

knocked over in that way, or bowled over with a big stone, as they will sit quietly and allow half a dozen stones, as big as themselves almost, to be thrown at them.

At length, only after being narrowly missed several times, they take flight, and make off, uttering their harsh note many times in succession. If a bird be knocked over with a stick, it is usually only stunned, since the Sheath-bills are very tenacious of life. If a bird thus caught be tied by the leg with a string and allowed to flutter on the rocks, in front of one as one sits, the neighbouring sheath-bills will come at once to fight with it and peck it, and can be knocked over in numbers. When courting one another, the birds show all the attitudes of pigeons, the male bowing his head up and down and strutting, making a sort of cooing noise.

The birds eat seaweed and shell-fish, mussels and limpets, besides acting as scavengers, as already mentioned. They carry quantities of the limpet and mussel shells up to the clefts or holes under the rocks which they frequent. They readily feed in confinement, and we had several on board the ship, running about quite at home. One of them established itself in one of the cutters for a short time, and used to take a fly round during the voyage to Heard Island and return again to the ship.

The birds, though usually to be seen running on the rocks, can fly remarkably well, and their flight is like that of a pigeon. I have seen them flying at a great height about the cliffs of Christmas Harbour.

A Tern (*Sterna virgata* ?), the "Mackerel-bird," "King-bird," or "Kinger" of sealers, nests on the ground amongst the grass, laying a single egg, just like that of other terns. When a nest is approached the old birds are very bold, and fly round the head of the intruder, uttering a sharp cry. Their young are brown and remarkably like a thrush at first glance, were it not for the web feet. When I saw one for the first time I thought a Land-bird had been found in Kerguelen, but such certainly does not exist except the Sheath-bill, if it can be considered as such. It is, however, worthy of note here, that in Antipodes Island, which lies south-east of New Zealand and a little nearer the South Pole than Kerguelen's Land, paroquets are abundant, although the island is covered with tussock,* and without trees.

The Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) nests also on the open ground amongst grass tufts, and the birds breed in considerable flocks together, choosing often some dry place on the lower slopes of

* "Notes on the Geology of the Outlying Islands of New Zealand. Reported by Dr. Hector, F.R.S." Trans. N. Zealand Institute, Vol. II., 1869, p. 176.