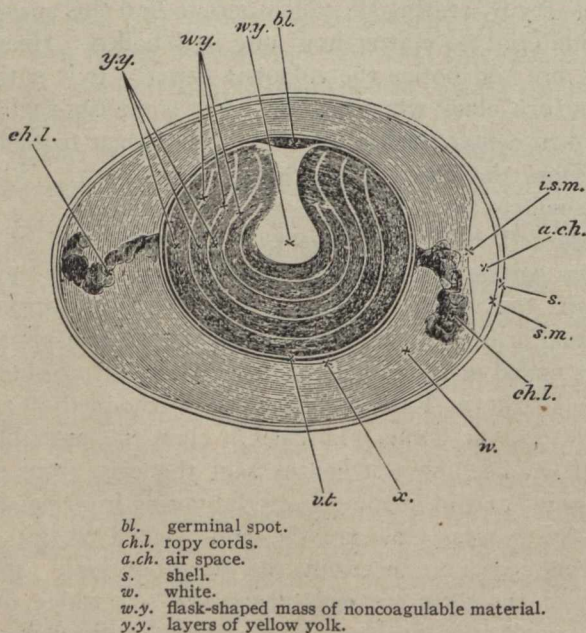


elliptical body will roll forward. In a concave surface such as a nest it is almost impossible to roll the egg out as it swings in a very small circle, while the elliptical body will move right across. This is undoubtedly of value to a bird while setting on such a shallow nest, as the eggs are kept compactly in the central part. It is particularly valuable to birds which deposit their eggs on shallow hollows in rocks on the sides of precipices, and it is in just such eggs that the difference in the ends is most marked. Ovate eggs also fit much more compactly in a nest than would elliptical eggs. They are therefore likely to be much more perfectly covered by the incubating mother and there is greater certainty

FIG. 1.



of their hatching. Every such trifling advantage plays its part in the keen struggle for existence, and it is often such slight differences that determine where an animal will thrive and cover the earth or join that melancholy list of the extinct.

The surface of the shell is covered with little pores that pass right through it. Through these openings water is continually evaporating from the egg. When newly laid the egg completely fills the shell and there is no air-space, but in a day or so this develops, and the older the egg the larger it becomes. If kept in a warm place the air space enlarges more rapidly, as might be expected. By means of these pores the young