bur-bhuachaill* (Lightfoot), *Bun-bhuachaill, Muir-bhuachaill* (Grey), *Fur-bhuachaill, Ianglas-an-syadain.* Welsh—*Trochydd mawr.*

Pennant says :—"In Scotland it is called Muir-bhuachaill, or the Herdsman of the Sea, from the credulous belief that it never quits that element." This name is very appropriate to such a dweller on the sea. However, it seems to have had in olden times a much more reverend title, for we read in the Rev. J. Buchanan's "Travels in the Hebrides," published in 1793, that it was then called there the *Bishop Carara.*

BLACK-THROATED DIVER.

Latin—*Colymbus articus.* Gaelic—*Fur-bhuachaill, Brollachbothan, Learga* (Grey). Welsh—*Trochydd gwddfdu.*

Mr Grey says :—In dry seasons, especially, their extraordinary cry frequently startles the lonely traveller as he passes their haunts, making the still waters resound with strange echoes. The natives of Benbecula and North Uist compare it to "Deoch! deoch! deoch! tha'n loch a traoghadh," which may be interpreted by the words, "Drink! drink! drink! the lake is nearly dried up."

RED-THROATED DIVER.

Latin—*Colymbus septentrionalis.* Gaelic—*Muir-bhuachaill, Learga-mhor, Learga-chaol, Learga-uisge, Learga-fairge.* Welsh—*Trochydd gwddfgoch.*

Family III.—Aloadæ.

COMMON GUILLEMOT.

Latin—*Uria troile.* Gaelic—*Gearradh-breac, Eun-a-chrubain. Eun-dubh-a-chrullain, Langach, Langaidh* (Barra) *Eun-an-Sgadain, Eun-dubh-an-Sgadain.* Welsh—*Gwilym.*

RINGED GUILLEMOT.

Latin—*Uria lacrymans.* Gaelic—*Gearradh-breac* Welsh—*Chwilog.*

BLACK GUILLEMOT.

Latin—*Uria Grylle.* Gaelic—*Calltag, Caileag* (Grey), *Callag, Gearr-ghlas* (Young). Welsh—*Gwilym dû.*

LITTLE AUK.

Latin—*Mergulus melanolencous.* Gaelic—*Colcach bheag.* Welsh—*Carsil bach.*

PUFFIN, OR COULTERNEB.

Latin—*Fratercula arctica.* Gaelic—*Fachach, Colcach, Colgach, Coltrachan, Conntachan, Comhdachan, Colcair, Colgaire,* (Harris), *Coltair-cheannach, Seumas Ruadh* (Barra), *Peata Ruadh, Buthaigre* (St Kilda) Welsh—*Pwffingen.*

The Rev. Kenneth Macaulay, in his History of St Kilda, published in 1764, says:—"The bougir of Hirta (St Kilda) is by some called the coulterneb, and by others the puffin. It is a very sprightly bird, in size like a pigeon. Incredible flights of the puffins flutter, during the whole summer season, round St Kilda and the two isles pertaining to it; sometimes they cover whole spots of ground, and sometimes while on the wing, involve everything below them in darkness, like a small cloud of locusts in another country. There are two different kinds of them—the one larger, the other smaller, with some other marks of diversity, scarce worthy of being pointed out. Their feathers are the softest produced here, their eggs are white and of much the same bigness with those of a hen. The people of this isle live mostly all the summer on the two kinds of this fowl together with eggs of various sorts, and I shall make no difficulty of affirming that the place could easily afford enough of these different articles to support two thousand persons more during the season."

RAZOR-BILL.

Latin—*Alca aorda.* Gaelic—*Coltraiche, Dui eunach* (Grey), *Dui-suineach, Ian-dubh-an-sgadain, Sgrab* (Barra), *Lamhaidh* (St Kilda). Welsh—*Carsil, Gualch y penwaig.*

GREAT AUK.

Latin—*Alca impennis.* Gaelic—*Gearbhul, Bunna-bhuachaille, Colca, Colcair.* Welsh—*Carsil mawr.*

This large, curious, and interesting bird is now extinct, not only in Britain, but also in all other known parts of the world, though it used to breed in St Kilda, the last one known being captured off that island in 1821 by Mr Maclennan, tacksman of Scalpa. The great auk is mentioned by Sir George Mackenzie and other early writers, also by Martin, in his "Voyage to St Kilda," published in 1698. He says:—"The Sea Fowls are first Gairfowl, being the stateliest, as well as the Largest of all the Fowls here, and above the size of a Solan Goose, of a Black Colour, Red about the Eyes, a large white spot under each eye, a long broad bill; stands stately, his whole body erected, his Wings short; he Flyeth not at all; lays his egg upon the bare rock, which if taken away, he lays no more for that Year. He comes without regard to any wind, appears about the first of May, and goes away about the middle of June." In his "History of St Kilda," published in 1764, the Rev. Kenneth Macaulay says:—"I had not an opportunity of knowing a very curious fowl sometimes seen upon this coast, and an absolute stranger, I am apt to believe, in every other part of Scotland. The men of Hirta call it the Garefowl. This bird is above four feet in length. From the bill to the extremities of the feet, its wings are, in proportion to its size, very short. The St Kildians do not receive an annual visit from this strange bird, as from all the rest in the list, and from many more. It keeps at a distance from them, they know not where, for a course of years. From what land or ocean it makes its uncertain voyages to their isle, is, perhaps, a mystery in nature." In "A General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides," by James Macdonald, published in 1811, that author gives a list of the birds of St Kilda, at the head of which comes the Auk:—1. Bunna-bhuachaille, or Great Auk, is the largest bird met with in the neighbourhood of St Kilda. It is larger than a common goose, of a black colour, the irides red, having a long white spot under each eye; the bill is long and broad at the base. It cannot fly, by reason of the shortness of its wings; lays only one egg, and if robbed of it, lays no more that season." The eggs of the Great Auk must have always been very rare, and now since the bird has become extinct, when one of them comes to the market, which is very seldom, it commands a fabulous price, two sold in Edinburgh in 1880 realising over a hundred guineas each.

It is hard to say what they may rise to yet, as there are only 65 known specimens in the world, 41 of which are in Britain. Of course the eggs are liable to destruction, whilst there is no possibility of any more ever being added to the list.

George Buchanan, in his "History of Scotland," published in 1580, in his account of the Isle of Suilkyr, says:—"In this island also there is a rare kind of bird, unknown in other parts, called *Colca*. It is little less than a goose. She comes every year thither, and there hatches and feeds her young till they can shift for themselves. About that time, her feathers fall off of their own accord, and so leaves her naked, then she betakes herself to the sea again, and is never seen more till the next spring. This also is singular in them, that their feathers have no quills or stalks, but do cover their bodies with a gentle down, wherein there is no hardness at all."

Family IV.—Peleanidæ.

COMMON CORMORANT.

Latin—*Phalacrocorax carbo.* Gaelic—*Sgarbh, Sgarbh-buill, Sgarbh-a-bhothain, Sgarbh-an-uchd-ghil, Ballaire-bothain, Ballaire-boan, Sgaireag* (Young). Welsh—*Mulfran, Morfran.*

This terrible glutton, the most voracious of all our birds, though certainly no great favourite with the Highlanders, has escaped in Gaelic lore the extremely bad character which it bears in English, caused no doubt, to a great extent, by some of the early English poets choosing this bird for an example of all that was bad. Milton even goes the length, in "Paradise Lost," of making Satan assume the form of this bird, before he did that of the serpent, and entering the Garden of Eden:—

> "Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
> The middle tree, and highest there that grew,
> Sat like a Cormorant."

As Pennant puts it:—"To survey undelighted the beauties of Paradise: and sit devising death on the Tree of Life." The only evil habit which I find in our Gaelic lore attributed to the cormorant is that its young, along with the jackdaw's, are accused, in the old proverb, of trying to pass themselves off as something better than what they really are by imitating the voices of better birds:—"Guth na cubhaig am bial na cathaig, 's guth na faoileig am bial na sgaireig"—the cuckoo's voice in the jackdaw's mouth, and the sea-gull's voice in the young scart's. The cormorant is an extremely dirty bird about its nest, which smells abominably. Mr

Grey says:—"When cruising past (their nests), when the wind is blowing off shore, it is by no means pleasant to be assailed by the offensive odours which are wafted on board; the abomination is only exceeded when, on a hot day, you venture within the precincts of the nursery itself. In such a place one can almost understand the aversion with which the bird is regarded by many persons who have given it a bad character." My personal experience of the abominations of the cormorant's nursery, a few hours before I write this, was even worse than what Mr Grey here describes as feeling when cruising past on the open sea. I had been hunting in vain for some time amongst the cliffs and caves of the most rocky part of the eastern shores of Fleet Bay in Kirkcudbrightshire for cormorants' nests, and was passing along the top of a high cliff, over a large cave, into which the sea ran at high water, when I felt such a fearful smell that I thought I must have discovered the breeding place of all the cormants in Galloway. I quickly scrambled down the face of the cliff, the smell getting worse every step. On getting into the cave I found to my disgust that there were no cormorants breeding there, only a few innocent rock doves' nests, and that the cause of all the abomination was the putrifying carcases of two large horses and a sheep which the tide had washed into the cave. They had died on a neighbouring farm, and, to save the trouble of digging graves, the farmer had hurled them over the rocks several weeks before, and, as the day was very hot and the wind blowing right into the cave, the stench was something fearful—enough to make me remember it as long as Mr Grey says a friend of his did the bad taste of the cormorant's flesh. He says :—"From living exclusively upon fish, its flesh, as I have been informed by those who have had the courage to taste it, is peculiarly rank and unpleasant. An old friend of mine told me lately that he had cooked one and eaten part of it about forty years ago, and that the terribly fishy flavour was in his mouth still." This gentleman with the long memory certainly never had the privilege of deriving his first support from an Isle of Skye nurse, for Martin, in his description of Skye, says :—"The natives observe that the cormorant, if perfectly black, makes no good broth, nor is its flesh worth eating; but a cormorant that has any white feathers or down, makes good broth and the flesh of it is good food, and the broth is usually drunk by nurses to increase their milk."

SHAG, OR GREEN CORMORANT.

Latin— *Phalacrocorax crisbantus.* Gaelic— *Sgarbh, Sgarbh-an sgumain, Orag* (Young). Welsh—*Y Fulfran leiaf.*

This is a very wary bird, and very difficult to approach or capture, hence the old proverb :—"Trod nam ban mu'n sgarbh, 's an sgarbh a muigh air an loch"—the scolding of the wives above the shag, and the shag out on the loch. Quarrelling about it before they had captured it. Another old proverb, common in the Hebrides, is :—"Biodh gach fear a' toirt sgairbh a' creagan dha fhein"—let every man take shags out of rocks for himself. Sheriff Nicolson says :—"Alleged to have been said by a St Kilda man to his comrade, who was holding the rope above and asked if he had secured birds for them both. On hearing the answer above quoted, the holder of the rope is said to have replied, 'Let every man hold the rope for himself,' and let him go!" These bold cragsmen descend the rocks for the "oragan," or young shags, which are reckoned good eating there. Mr A. A. Carmichael writes me from Uist :—"The oragan are so fat and helpless that they frequently tumble out of the nest down into the sea, then they scramble on shore on ledges of rock as best they can. In Minlaidh adventurous bird-catchers go to the rocks at nights and catch these asleep. These birds sleep with their heads under their wings. Their enemies place them between their knees and wring their necks."

GANNET, OR SOLAN GOOSE.

Latin—*Sula Bassana.* Gaelic—*Sulaire, Amhsain* (Lightfoot), *Eunhan-an-sgadain, Guga or Gouy* (Young). Welsh—*Gan, Gans.*

M'Aulay, in his history of St Kilda, says :—"The Solan Goose takes its Gaelic name from its sharpness of sight; he observes his prey from a considerable height, and darts down upon it with incredible force. The St Kildians kill a Solan Goose with great alertness, by dislocating a certain joint of the neck very near the head; the rest of the neck is made for strength and adapted to the body in such a manner that without this art it would be difficult and tedious to kill them. About the middle of March a select band of adventurers go to the neighbouring isles to catch the old Solan Geese before they begin to lay. They hunt them in the night time through steep and, to all other men, inaccessible precipices. They go upon another expedition about the middle of May for gathering the eggs. The young Solan Goose is fit for use in September. Before the young, which they call Guag, fly off they are larger than the mothers and excessively fat. The fat on their breasts is sometimes three inches deep. The inhabitants of Hirta have a method of preserving their greese in a kind of bag made of the stomach of the old Solan Goose caught in March. In their language it is called *Giobain*; and this oily

kind of thick substance manufactured in their own way, they use by way of sauce, or ins'ead of butter, among their porridge and flummery. In the adjacent islands they administer this oily substance to their cattle if seized with violent colds or obstinate coughs; and it is the general belief that the appliacation of the *Giobain*, in such cases, has a very good effect." I have no doube the reverend gentleman was quite correct in his surmises of to tht beneficial effects of the *Giobain* on the cattle, for they seem to have the same on even the lords of creation, as I find in an old song by Archibald Macdonald, the Uist bard, to Dr Macleod, that he ascribes the enormous size and weight of the worthy doctor to his being fonder of "Giobainean nan Gugachan" than of milk or butter. As the whole song is illustrative of the art of the fowler amongst the rocks, and of the capture, not only of the solan goose—the "Sulair Garbh"—but also of the preceding and following birds, I may give the whole, as it is very cleverly written, and represents the bulky doctor in a ludicrous light all through his adventures, till at last his courage fails him when descending a high rock and all the wild fowl fly far beyond his reach when they get the scent of his drugs off him :—

ORAN CNADAIL DO'N OLLA LEODACH.

Le Gilleaspuig Donullach, am Bard Uisteach.

Luinneag.—Thugaibh, thugaibh, bo bo bo,
An Doctair Leodach 's biodag air,
Faicill oirbh san taobh sin thall
Nach toir e'n ceann a thiota dhibh.

'Nuair a bha thu d'fhleasgach og,
Bu mhorchuiseach le claidheamh thu,
Chaidh Ailean Muillear riut a chorag,
'S leon e le bloidh spealaidh thu.

Bha thu na do bhasbair corr,
'S claidheamh mor an tarruing ort,
An saighidear 's measa th'aig Righ Deors'
Choraigheadh e Alastair.

Bhiodh sud ort air do thaobh,
Claidheamh caol 'sa ghliosgartaich ;
Cha'n eil falcag thig o'n traigh,
Nach cuir thu barr nan itean di.

Biodag 's an deach an gath seirg
Air crios seilg an luidealaich,
Bha seachd oirlich oire a mheirg,
'S gur mairg an rachadh bruide dhi.

Bhiodag 's measa th'anns an tir,
'S a beairt-chinn 's a' ghliogartaich,
Chnamh a faobhar leis an t-suthaidh,
'S cha ghearr i'n dh'im na dh'itheadh tu.

Biodag, agus sgabard dearg,
'S cearbach sud air amadan,
Gearradh armhaichean nan sgarbh,
D'fhaigte marbh gun anail iad.

'Nuair a theid thu'n chreig gu h'ard
Cluinnear gair nan iseanan,
'S mu thig am fulamair a d' dhail,
Smalaidh tu do bhiodag ann.

'S iomad farspag rinn thu mharbhadh,
A 's sulair garbh a rug thu air,
Bhliadhna sin, mu'n deach thu'n arm,
Chuir uibhean sgarbh cioch shlugain ort.

Cha deoch bhainne, no mheig,
'S cinnteach mi rinn uesa dhiot ;
Ach biadh bu docha leat na'n t-im,
Giobainean nan gugachan.

'Nuair a theid thu air an rop',
A Righ ! bu mhor do chudthrom air,
Direadh 's na h-iseanan a d' sgeth,
Air leam gu'm feum thu cuideacha.

Bu tu theannaicheadh an t-sreang,
Cha'n eil i fann mur bris thu i,
Mu thig an cipean as a ghrunnd,
Cluinntear plumb 'nuair thuiteas tu.

'Nuair a theid thu'n chreig gu h-ard,
Failigidh do mhisneach thu,
Cha tig na h-eunlaidh a'd' dhail.
Le faile do chuid dhrogaichean.

'Nuair a theid thu'n chreig tha shuas
Fuadaichidh tu chlisgeadh iad
Le dearsa do bhutain ruadh,
'S do bhucaill chruadha'ch 'sa ghliosgartaich.

Cha mharbh thu urrad ri cach,
Ge leathan ladair mogur thu.
T'airm cha dian a bheag a sta,
Mur sgriobar clar no praise leo.

Family V.—Laridæ.

COMMON TERN, OR SEA SWALLOW.

Latin—*Sterna hirundo.* Gaelic—*Stearnan.* Welsh—*Y Fôrwennol fwyaf, Yscraean.*

ARCTIC TERN.

Latin—*Sterna arctica.* Gaelic—*Stearnal.*

LESSER TERN.

Latin—*Sterna minuta.* Gaelic—*Stearnal beag.* Welsh—*Y Fôrwennol leiaf.*

BLACK TERN.

Latin—*Sterna nigra.* Gaelic—*Stearnal-dubh.* Welsh—*Yscraean ddû.*

LITTLE GULL.

Latin—*Larus minutus.* Gaelic—*Crann-fhaoileag, Crion-fhaoileag, Faoileag bheag.*

BLACK-HEADED GULL.

Latin—*Larus ridibundus.* Gaelic—*Faoileag, Ceann-dubhan, Dubh-cheannach, Faoileag-dhubh-cheannach.* Welsh—*Yr wylan benddu.*

KITTIWAKE.

Latin — *Larus tridactylus.* Gaelic — *Seagair, Faireag, Ruideag Sgaireag.*

COMMON GULL.

Latin—*Larus canus.* Gaelic — *Faoileann, Faoileag, An t-iasgair-diomhain.* Welsh—*Gwylan lwyd, Huccan.*

This gull gets its name of An t-iasgair-diomhain (Idle Fisher), by which it is generally known in Athole, from its habit of flying along the course of a river or stream, and darting down on any small trout it sees near the surface, but as these shallow-water trout are very quick of sight they generally see it coming, and either dive into deep water, or under a stone, and escape, so its fishing exploits there being generally a failure it got the name of the Idle Fisher, or, more literally, the Unsuccessful Fisher.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.

Latin—*Larus fuscus.* Gaelic—*Sgaireag, Farspach-bheag, Faoileag-bheag* (Grey).

HERRING GULL.

Latin—*Larus argentatus.* Gaelic—*Glas-fhaoileag.* Welsh—*Gwylan benwaig.*

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.

Latin—*Larus marinus.* Gaelic—*Farspach, Farspag Faoileann-mor, Sgliuireach,* (first year state). Welsh—*Gwylan gefn-ddu.*

GLAUCOUS, OR GREAT WHITE GULL.

Latin—*Larus glaucus.* Gaelic—*Faoileag-mhor, Muir-mhaighstir.*

This gull gets its last Gaelic name, "Master of the Sea," from its being such a tyrant over all the other gulls. In the Birds of the West of Scotland, Mr Angus writes from Aberdeenshire:—"I have never been out in the bay in winter without seeing this bird, which is a very conspicious object, being more oceanic in its habits than any of its congeners. Along the coast its advent is heralded by the screaming of the other gulls, whom it torments and tyrannises over like the skuas. Even the great black-backed gull must give place to the Burgo-master."

COMMON SKUA.

Latin—*Lestris catarractes.* Gaelic—*Fasgadair, Fasgadan, Tuliac* (St Kilda). Welsh—*Gwylan frech.*

The skua gets its name of Fasgadair, *i.e.*, "The Squeezer," from its habit of not going to fish much itself, but its watching the other gulls till they have caught a lot of fish, then it darts on them and makes them disgorge their prey, which it seizes before reaching the water, and so may be said to wring or squeeze its food from them. The Skua used to be a terrible pest, not only to the other sea birds, but to the inhabitants as well of the isles where it used to breed, as will be seen from the following quotation from the Rev. K. Macaulay's History of St Kilda:—"At Hirta is too frequently seen, and very severely felt, a large sea-gull, which is detested by every St Kildian. This mischevious bird destroys every egg that falls in its way, and very often the young fowls, and sometimes the weakest of the old. It is hardly possible to express the hatred with which this otherwise good-natured people pursue these gulls. If one happen to mention them, it throws their whole blood into a ferment; serpents are not at all such detestable objects anywhere else. They exert their whole strength of industry and skill to get hold of this cruel enemy, a task very far from being easy, as they are no less vigilant than wicked. If caught they outvie one another in torturing this imp of hell to death; such is the emphatical language in which they express an action so grateful to their vindictive spirit. They pluck out his eyes, sew his wings together, and send him adrift; to eat any of its eggs, though among the largest and best their isle affords, would be accounted

a most flagitious action, and worthy of a monster only. They extract the meat out of the shell, and leave that quite empty in the nest; the gull sits upon it till she pines away. They call it Tuliac in St Kilda, but in the other western isles it goes under a different name" (Fasgadair).

RICHARDSON'S SKUA, OR ARCTIC GULL.

Latin—*Lestris Richardsoni.* Gaelic—*Fasgadair.* Welsh—*Gwlyan y Gogledd.*

FULMAR PETREL.

Latin—*Procellaria glacialis.* Gaelic—*Fulmaire, Falmaire.* Welsh—*Gwylan y graig.*

This is another inhabitant of St Kilda, but a very different one from the Skua, and after the very bad character the latter got from the rev. historian of St Kilda, it is pleasant to turn to the good one he gives the Fulmar :—"Another sea-fowl highly esteemed in this island is the Fulmar. I was not a little entertained with the econiums they bestowed on this bird. 'Can the world,' said one of the most sensible men in Hirta to me, 'exhibit a more valuable commodity? The Fulmar furnishes oil for the lamp, down for the bed, the most salubrious food, and the most efficacious ointments for healing wounds, besides a thousand other virtues of which he is possessed, which I have not time to enumerate. But, to say all in one word, deprive us of the Fulmar, and St Kilda is no more.'" The following account of the taking of the Fulmar in St Kilda is given in sketches of St Kilda, by Lachlan Maclean (pub. 1838) :—"The young Fulmar is valued by the natives more than all the other tribes of birds taken together; it may be said to be their staff of life; they therefore never meddle with the egg. The twelfth of August, if a notable day on the moors, is more so on the rocks of St Kilda. A day or two before every rope is tested, every oil-dish cleaned, and every barrel emptied. Some of these ropes are older than their owners, and are chiefly made of thongs from cow-hide, salted and twisted into a cable. The twelfth arrives, the rope is made fast round the waists of the heavier party, whilst the other and lighter party is let down the perpendicular rock several hundred feet. Here the work of destruction goes on night and day for a given space; the St Kilda man has nothing to do but take the young Fulmar, wring his neck, and then suspend him by a girth he wears round his loins. This is the harvest of the people of St Kilda. They are aware it is to last only eight days, and therefore sleep itself is banished for this space. The number killed in this one week may be from eighteen

to twenty thousand. They are from two to three pounds weight, about two hundred will go to fill a herring barrel ; yet each family, after serving the poor, shall have from four to five barrels salted for winter use."

GREATER SHEARWATER.

Latin—*Puffinus Major.* Gaelic—*Sgriob, Sgrab* (Barra), *Sgrabaire, Sgrabail* (St Kilda).

MANX SHEARWATER.

Latin— *Puffinus Anglorum.* Gaelic—*Sgraib, Fachach* (Young) Welsh—*Pwffingen Fanaw.*

Mr Carmichael informs me that this bird used to breed very numerously on the southern isles of Barra till supplanted by the puffins, who took posseseion of their breeding holes. During the time of the Macneills, each tenant in Minlaidh, Bearnearadh, had to send a barrel of "Fachaich" or young shearwaters salted and cured to Ciosmal, the castle of the chiefs of Macneill, for winter provisions.

FORK-TAILED PETREL.

Latin—*Thalassidroma Leachii.* Gaelic—*Gobhlan-gaoithe* (Barra).

STORM PETREL.

Latin—*Thalassidroma procellaria.* Gaelic—*Luaireag, Luaiseagan, Fanlag, Amhlag-mhara* (Barra), *Asailag, Lucha-fairge* (Grey).

This, the sailor's Mother Carey's chicken, is the smallest of all web-footed birds, and is so active on the wing that it is found in the very middle of the wide Atlantic, and seems never to come near the land, except to breed, which it does in many parts of the Hebrides, where it lays its single egg under large boulders near the sea. And now with this restless little Hebridean-reared wanderer of the ocean I bring the list of native British birds to a close.

DOMESTIC BIRDS.

I may now give a list of the Gaelic names of our common barn-yard fowls, most of which will be found in Alex. Macdonald's Gaelic Vocabulary (Mac Mhaighstir Alastair).

COMMON, OR BARN-FOWL.

Gaelic — Cock — *Coileach, Coileach-otraich, Coileach-an-dunain.* Hen—*Cearc, Cearc-otraich.* Chicken—*Isean, Eun-otraich Eireag* (pullet). Game Cock—*Coileach-catha.*

Of the common fowl Pennant says—"Our common poultry came originally from Persia and India. They were early introduced into the western parts of the world, and have been very long naturalised in this country, long before the arrival of the Romans in this island, Cæsar informing us they were one of the forbidden foods of the old Britons. These were in all probability imported here by the Phœnicians, who traded to Britain about five hundred years before Christ. For all other domestic fowls, turkeys, geese, and ducks excepted, we seem to be indebted to the Romans. The wild fowl were all our own from the period they could be supposed to have reached us after the great event of the flood."

I need scarcely remind any one who knows anything about the Highlands, in the days of our grandfathers, what an institution cock-fighting was in every part of the country, especially in the parish schools, where certain days were set specially apart for cock-fighting, with the old schoolmaster as president, who claimed all the slaughtered cocks as a perquisite.

TURKEY.

Gaelic—*Coileach-frangach, Coileach-turcach, Turcach, Turcaire.* Hen—*Cearc-fhrangach, Cearc-thurcach.*

PEACOCK.

Gaelic—*Peucag* (1st Kings x. 22), *Coileach-fheuchaig, Peubh-choileach, Pecoc* (Alex. Macdonald). Hen—*Cearc-fheucaig, Eucag.*

GUINEA FOWL.

Gaelic—*Coileach-innseanach.*

PIGEON.

Gaelic—*Calman, Gura-gug, Duradan.*

The old song says :—

Fhuair mi nead a ghura-gug,
Ann an cuil na moine,
Fhuair mi an toisich uibhean ann,
'S fhuair mi ris coin ann,
'S fhuair mi nead a ghura-gug,
Ann an cuil na moine, &c.

GOOSE.

Gaelic—Gander—*Ganradh, Sgeigeir.* Goose—*Geadh.*

DUCK.

Drake, Gaelic—*Lach, Rac.*
Duck, Gaelic– *Tunnag.*

FOREIGN BIRDS.

I will now finish by giving a few Gaelic names of foreign birds, most of which will be found in the Bible (Deut., 14th chap.), or in Alexander Macdonald's vocabulary :—

Eagle, Gaelic—*Iolair.*
Gier-eagle, Gaelic—*Iolair-fhionn, Iolair-thimchiollach.*
Ossifrage, Gaelic—*Cnaimh-bhristeach.*
Vulture, Gaelic—*Fang, Syriachan-criosach, Preachan-ingneach.*
Vulturine, Gaelic—*Preachanach.*
Pelican, Gaelic—*Pelag, Pelicon, Eun-mor-fasaich.*
Ostrich, Gaelic—*Struth, Struth-chamhull.*
Parrot, Gaelic—*Piorraid, Parracait.*
Canary, Gaelic—*Canari.*

With this I conclude my list of Gaelic names of birds, having given a Gaelic name for about 220 different birds, and as most of them have several different names, making a total of about 612 Gaelic names. Though this is a large number, yet it does not nearly include them all, as there are many local names by which birds are known in different districts of the Highlands, which I have not been able to collect, and I shall therefore be very glad, indeed, if any member of the Society, or anybody else, who may know any other Gaelic names, anecdotes, proverbs, or poetry connected with the bird lore of the Highlands, will kindly communicate them, either to myself, or to the obliging secretary of the Society, with a view to their perhaps appearing in a more complete form "some ither day." I know many members of the Society are deeply versed in Gaelic bird lore, and I hope they, and all other lovers of birds, and of the Gaelic language, will, in the words of the old Gaelic proverb—"Prove it, prove it," by assisting in collecting and preserving our old bird lore, and I think I may now conclude by giving the old proverb referred to, which, as Sheriff Nicolson says, is an imitation of the chirping of birds, but with a moral meaning—"Tha dà ian bheag 's a' choill ud thall, 's their an dara fear ris an fhear eile, ''S toigh leam thu, 's toigh leam thu ;' 's their am fear eile, 'Dearbh sin, dearbh sin.'" There are two little birds in yonder wood, and the one says to the other, "I like you, I like you ;" and the other says, "Prove it, prove it."