

" It is somewhat larger than our common Teal, and of a brown colour, with a metallic blue streak, and some little white on the wing. It is enormously abundant all about Kerguelen Island, near the coast. I killed in one day twenty-seven Teal, and similar bags were frequent.

" Four or five guns used to bring back usually over 100 birds.

" The Teal feed mainly on the fruit of the Kerguelen cabbage, and are extremely good eating. They were the greatest treat possible to us, living, as we necessarily were, almost entirely on preserved meat.

" The Teal are to be found mostly in flocks, or when breeding in pairs. They are, where they have not been shot at by sealers, remarkably tame, and require to be kicked up almost to afford a shot.

" At one valley near Three Island Harbour in Royal Sound, which had probably not been visited by man for thirty or forty years, perhaps hardly ever, after tramping some distance after Teal without success, I saw a flock get up from the bed of a river which ran down the valley, about 150 yards off. I thought the birds must be wild and had been recently shot at; but no, they got up merely to come and look at me. They pitched about 40 yards off, and then set off running towards me in line, like farm-yard ducks, seven of them in a row, headed by a Drake.

" As a sportsman I hesitate to describe the termination of the scene. Only those who have been long at sea know what an intense craving for fresh meat is developed by a constant diet of preserved and salt food. The Teal were most excellent eating, and there were many mouths to feed. My rule was always to shoot them on the ground if I could, and as many at a shot as possible. When I could not do this I took them flying, and with tolerable success.

" Some of the Teal were breeding at the time of our visit, some with young full-fledged and already away from the nest, others with eggs. The nest is a neat one, placed under a tuft of grass, and lined with down torn from the breast of the parent bird. There were five eggs in one nest that I found.

" The duck, when put up off the nest, to effect which the nest required almost to be trodden upon, or when found with her young away from the nest, flutters a few yards only as if maimed, and pitches again, and cannot be frightened into a long flight. It is curious that the bird should have retained this instinct where there are no four-footed or human enemies; possibly she finds it a successful ruse when the brood is attacked by the Skuas.

" The young must fall constantly a prey to these ever-watchful Skuas, for in most cases I found only a single young one following the mother. There were no young met with in the condition of flappers; and the general breeding season was probably only about to begin, as it was with many birds of the island. The greater part of the birds were yet in flocks."—(Moseley, Notes, pp. 190, 191.)