

greater number, are jet black; and the females (with perhaps one or two exceptions) are brown. The most curious fact is the perfect gradation in the size of the beaks in the different species of *Geospiza*, from one as large as that of a hawfinch to that of a chaffinch, and (if Mr. Gould is right in including his sub-group, *Certhidea*, in the main group), even to that of a warbler. The largest beak in the genus *Geospiza* is shown in Fig. 1, and the smallest in Fig. 3; but instead of there being only one intermediate species with a beak of the size shown in Fig. 2, there are no less than six species with insensibly graduated beaks. The beak of the sub-group *Certhidea* is shown in Fig. 4. The beak of *Cactornis* is somewhat like that of a starling; and that of the fourth sub-group, *Camarhynchus*, is slightly parrot-shaped. Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately-related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago one species had been taken and modified for different ends. In a like manner it might be fancied that a bird originally a buzzard had been induced here to undertake the office of the carrion-feeding *Polybori* of the American continent.

Of waders and water-birds I was able to get only eleven kinds, and of these only three (including a rail confined to the damp summits of the islands) are new species. Considering the wandering habits of the gulls, I was surprised to find that the species inhabiting these islands is peculiar, but allied to one from the southern parts of South America. The far greater peculiarity of the land-birds, namely, twenty-five out of twenty-six being new species, or at least new races, compared with the waders and web-footed birds, is in accordance with the greater range which these latter orders have in all parts of the world. We shall hereafter see this law of aquatic forms, whether marine or fresh water, being less peculiar at any given point of the earth's surface than the terrestrial forms of the same classes, strikingly illustrated in the shells, and in a lesser degree in the insects of this archipelago.