

of the shelving bottom ledges from which a sure foot and steady head gives access to some of the nesting ledges above. As the investigator jumps ashore more of the birds leave the ledges over head, stopping but momentarily to relieve themselves of the weight of the last meal, and a shower of partially digested fish that they disgorge falls all about with squashy flops making the moment interesting and not a little apprehensive to the intruder until the worst of the shower ceases.

The rock is a coarse conglomerate of innumerable pebbles of all sizes in a matrix of brick red sandstone. The binding material has weathered away leaving the stones protuberant and more or less loose. While this roughness gives good foot hold there is the constant and well founded fear of their loosening under the tread and precipitating the explorer a hundred feet or more into the sea or on the jagged rocks below. Good hob-nails, stocking feet or thin rubber soles are absolutely necessary on such ground and are sources of considerable satisfaction when by dint of strenuous climbing one arrives at an upper ledge and greater height increases apprehension.

Many of the ledges wind along the face of the cliff for considerable distances narrowing here to mere toe holds with steeply rounded edges, widening there to shelves several feet across blocked occasionally by fallen boulders from above or rendered still more treacherous by the slippery wet ooze seeping down from upper levels. Everywhere is the dazzling wash of white guano, and the strong acrid smell mingled with that of decayed fish liberally scattered about and steaming in the hot sun makes even hardened enthusiasts catch the breath. The great white birds fill the air fanning the cheek as they pass by at one side of a great circle, the other segment lying far out over the water. On the ledge ahead are many more, some breeding young or eggs, on their nests of matted seaweed, others sitting gravely watching the intruder. When approached too closely they lumber awkwardly down from the nest, scramble to the inclined edge and throw themselves over to catch the air on their broad pinions and join the protesting ever passing throng.

Though the Gannets are the most conspicuous form of bird life on the ledges they are not the only one. Here and there are long horizontal cracks extending ten or fifteen feet back into the heart of the rock. The floors of these are covered well with red mud, mixed with guano puddled and padded by the feet of Murres, Razor-billed Auks and Puffins whose eggs can be seen scattered here and there on the bare floor. When approached hundreds of these birds rush out from the bowels of the

earth towards the light, hurl themselves into the air regardless of obstructions, and so off to sea. Caution must be used in investigating such places, and the story is current and easily to be believed, that one uncautious intruder had both eyes pierced by the sharp bills of the escaping birds. When the first rush is over one can look back into the depths of the creases and, lined against the wall at the back, see rows of young or lingering Murres lined up like soldiers on parade their white breasts gleaming in the shadows. The Murres show little inclination to return when disturbed by uninvited humans, the Puffins, however, keep going and coming continually along the ledges just beyond the danger zone. An interesting fact seems to be that though these birds are not particularly wild on the breeding ledges they seem to have absolutely no fear of danger coming at them from the depths of the cliff itself. One can crawl into one of these deep cracks and squeeze along on the stomach, if the stomach permits and revels not; and so worming along can come to the mouth where the Puffins are disporting themselves on the outer ledge. They look inquisitively at the queer invaders of their stronghold but seemingly fail to connect him with danger and can be watched at nearly arm's length for hours at a time. With their great gaudy coloured bills, small staring eyes and funny waddling little motions they are indescribably quaint while the absolute gravity of their manner and unconsciousness of their comedy makes the humour of their bearing almost irresistible.

Out on the ledges during this retirement many of the Gannets return. On reappearing a few of the nearest reluctantly lumber off and their single egg, or the black-faced, white down-wrapped young can be examined at leisure. The nests are conical piles of weed some six to ten inches high when new, merged into the surrounding ground with guano. The saucer-shaped depression on the top contains the single egg stained red with the mud from the rock, like all other eggs on these red cliffs. Older nests containing young have been tramped flatter and flatter by the growing young and the parent bird that seems to cease the constant construction, adjusting and repairing indulged in previously as soon as the young are hatched. Finally, when the young are ready to leave, the nests are mere flat mounds with little form or shape.

In rougher weather the ledges can only be reached from the top of the cliffs but the approach from thence is as interesting in its way as from below. Landing on the shoreward side at the village of Bonaventure one proceeds along the grass grown road between quaint fisher-folk houses and garden