hopping over the grass for a few yards, then pausing to detect the movement of a worm, and vigorously seizing the same a moment after, is one of the most familiar sights. Hardly less well known is the singular nest built by this bird—a deep cup, lined with a thin but stiff coating of fragments of rotten wood ingeniously spread, and plastered so as to present a smooth interior—in which its sea-green eggs spotted with black are laid. An early breeder, it builds nest after nest during the season, and there can be few birds more prolific. Its ravages on ripening fruits, especially strawberries and gooseberries, excite the enmity of the imprudent gardener who leaves his crops unprotected by nets, but he would do well to stay the hand of revenge, for no bird can or does destroy so many snails, as is testified to the curious observer on inspection of the stones that it selects against which to dash its captures,—stones that are besmeared with the slime of the victims and bestrewn with the fragments of their shattered shells. Nearly all the young Thrushes reared in the British Islands—and this expression includes the storm-swept isles of the Outer Hebrides, though not those of Shetland—seem to emigrate as soon as they are fit to journey, and at a later period they are followed by most of their parents, so that many parts of the kingdom are absolutely bereft of this species from October to the end of January. On the continent of Europe the autumnal influx of the birds bred in the North is regarded with much interest, as has been already stated (Birds, vol. iii. p. 765), for they are easily ensnared and justly esteemed for the table, while their numbers make their appearance in certain districts a matter of great importance.

The second species to which the name applies is distinguished as the Mistletoe-Thrush, or, by corrupt abbreviation, the Missel- Thrush.@@1 It is known also in many districts as the “ Storm-cock,” from its habit of singing in squally weather that silences almost all other birds, and “Holm- (i.e., Holly-) Thrush,” while the harsh cries it utters when angry or alarmed have given it other local names, as “ Screech,” “ Shrite,” and “ Skrike,” all traceable to the Anglo-Saxon Scric.@@2 This is a larger species than the last, of paler tints, and conspicuous in flight by the white patches on its outer tail-feathers. Of bold disposition, and fearless of the sleety storms of spring, as of predatory birds, the cock will take his stand on a tall tree, “like an enchanter calling up the gale ” (as Knapp happily wrote), and thence with loud voice proclaim in wild and discontinuous notes the fervour of his love for his mate ; nor does that love cease when the breeding-season is past, since this species is one of those that appear to pair for life, and even when, later in the year, it gathers in small flocks, husband and wife may be seen in close company. In defence of nest and offspring, too, few birds are more resolute, and the Daw, Pie, or Jay that approaches with an ill intent speedily receives treatment that causes a rapid retreat, while even the marauding cat finds the precincts of the “master of the coppice” (Pen y llwyn), as the Welsh name this Thrush, unsuitable for its stealthy operations. The connexion of this bird with the mistletoe, which is as old as the days of Aristotle, is no figment, as some have tried to maintain. Not only is it exceedingly fond of the luscious viscid berries, but it seems to be almost the only bird that will touch them. Of other British Thrushes, the Fieldfare (vol. ix. p. 142), Redwing (vol. XX. p. 318), and the Blackbird and Ring-Ousel (vol. xviii. p. 75) have been before noticed in these pages, as has been (under the first of those headings) the so-called “Robin ” of North America.

The Thrushes have been generally considered to form a distinct Family, *Turdidæ,* which is placed by some taxo­nomers the highest in rank among birds. An attempt has already been made (Ornithology, vol. xviii. pp. 30, 48) to point out the fallacy of this view, and space is here wanting to dwell longer on the matter. This is the more to be regretted, for, though many modern systematists will admit the close connexion of the *Turdidæ* and some of the so-called Family *Sylviidæ* or Warblers *(q.v.),* the abolition or modification of the latter, by wholly or par­tially merging it in the former, has not yet been satis­factorily effected, and Mr Seebohm, in his portion of the British Museum *Catalogue of Birds* (v. p. 1), being com­

pelled by the conditions previously laid down by Mr Sharpe *(op. cit.,* iv. pp. 6, 7) to unite them, protests against doing so. His own assignment of the Subfamily *Turdinæ* is into 11 genera, of which, however, 6 only would be commonly called Thrushes, and it must be borne in mind that in establishing these he regards coloration as the most valid character. They are *Geocichla* with 40 species, *Turdus* with 48, *Merula* with 52, *Mimocichla* with 3, *Catharus* with 12, and *Monticola* with 10. These last, well known as Rock-Thrushes, make a very near approach to the Nightingale (vol. xvii. p. 498), Redstart (vol. XX. p. 317), and Wheatear *(q.v.).* (a. n.)

THUCYDIDES. Thucydides was the greatest historian of antiquity, and, if not the greatest that ever lived, as some have deemed him, at least the historian whose work is the most wonderful, when it is viewed relatively to the age in which he did it. The most important facts which we know about him are those which he has told us himself. It matters very little, fortunately, that the biographical materials are scanty. For posterity, his life is represented by his life’s labour, the *History of the Pelo­ponnesian War ;* and the biographical facts are of interest chiefly as aids to the appreciation of that history. He was probably born in or about 471 B.C. The only definite testimony on the subject is contained in a passage of Aulus Gellius, who says that in 431 Hellanicus “ seems to have been” sixty-five years of age, Herodotus fifty-three, and Thucydides forty *(Noct. Att.,* 15, 23). The authority for this statement was Pamphila, a compiler of biographical and historical notices, who lived in the reign of Nero. She must have had access to Greek sources of the 4th century B.c. ; and her precision—though qualified, in the version of Gellius, by the word “ seems ”—would warrant the supposition that she had taken some pains to secure accuracy. Further, the date which she assigns is in good accord with an inference fairly deducible from the language of Thucydides himself, viz., that in 431 he had already reached the full maturity of his powers. Krüger, indeed, would place his birth earlier than 471, and Ullrich later, but for reasons, in each case, which can scarcely outweigh the ancient authority.

The parentage of Thucydides was such as to place him in a singularly favourable position for the great work to which he afterwards devoted his life. His father Olorus, a citizen of Athens, belonged to a family which derived wealth and influence from the possession of gold mines at Scaptesyle, on the Thracian coast opposite Thasos, and was a relative of his elder namesake, the Thracian prince whose daughter Hegesipyle married the great Miltiades, so that Cimon, son of Miltiades, was a cousin, perhaps first cousin, once removed, of Thucydides. It was in the vault of the Cimonian family at Athens, and near the remains of Cimon’s sister Elpinice, that Plutarch saw the grave of Thucydides. Thus the fortune of birth secured three signal advantages to the future historian : he was rich ; he had two homes—one at Athens, the other in Thrace,—no small aid to a comprehensive study of the conditions under which the Peloponnesian War was waged ; and his family connexions were likely to bring him from his early years into personal intercourse with the men who were shaping the history of his time.

The development of Athens during the forty years from 471 to 431 was, in itself, the best education which such a mind as that of Thucydides could have received. In the first two decades of his life the expansion and con­solidation of Athenian power was proceeding; between his twentieth and fortieth year the inner resources of the city were being applied to the embellishment and ennoble­ment of Athenian life. As Cimon had been the principal agent in the former period, so Pericles was the central

@@@1 There is no doubt of the bird taking its name from the plant Mistletoe ( Viscum album), about the spelling of which there can be no uncertainty—A.S. Μisteltan, the final syllable originally signifying “twig,” and surviving in the modern “tine,” as of a fork or of a deer’s antler.

@@@2 It seems quite possible that the word Shrike (vol. xxi. p 845), though now commonly accepted as the equivalent, in an ornithological sense, of Lanius, may have been originally applied to the Mistletoe- Thrush. In several of the Anglo-Saxon Vocabularies dating from the 8th to the 11th century, as printed by Thomas Wright, the word Scric, which can be hardly anything else than the early form of "Shrike, ” is glossed Τurdus.