

and the natives thus discover her nest. In La Plata the Furnarius builds a large oven-like nest of mud in as conspicuous a place as possible, on a bare rock, on the top of a post, or cactus-stem; * and in a thickly peopled country, with mischievous boys, would soon be exterminated. The great Butcher-bird conceals its nest very badly, and the male during incubation, and the female after her eggs are hatched, betray the nest by their repeated harsh cries.† So again a kind of Shrew-mouse at the Mauritius continually betrays itself by screaming out as soon as approached. Nor ought we to say that these failures of instinct are unimportant, as principally concerning man alone; for, as we see instinctive wildness directed towards man, there seems no reason why other instincts should not be related to him.

The number of eggs of the American Ostrich scattered over the country, and so wasted, has already been noticed. The Cuckoo sometimes lays two eggs in the same nest, leading to the sure rejection of one of the two young birds. Flies, it has often been asserted, frequently make mistakes, and lay their eggs in substances not fitted for the nourishment of their larvæ. A Spider‡ will eagerly seize a little ball of cotton when deprived of her eggs, embedded as they are in a silken envelope; but if a choice be given her, she will prefer her own eggs, and will not always seize the ball of cotton a second time: so that we see sense or reason here correcting a first mistake. Little birds often gratify their hatred by pursuing a Hawk, and perhaps by so doing distract its attention; but they often mistake and persecute (as I have seen) any innocent and foreign species. Foxes and other carnivorous beasts often destroy far more prey than they can devour or carry away: the Bee Cuckoo kills a vast number more bees than she can eat, and "unwisely pursues without interruption this pastime all the day long."§ A queen Hive-bee confined by Huber, so that she could not lay her eggs in worker cells, would not deposit, but dropped them, upon which the workers devoured them. An unfertilized queen can lay only male eggs, but these she deposits in worker and royal cells—an aberration of instinct not surprising under the circum-

* *Journal of Researches*, p. 95.

† Knapp, *Journal of a Naturalist*, p. 188.

‡ These facts are given by Dugès in *Ann. des Sc. Nat.*, 2nd series tome vi, p. 196.

§ *Bruce's Travels in Abyssinia*, vol. v, p. 179.