

volunteered to dig up birds and eggs for our collection. This is the method by which very many of the birds of Kerguelen are most readily procured. The peaty ground beneath the Azorella is perforated everywhere with holes of various petrels. Those of the Prion (*Prion desolatus*) are most numerous. They are about big enough to admit the hand, but the nest and egg are nearly always far out of reach, the holes going in a yard and a half sometimes.

The Prion is a small grey bird, a petrel from the form of the nostrils, but with a broad boat-shaped bill, with extremely fine horny *lamellæ*, projecting on either margin of the bill inside. The bird flies like a swallow, and was nearly always to be seen in flocks about the ship, or cruising over the sea, or attendant on a whale to pick up the droppings from its mouth. Hence it is termed by sealers the "Whale-bird." Its food, as that of all the petrels except the carrion ones, seems to consist of the very abundant surface animals of the south seas, especially of small Crustacea. These form also, apparently, the only food of the penguins; for the stomachs of all the penguins which we examined were crammed with them only. The Prion lays a single white egg.

Besides the Prion there is the "Mutton-bird" of the whalers (*Æstrelata Lessoni*), a large Procellarid, as big as a pigeon, white and brown and grey in colour. It makes a much larger hole than the Prion, six inches in diameter, and long in proportion. At the end is a round chamber with a slight elevation in the centre, where the nest is somewhat raised, with a deeper passage all round; at least, I saw this in two nests. The old bird is very savage when pulled out. It makes a shrill cry, and bites hard, the sharp decurved tip of the upper mandible being driven right through a man's finger if he is not careful in handling the bird. The egg is white, and about the size of a hen's.

Another petrel, *Majaquens æquinotialis*, which also is often to be seen cruising after the ship, but then always solitary, is called the "Cape Hen" by ordinary sailors, and "Black Night Hawk" by the whalers. It makes a hole, larger a good deal than that of the Mutton-bird, and nearly always with its mouth opening on a small pool of water, or in a very damp place. The hole is deep under the ground and very long, two yards or more. The birds seem to make their holes in certain places in company. At one place, on the shores of Greenland Harbour, I found a number of such holes, all within a small area. The bird utters a peculiar prolonged and high pitched cry, either when dug into on the nest and handled, or on going into the hole and finding its mate there.