

been introduced and for which very little good can be said. The pipit, or pihoihoi, which, by the way, is not a true lark at all, may be distinguished by the very conspicuous white outer tail-feathers, especially noticeable in flight, by its much slenderer build and longer tail, the longer and slenderer bill, and, above all, by its familiar habit of rising from the ground just in front of one, flying a short distance and then alighting just ahead, where it walks briskly about uttering its cheerful note until the observer again approaches.

The nest, which is a much more substantial structure than that of the introduced skylark, is placed on the ground among the roughage of a pasture, in the drier portion of a swamp, or sheltered among the alpine herbage far above the bush-line on the mountain-side, as shown in Fig. 2. The eggs, as will be noticed, need never be confused with those of the skylark. They are often more rounded, but the chief distinguishing character is the heaviness and distinctness of the blotches of darker colour. In the skylark's egg these are smudged and less contrasted.

The food of the ground-lark consists almost entirely of insects and their larvæ, some of the former of which it often snaps up on the wing. Small earthworms and occasional minute seeds contribute to its bill of fare.

THE RIFLEMAN AND THE WRENS.

The last of the purely insectivorous birds to be dealt with are those small active short-tailed birds popularly known as "wrens." It should perhaps be mentioned that they are none of them true wrens, but members of a family or two families found nowhere else in the world. Of the three species still existing at the present day the rock-wren (*Xenicus gilviventris* Pelz.) bears no relation to agriculture, since it is confined to the wilderness of rock above the bush-line on the mountains of the South Island; the green wren (*X. longipes* Gm.), a very rare bird, renders some service to forestry in that it is an ever-active insect-hunter in the subalpine beech forests, where the ordinary forest-birds are quite rare. The rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris* Sparr.), however, the smallest bird in New Zealand, occurs plentifully in beech forests in the North Island and throughout all forest in the South. It is easily recognized by its extremely small size, greenish colour, and slightly upturned awl-shaped bill, and by its habit of running in a very mouse-like manner up the trunks and large branches. The nest is placed in a crevice of bark or bank, or in a natural hole in tree or log. Frequently, when in living timber, the nest-entrance is so small that the tip of the forefinger can be inserted only by turning it sideways. Such was the case in the nest sketched and shown in Fig. 3. The nest itself is of the most irregular shape, and is suited to the exigencies of the selected cavity. The eggs are small and pure-white.

CONCLUSION (OF PART IV).

As was indicated in the opening article of this series, there are some birds which are beneficial, provided their numbers be not too great; with others a careful balance must be struck between the services they render and the damage they do. In the case of the insectivorous small birds dealt with in the preceding pages the only verdict must be one