

perhaps every third or fourth nest would have from one to three eggs in it. These are used by the inhabitants very largely for food, and a hungry man can dispose of a good many such small eggs, but the birds are in such numbers, and are such persistent layers, that it is not very long before the inhabitants tire of eggs as a diet, and the birds are thus allowed to raise their young in peace. Even before this period arrives it is impossible for the inhabitants to eat all the eggs that are laid by so many tens of thousands of birds; therefore many nesting places are left untouched, and the egg collecting is largely confined to those localities more accessible and convenient to the houses. Although too early for the main crop of eggs, yet three of our party one evening gathered over a hundred eggs in about twenty minutes. They reported the nests as being so close together that one could step from nest to nest, and this was also the case on a small island in one of the fresh-water ponds, which I visited, where there were probably a hundred nests in a space not more than twenty yards long. The majority of the nests were merely a hole scooped in the sand, but a fair number had more or less straw and dry grass as a lining; and a very few had quite a compact and thick lining of the same material. The eggs vary much in color, the normal type being clay color with blackish spots, probably $\frac{2}{10}$ of the eggs being thus colored. A few are of a rich dark brown, similarly spotted while at the other extreme about one of the hundred is of a clean pale blue, almost or quite unspotted. At least two common species of gulls show a similar variation. The birds are exceedingly graceful flyers, living almost entirely upon the wing, and catching their prey, which consists of small fish, by darting down and taking it from the water, sometimes without wetting more than the bill, while at other times the force of the plunge is not sufficient to carry the bird deep enough to catch the fish. They feed largely upon a long, slender fish, called the lance, and also upon sticklebacks, which grow to a length of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Over every favorable piece of inland water the birds may be seen hunting at all times of the day, and thousands more are out upon the ocean, following the schools of cod, which chase the small fish, driving them to the surface, where they become the prey of the terns. Their call is heard everywhere, and at all times. Even in