



to eject minute clawfuls of soil. The idea is, seemingly, to cut the gallery straight inwards, and in every case sloping up to guard against the risk of flooding. However, an easy winding of the tunnel is common, to avoid roots or stones too large to handle, pebbles up to two ounces being dug and pushed out. The work is finished, under ordinary circumstances, in four or five days, and a tunnel and a cave-home three or four feet deep in the solid earth is the result. These homes are as skilfully and securely sapped as any earth dwelling of the ancient Picts, or the more modern refuges of Lady-smith and Mafeking.

Our birds' domestic arrangements are carried on so completely in the dark that little can be said about them, but by the middle of May four or five extremely fragile eggs may be found, with fine white shells,



having a delicate roseate hue when full. They are slightly enlarged and flattened at one end, perhaps as a provision against the chance of a push and roll out down the tunnel. Towards the end of the month the young begin to appear at the gallery mouths, to look out on the world. One untoward result that awaits them was indicated at the beginning of this article. Another of their dangers to life comes from piratical crows, which at this season may be seen in parties watching on the cliff-tops to snap up any unwary innocent, but once fairly launched on the air their risks are small. A close observer may catch the parent bird feeding the young upon the wing, as they flash by, and their nurture is so soon completed that it is common for the old birds to raise two broods in a season.

Our delicate little friend so well guarded by its habits from "ravaging" tooth and claw, and with a nest construction so well fitted to meet extremes of temperature, fares bravely in the struggle for existence, and finds safe breeding grounds in all parts of the northern half of the world. None of the numerous and very varied order of Passerines to which it belongs, can compare with it in the enormous range of its settlements, though that order includes more than half of all living birds. It is found on Melville Island far into the Arctic Ocean. It swarms in the

