

an occasional breeze wafts a whiff of acrid guano odour from below. Going out on a small projecting point, a spot is found where a long line of cliff face can be enfiladed and a wonderful sight greets the eye. Looking down on the upper surfaces, tiers of irregular white shelving are seen, peopled with hundreds of birds, the din of raucous voices increase and hundreds of great white gannets launch out into the air. They circle out over the sea and return to leeward, sailing by and passing the cliff edge at almost arm's length against the wind. They pause as they reach a strong salient point of the cliff beyond and meet the full strength of the breeze, pause a moment, and then fall off seawards to circle a quarter of a mile out and return and repeat indefinitely. As each bird passes it turns its ivory bill and blue circled silvery eyes full upon the intruder, follows him with calm impersonal stare until well past and then straightens away on its course to be replaced in a moment by the next one that repeats the motions to a nicety. Bird follows bird so fast that they cannot be counted. Each the exact duplicate of the last until one is finally almost forced to turn the eyes away from the confusing repetition to prevent dizziness in a situation where dizziness may be fatal.

There is nearly half a mile of these cliffs peopled by Gannets, ending at the far point in Great Gannet Ledge where the most spectacular view is obtained. Every here and there are small salients where one can closely approach the edge and, reclining on the grassy margin, view the scene at ease. After a few minutes the birds begin to return to their stations and with them one sees Murres, Puffins and Razor-billed Auks hurrying to and from their nesting crevices throughout the height of the cliff. The Puffins with their quick bee-like buzz of wings, and the Murres and Auks with rather slower wing-beat fly with the business-like directness of aerial torpedoes. The Gannets crowd the ledges until it seems that there is no room for more, but still they come. Occasionally one skirts a shelf a considerable distance before finding unoccupied foothold then it forces its way between adjoining birds sometimes knocking several off with its broad wings as it alights. One holds his breath almost expecting to see these so unceremoniously treated dashed on the rocks three hundred feet below, but no, before descent begins the ample wings open and the victim glides off in safety, calling back protesting grunts as it joins the circling flock. The new arrival looks around, eyes its nest further back on the ledge and measures the crowd between, then with an awkward waddle, makes straight for its objective amid a shower of blows of bill and wing from disturbed

neighbours en route. Arriving at its own nest site it exchanges challenges with all surrounding it. At first threatening these interchanges become more formal and end at last with a sort of conventionalized ritual in which the head of opposing birds is thrown straight up in the air and the bill opened and closed, then the head is held at right angles to the neck and pumped up and down several times as if bowing. This is repeated several times, becoming more and more prefatory until it dies away. But even after all are at rest this series of conventional courtesies is exchanged occasionally between sitting birds. When a bird desires to leave the nest formality is dispensed with. Though it may be well at the back of the ledge and separated from the verge by numbers of other birds it suddenly makes straight for the edge, wabbling, flopping and sliding irrespective of who or what is in the way. By a sudden dash it takes all by surprise and almost before a bill can be brought against it or a blow driven home it is over the edge and away leaving a wake of upset and protesting birds who momentarily turn their weapons against each other and then philosophically resume their places and comparative quiet reigns again.

A steady head can reach some of the occupied ledges nearer the top unaided, but a rope and stout helping hand at the top are of great assistance and insure confidence. There one can scramble about amongst the sitting birds. They are not very wild on the less accessible ledges and when they have young can even be caught in the hand, but their bills are powerful, finely saw-edged and can make a nasty wound, and it is better to take the obvious fact for granted than to demonstrate it. The young when first hatched are shapeless, moist, gray, slug-like creatures that can barely raise their heads unsteadily from the ground and then let them fall again with helpless weakness. Later a white down comes out over all the body except the face, which has a black shivelled appearance, like that of an old, old negro with features surrounded with white wool. They are extremely quaint as they stand or sit up with the gravity of judges. The adult as mentioned before is pure white with black wing tips and a golden creamy wash over crown and nape. The bird of the year when able to shift for itself is smoky brown covered over all with fine white V-shaped spots. In between this latter plumage and the adult is every intermediate stage of pied spotting. Contrary to what would naturally be expected such birds are comparatively scarce in the neighbourhood of the rookery perhaps averaging in the total population less than one in fifty. The only explanation that can at present be advanced is