

mostly nest in colonies, and so to a certain extent protect each other. Petrels are dark and easily seen, but they nest in holes, and the male takes his turn on the nest, but the same fact applies to most sea birds. Gannets and Albatrosses nest in the open, and are conspicuous, but they are powerful birds, and also nest in colonies, and male and female both take their turn at sitting. During the nesting season among the smaller Petrels the bird which is not sitting remains at sea during the day, safe from the attacks of Hawks, Crows, &c., and only returns to its companion after dusk, leaving again in the morning by daylight.

I have only treated this interesting subject very briefly, as the protective colouring of eggs is a study in itself, as is that of the birds and their nests; but enough, I think, has been said to show how that practically all through our birds the various kinds nest in surroundings which more or less harmonise with them in colour, that the outside of their nests also assimilates with the branch or ground on which it is built, and that eggs which are laid on the ground are of the same general hue as their surroundings. Of course there are exceptions, but they are very few. It is to be hoped that this article may be the means of stimulating others to investigate the same subject, and to illustrate by photography instances seen, and, if possible, secure the nest and branch it is on for a local museum when the young have flown, so that others may be able to learn practically. In passing through the bush during the nesting season, how many nests are passed by undetected! It is usually by our sitting still and watching the birds that they betray their homes, which otherwise we should have missed. Sometimes the nests are found by observing the bird flying off. Birds fly away from their homes when disturbed by human beings, but not so when a bird of prey passes over—they remain quietly where they are, apparently trusting to their colour to save them. On several occasions when peering about on the ground under a bush where I had seen a bird alight, such as a Nightjar, I have caught sight of its bright eye before I could make out the bird itself, and I have heard of other observers doing the same thing.

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FORMALIN AS A BIRD PRESERVATIVE.—I have on hand several small birds injected with a 20 per cent. solution of formalin five months ago. They do not show any signs of decay, but are only dried up, leaving the bodies rigid. With large birds success depends on their being dried quickly. These mummies, in many cases—such as for identification, &c.—are as useful as properly skinned specimens.—A. MATTINGLEY.