

a hill-side. I saw two such places where there were a few nests with young and remains of many more. No regular nest is made. The young are brown-coloured. The old birds make a great deal of noise when the young are carried off, but make no attempt to protect them. The brown colour of the young is closely like that of the dead grass in which they lie, and under which they hide on approach of danger. The colour is protective to them; they are certainly very difficult to see amongst the grass.

A species of Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax verrucosus*), which occurs at the Falkland Islands and at New Zealand, and which is almost certainly the same bird which we saw at Marion Island, is very abundant about Kerguelen. The birds are very handsome, especially the male. The chest is white, the back dark brown and black with green metallic tints upon it. At the base of the bill are large orange warty protuberances.

The birds build on ledges of the cliffs, or on the higher part of steep declivities leading directly down into the sea. They are especially fond of the horizontal grooves and ledges in the cliffs formed where the red earth bands weather out beneath the harder overlying basalt. They are gregarious in their nesting, and in places small islands or projecting headlands are stained yellow-white with their droppings, so as to be conspicuous from a distance at sea.

The birds make a compact neat round nest, raised about a foot from the ground, and composed of mud and lined with grass.

They lay either two or three eggs, pale blue in colour, and covered with a chalky substance, as are all cormorants' eggs. The young are ugly beasts, covered with intensely black down. When there are three in the nest nearly full-fledged they form an absurd sight, since the nest is then not big enough to hold more than one properly, so the greater part of the bodies of the three young projects out, and then, to crown the absurdity, the mother comes and sits on the top of these three young as big as herself.

An idea of the relations of the various birds to one another in the struggle for existence will be gained from the following incident: I saw a cormorant rise to the surface of the water, and lifting its head, make desperate efforts to gorge a small fish which it had caught, evidently knowing its danger, and in a fearful hurry to get it down. Before it could swallow its prey, down came a gull, snatched the fish after a slight struggle, and carried it off to the rocks on the shore. Here a lot of other gulls immediately began to assert their right to a share, when down swooped a Skua from aloft, right on to the heap of gulls, seized the fish and swallowed it at once.