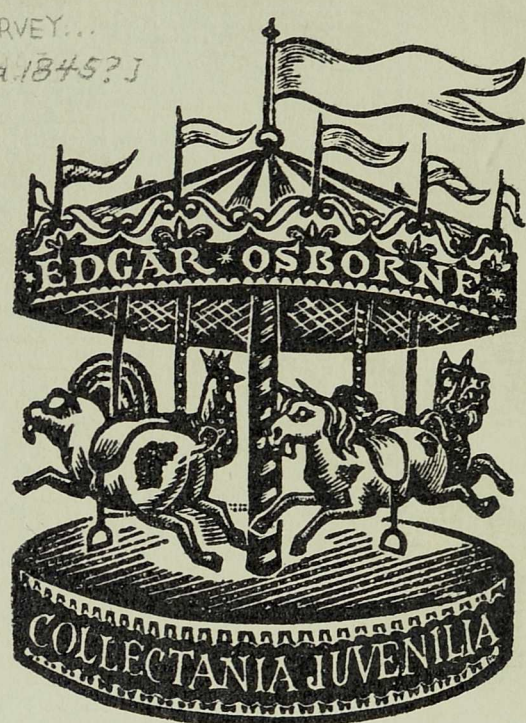


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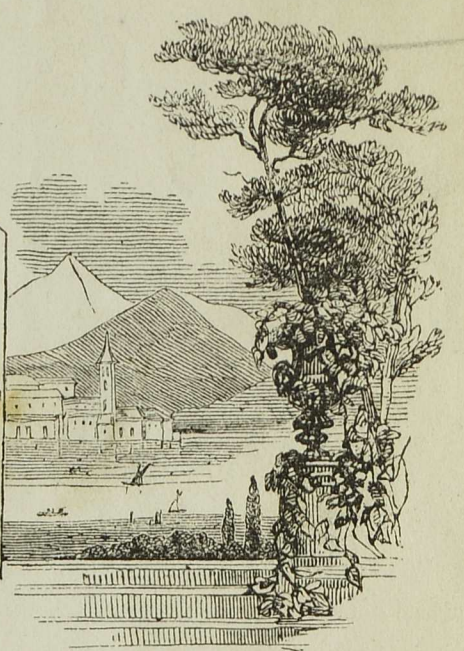
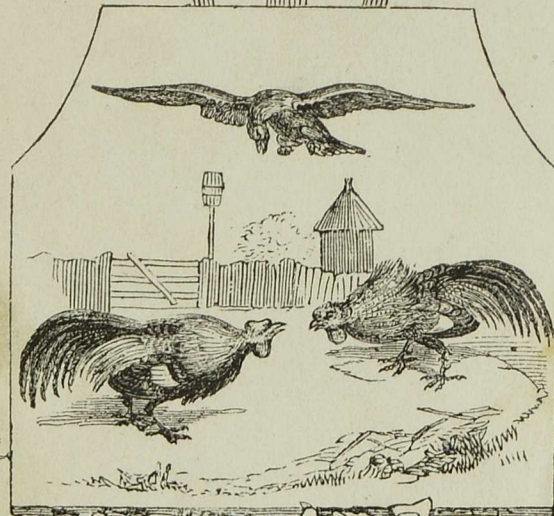
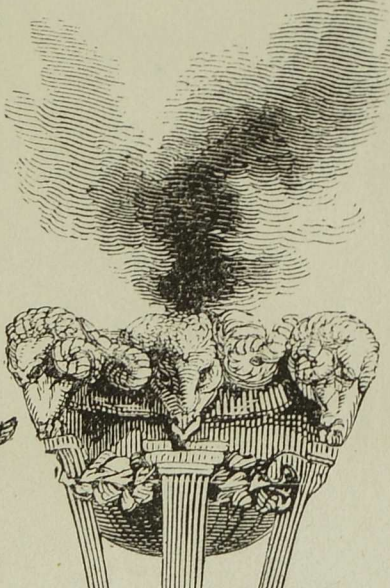
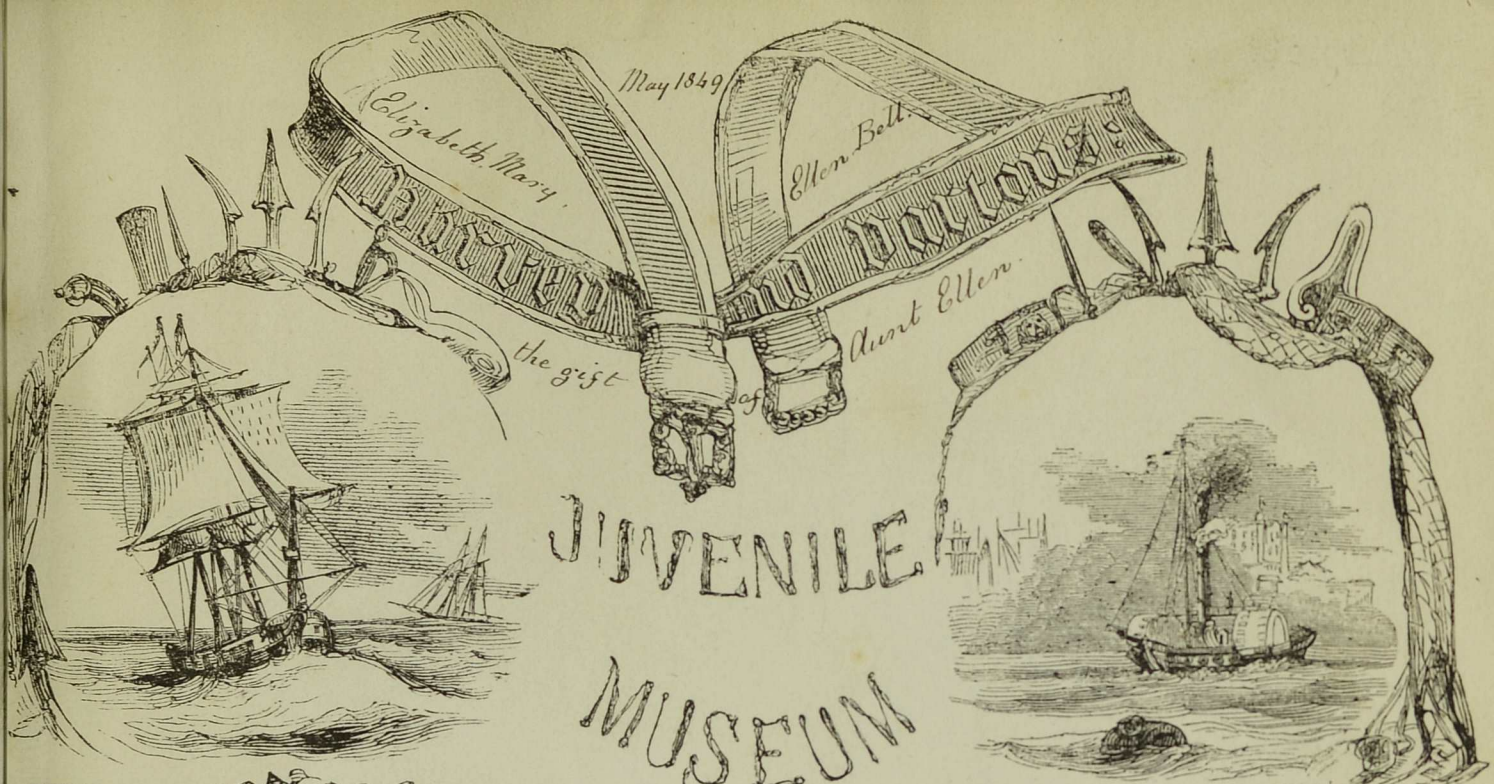
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HARVEY AND DARTON, GRACECHURCH STREET.



FOX.

THE FOX

Is generally allowed to be not only the most crafty but the most sagacious of all beasts of prey. The fox has a very significant eye, by which it expresses the passions of love, hatred, fear, &c. Although of such a wild nature, that it is impossible fully to tame him, he is remarkably playful and even affectionate; but, like all other savage creatures half-reclaimed, will, on the slightest offence, bite those with whom he is most familiar. The sagaciousness of this animal is exemplified by the art he displays in rendering his retreat commodious, and of concealing the avenues to it; of his own preservation he is most vigilant: in cases of danger he makes for home, where he lives in a settled domestic state. The favourite abode of the fox is some thick brake, generally of gorse, where he can rest secure from surprise, on the skirt of a wood, in the vicinity of a farm or village;

THE FOX.

he listens to the crowing of the cocks and the cackling of the poultry, which he scents at a distance. Proceeding with caution, he seldom returns without booty. Having effected an entry, he puts all to death, and then retires with his prey, which he either hides in some convenient spot, or conveys to his kennel; speedily revisiting the scene of his depredation, he carries off another supply, which he conceals in the same way. In this manner he proceeds till the peep of day warns him of the necessity of suspending his operations. He also visits the nets, &c. placed by bird-catchers, and carries off the birds entangled, depositing them by the road side, in furrows, under brushwood or grass; these he removes as opportunity suits. When pressed by hunger, he will devour roots and insects: foxes near the sea-coast will, other sources failing, eat crabs, shrimps, or shell-fish. In France and Italy, they commit sad havoc in the vineyards, by feeding on the grapes, of which they are very fond. The fox, however, renders considerable service to man by the quantities of rats,

THE FOX.

field-mice, frogs, toads, lizards, and snakes, which he destroys. When deprived of liberty, the fox pines, and actually dies of chagrin. In warm weather, he will quit his habitation for the sake of basking in the sun and of enjoying the fresh air; upon these occasions he amuses himself by running in circles in pursuit of his brush, of which he is very proud; in cold weather he wraps it about his nose. Crows, magpies, and other birds, who consider the fox as their common enemy, often by their tones of anger point out his retreat, and will even follow him with their screams to a considerable distance. Somerville notices this circumstance:—

Here, huntsman, from this height
Observe yon birds of prey; if I can judge,
'Tis there the villain lurks: they hover round
And claim him as their own.

In winter, particularly during frost and snow, the fox barks incessantly, but in summer, when he sheds his hair, he is almost entirely silent. The fox breeds generally but once a year, producing four or five,

THE FOX.

rarely six, but seldom less than three at a litter. To these she is peculiarly attentive, and if she suspect that the place of their retreat has been discovered, and that her young have been disturbed during her absence, she removes them, one after another, in her mouth, and endeavours to find a place of greater security. A still stronger proof of maternal affection and solicitude is said to have been evinced by one of these animals, some years ago, in the county of Essex. A she fox, that had but one cub, was unkennelled by a gentleman's hounds, near Chelmsford, and hotly pursued. This did not appear a proper time for consulting the safety of her offspring: however, the poor animal, braving every danger, rather than leave her cub to be worried by the dogs, took it up in her mouth, and ran with it in this manner for several miles. At last, taking her way through a farm-yard, she was assaulted by a mastiff, and obliged to drop her little charge, which was taken up by the farmer. The faithful creature, however, eluded the pursuit, and eventually got off in safety.

THE FOX.

Like dogs, the young are brought forth blind; grow to the age of eighteen months or two years, and live fourteen or fifteen years.

The generality of foxes are red; but in the colder climates round the pole they are of all colours; black, blue, grey, iron-grey, striped white, &c. The common kind, however, is more generally diffused than any of the former; being found in Europe, in the temperate climates of Asia, and also in America.

THE BADGER.

ALTHOUGH the badger is an animal of great strength, and is furnished with strong teeth, six cutting and two canine in each jaw, as if formed for rapine, yet it is perfectly inoffensive ; roots, fruits, grass, insects, and frogs constituting its food. It is accused of destroying lambs and rabbits ; but there seems to be no other reason for pronouncing it a beast of prey than the analogy between its teeth and those of carnivorous animals. Few beasts defend themselves more courageously : hence they are frequently baited. The badger is an indolent, solitary animal, and sleeps much ; it confines itself to its hole throughout the day, and feeds only at night.

The usual length of the badger is about twenty-eight inches, exclusive of the tail, which does not exceed six inches : the eyes are very small ; the ears short, and rounded ; the neck thick ; nose, chin, lower sides of the



BADGER.

W. Woodcock, del. 25

THE BADGER.

cheeks, and middle of the forehead white ; the ears and eyes are inclosed in a pyramidal bed of black ; the throat, breast, belly, and legs, black ; the hair on the body and tail tri-coloured,—the bottoms, a yellowish white ; the middle, black ; ends, ash-coloured or grey : whence the proverb, “ As grey as a badger.” Legs and feet, short and thick ; each foot consisting of five toes, those on the fore feet armed with claws exceedingly strong and sharp, admirably adapted for burrowing or digging. In walking, the badger treads on its whole heel, like the bear, which he resembles in many points, viz. in his feet and claws, somnolency, proneness to obesity, attention to his young, and reciprocity of attachment in the young to the old.

The badger is an original native of the temperate climates of Europe, and is found in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Poland, and Sweden. This animal admits not only of no varieties, but does not even approach to any other species : his characters are deeply marked and very singular ; the alternate belts on his head, are remarkable peculiari-

THE BADGER.

ties ; his body also is nearly white above, and almost black below, the bellies of all other quadrupeds being of a lighter colour than their backs. The female brings forth in summer, and the litter commonly consists of three or four, which she suckles for a time, and afterwards supplies them with such prey as she can surprise.

The skin and hair of the badger are in great request : when dressed with the hair on, the former is used for pistol furniture : of the latter, brushes are made, with which painters soften and harmonize their shades. Its flesh is eatable ; hams are sometimes made of the hind quarters, which are *said* to be well flavoured.

It may be remarked, in justice to this persecuted animal, so frequently sacrificed at the shrine of brutality and cowardice, that although supplied by nature, in addition to the most terrible weapons of offence, with commensurate strength, he is nevertheless harmless and inoffensive, and unless attacked, employs them only for his support.



OTTER.

THE OTTER.

“Of all the brutes,
Whether by nature form'd, or by long use,
This artful diver best can bear the want
Of vital air.”—SOMERVILLE.

THIS animal seems to form the connecting link in the grand chain of nature, resembling those of the terrestrial kind in shape, and the aquatic tribes in its mode of living, and in being furnished with membranes between the toes to assist in swimming. Correctly speaking, however, the otter is not amphibious, as he cannot live *equally* in air and in water: he requires the aid of respiration! The otter is a very voracious beast; although fonder of the finny tribe, of which he destroys vast quantities, than of flesh; when the former source fails, he devours frogs and water-rats; he gnaws the twigs, and eats the bark of aquatic trees: in the spring, he occasionally feeds on the young herbage. In severe

THE OTTER.

weather, he will kill lambs, sucking pigs, and poultry.

The otter, whose bite is more savage even than that of the badger, has six cutting teeth, and two canine in each jaw. The head and nose are broad and flat; the mouth resembles in some degree that of a fish; the neck short; the body long, of a deep brown colour, except two small spots on each side of the nose; the tail sixteen inches long, broad at the insertion, but tapering to a point; the eyes small, and nearer the nose than is usual in quadrupeds; the ears very short, the orifice narrow; the lips muscular and capable of being brought close together; the nose and corners of the mouth furnished with long whiskers, which present rather a terrific appearance. The legs very short, but remarkably strong, broad, and muscular; the joints articulated so loosely, that the animal possesses the power of turning them back, and bringing them on a line with the body, so as to perform the office of fins; each foot furnished with five toes connected with strong broad webs, resembling those of water-fowl.

THE OTTER.

The otter has no heel, but a round ball under the sole of the foot, by which its track is easily distinguished, and is termed the *seal*: the skin is valuable, if killed in the winter. The usual length is about three feet four inches, including the tail: the weight of the male, from eighteen to twenty-six; of the female, from fourteen to twenty-two pounds. The female comes in season in winter, brings forth in March, and the litter consists of three or four, according to Buffon. “This may be the case in France,” says Goldsmith, “but it is certainly different with us, for its young are never found till the latter end of summer.” M. Lots, of the Academy of Stockholm, assures us, that “it couples about the middle of summer, and brings forth at the end of nine weeks.” In constructing its *couch*, according to Pennant, it burrows underground, on the banks of some river or lake, always making the entrance to its hole under water, and, working upwards to the surface of the earth, forms a minute orifice for the admission of air. Buffon, however, says, the otter digs no habitation for himself, but takes possession

THE OTTER.

of the first hole he finds, under the roots of a poplar or willow. There are instances on record of litters being found in cellars, sinks, and drains.

Hunting the otter was once a very favourite diversion in this country ; it is now, however, comparatively speaking, but little understood ; and the animal is pursued more with a view to its extirpation than to the sport it affords.



H A R E

THE HARE.

To enter into a minute description of an animal so well known would be deemed a work of supererogation. Being a most defenceless and timorous creature, all its senses seem only given to regulate its flight, and it is perpetually attentive to every alarm. Its eyes are large and prominent, adapted to receive the rays of light on all sides, and which are never wholly closed ; its ears are long, and capable of being directed to every quarter, the remotest sounds are readily received ; the hind legs are remarkably long, and furnished with strong muscles, which give the hare singular advantages in ascending steep places ; and so sensible is the animal of this, that it always makes towards the rising ground : it is extremely swift ; the pace is a sort of a gallop, or rather a quick succession of leaps, unaccompanied by noise, the feet being covered both above and below with hair.

THE HARE.

Foxes and dogs of all kinds pursue the hare by instinct; wild cats and weasels are continually lying in ambush, practising all their arts to seize it: birds of prey are still more dangerous enemies, as against them no swiftness can avail; and man, far more powerful than all, makes perpetual war against the hare, it constituting one of the numerous delicacies of his table. Thus persecuted, the race would long since have become extinct, did it not find a resource in its amazing fecundity: so various are its foes that it is rarely allowed to reach even that short term to which it is limited by nature.

In general, the hare wants neither instinct sufficient for his own preservation, nor sagacity for escaping from his foes: he forms a *seat*, which he rarely leaves in the day, but in the night takes a circuit in search of food, choosing the most tender blades of grass, and quenching his thirst with the dew. This timid creature also lives upon fruit, grain, herbs, leaves, roots, preferring those plants which yield milky juices; and in winter will gnaw the bark indiscriminately from all

THE HARE.

trees, except that of the alder and lime. In plantations and nurseries of young trees, hares commit dreadful havock. The colour of the hare approaches nearly to that of the ground, which secures it more effectually from the sight. Providence has been so mindful of this, as well as many other animals, in northern regions, as to change their colour, and they become white at the beginning of winter, thus rendering them less conspicuous amidst the surrounding snow. White hares are occasionally met with in this country. The young, of which the female has generally three or four at a time, are produced with their eyes open, the dam suckles them about twenty days, after which they leave her and provide for themselves, never removing however, far from each other, nor from the place where they are littered. The hare lives about ten years.

These quadrupeds seem to pass their lives, when undisturbed, in solitude and silence ; and are seldom heard to cry except when seized or wounded. They are not so wild as their disposition and habits seem to

THE HARE.

indicate, but are easily tamed, and are even susceptible of a kind of education. As they have a remarkably good ear, sit up on their hind legs, and use their fore paws as hands, they have been taught to dance to music, and go through the manual exercise. And it is a well known fact, that some years ago, one of these little animals was exhibited at Sadler's Wells, beating with its fore feet upon a drum, which a person carried round the stage.



Howitt

RABBIT.

THE RABBIT.

THE hare and rabbit, though similar in external form and internal structure, constitute two distinct species, refusing to mix with each other. The fecundity of the latter is still greater than that of the former; they breed six or seven times a year, and have six to ten young ones at a litter: hence an idea may be formed of their amazing increase; happily, however, for mankind, their enemies are numerous, or we *might* be similarly situated with the inhabitants of Majorca and Minorca, who, as Pliny tells us, were obliged to implore the assistance of a military force from the Romans, in the reign of Augustus, to extirpate them. They devour herbs, roots, grain, fruits, even young trees and shrubs. Indeed, of all the animals which are considered *game*, none is so injurious to the farmer as the rabbit, if suffered to become numerous in

THE RABBIT.

the southern parts of Europe, they were not originally natives of Great Britain, but are supposed to have been originally imported into this country from Spain.

THE STAG.

Whistled or called to from a distance he stops short and looks steadfastly at carriages, cattle, or men : if he perceives neither dogs nor fire-arms, he moves on unconcerned. He appears to hearken with delight to the shepherd's pipe, and the hunters sometimes make use of that instrument to allure the animal to his destruction. He appears less afraid of men than of dogs, and never uses any arts of concealment, but in proportion to the disturbances he has received. The stag eats slowly, and is very choice in his aliment ; after his stomach is full, he retires to some thicket to chew the cud in security : he ruminates, however, with less facility than either the cow or sheep. This difficulty proceeds from the length and direction of the passage through which the nourishment passes. The stag's voice is stronger, louder, and more quivering in proportion as he advances in age. At times, the bellowing of the stag is terrible ; and he is so transported with rage, that nothing obstructs his fury. He is then easily surprised, and as he is loaded with fat, he cannot stand long before the hounds ;

THE STAG.

but when at bay, he attacks them with a degree of violence not farremoved from madness.

Resolv'd to die,

He fears no more, but rushes on his foes,
And deals his deaths around ; beneath his feet
These grov'ling lie ; those by his antlers gor'd
Defile th' ensanguin'd plain.

The stag seldom drinks in the winter ; in the spring the tender herbage, covered with dew, serves to slake his thirst. In the heat of summer he frequents the margins of rivers and brooks, not only to satisfy his parching thirst, but to cool and refresh his body. He then swims more easily than at any other time, on account of his fatness ; and will not only cross very wide rivers, but plunge into the sea, and pass from one island to another, at the distance of several leagues. The stag still runs wild in the New Forest, Hampshire, the northern parts of Devonshire, and in the mountains of Kerry, in Ireland. The voice of the *hind* (or female) is more feeble than that of the male. They usually have but one fawn at a time, about May or the

THE STAG.

beginning of June, which they take great care to conceal in the most obscure thickets. The stag appears to have a fine eye, an acute smell, and an excellent ear. Like that of the cat and the owl, its eye contracts in the light and dilates in the dark, but with this difference, that the contraction and dilation are horizontal, while, in the first mentioned animals, they are vertical. This animal lives from thirty-five to forty years.



FALLOW DEER.

THE FALLOW DEER.

No two animals approach so nearly to each other as the stag and the fallow deer. Although their similiarity be great, they never herd together; or form a mixed breed. Fallow deer are rarely found in countries much frequented by stags. In fact, they constitute distinct families; and with similar habits avoid each other with the most deep-rooted antipathy. The fallow deer is considerably smaller, and of a nature less robust than the stag: they are also less common in the forests, but are bred in parks, and kept in a state half domestic, for the double purpose of the chase and of luxury. The horns of the *buck*, form its peculiar distinction, being broad and palmated, while those of the *stag* are round; the tail of the former is longer and the hair lighter; but the greatest difference between these two animals con-

THE FALLOW DEER.

sists in the duration of their lives, the fallow deer, seldom attaining twenty years.

The fallow deer is easily tamed, and brouzes upon many things which the stag refuses; it also feeds closer, and is more prejudicial to young trees, which it frequently destroys by stripping. The young deer eat faster and more greedily than the old. The *doe* (the female) commonly brings forth one at a time. About the middle of the last century, a beautiful variety of the fallow deer was introduced into this country from the East Indies, of a reddish brown colour, spotted with white, which readily associate with the deer,

Mr. White, in his Natural History of Selborne, remarks that the fallow deer is furnished with two *spiracula*, or breathing places, besides the nostrils. When deer are thirsty, they plunge their noses, like thorough-bred horses, very deep under water, while drinking, and continue them in that situation for a considerable time. Mr. Penant has noticed the same curious organization in the roebuck and antelope.

THE FALLOW DEER.

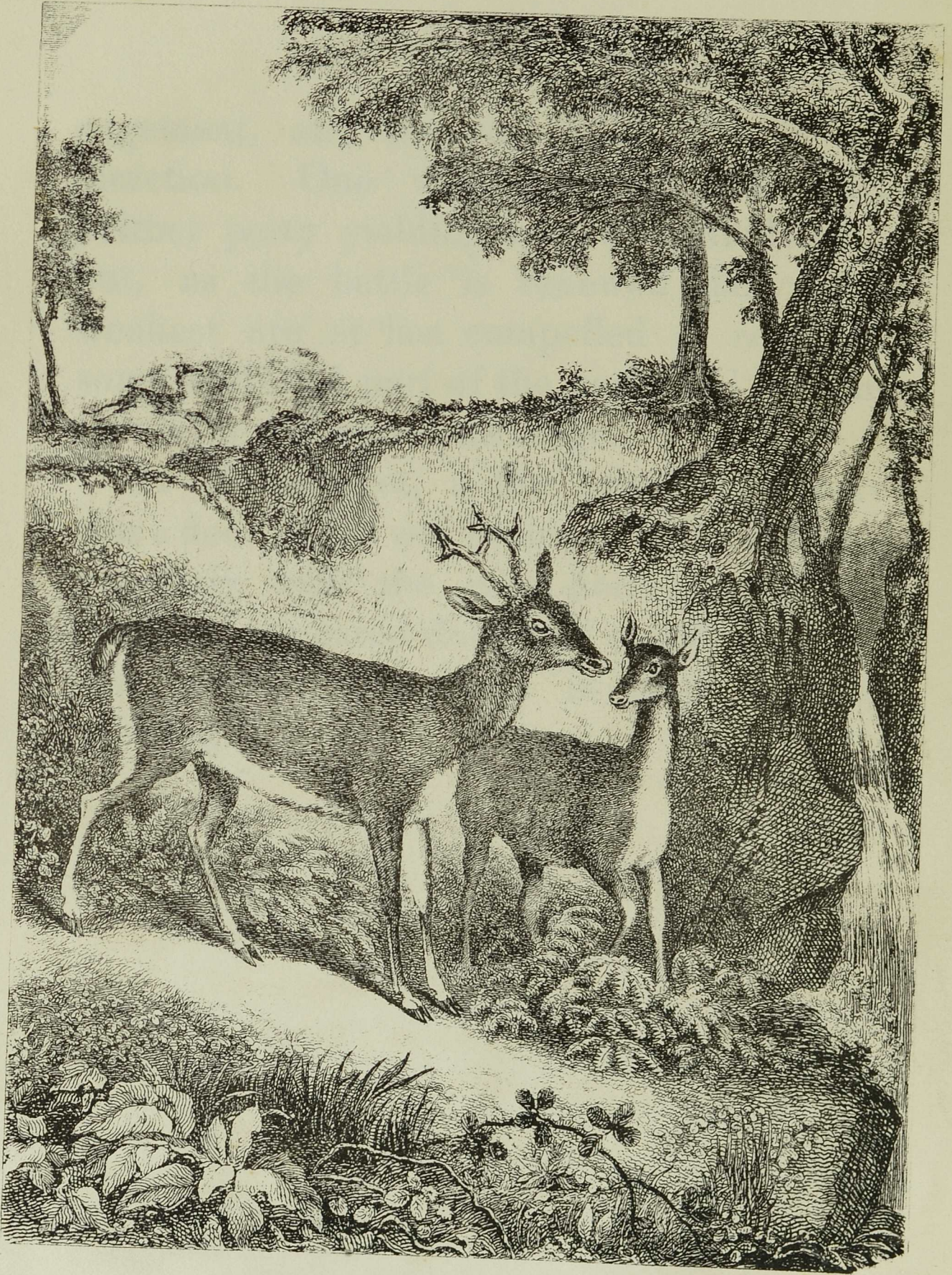
The Spanish fallow deer are as large as stags, but of a darker colour: and Viginian deer are considerably larger and stronger than ours, and have the ears and tail much longer. In Guiana, a country of South America, the fallow deer are much less than those of Europe, and destitute of horns: their hair is of a reddish sallow, their heads are small and lean, their necks long and arched, and their sight remarkably piercing. They are very timid, and, when pursued, they generally fly into places where no other animal can pursue them. The natives, therefore, stand and watch for them in narrow paths: and, as soon as the game appears within reach, shoot them unperceived. Their flesh, though seldom fat, is considered as a great delicacy.

It often happens, where there is a number in one park, that they will divide into two parties, and engage each other with much resolution; but these contests generally occur from the wish they both have to graze upon some particular spot. Each of these parties has its chief, who leads on the en-

THE FALLOW DEER.

gagement, and the rest follow under his direction. One victory is not sufficient, neither party yielding upon a single defeat ; but, as the battle is renewed daily, the weakest are at last compelled to retire to some secluded part of the park, and be content with the worst pasturage.

At Newmarket, a few years ago, there was a deer which was accustomed to exercise regularly with the race horses ; and the creature appeared delighted to gallop round the course with them in their morning training.



ROE DEER.

THE ROEBUCK.

Heav'n taught, the Roebuck swift
Loiters at ease before the driving pack,
And mocks their vain pursuit, nor far he flies
But checks his ardour, till the steaming scent
That freshens on the blade, provokes their rage.
Urg'd to their speed, his weak deluded foes
Soon flag fatigu'd ; strain'd to excess each nerve,
Each slacken'd sinew fails ; they pant, they foam ;
Then o'er the lawn he bounds, o'er the high hills
Stretches secure, and leaves the scatter'd crowd
To puzzle in the distant vale below.—SOMERVILLE.

THE Roebuck is the smallest of the deer kind known in our climate ; being only about three feet long and two feet high ; formerly they were very common in Wales, in the north of England, and in Scotland ; they are now chiefly confined to some districts of the latter country, but particularly to the Highlands. The horns, which it sheds annually, are eight inches long,

THE ROEBUCK.

upright, round, and divided only into three branches.

As long as the horns continue soft they are extremely sensible, of which Buffon describes a striking example : the young shoots of a roebuck's horn were carried off by a ball, when the animal was stunned, and fell down as if he had been dead. The sportsman, who was near, seized him by the foot ; but the roebuck suddenly recovering his senses and strength, dragged the man, though he was strong and alert, thirty paces into the wood. After killing him with a knife, he discovered that the roe had received no other wound.

The body is covered with very long hair, suited to the rigour of its mountainous abode ; the lower part of each hair is ash-coloured ; near the ends is a narrow bar of black, and the points are yellow ; the hairs on the face black, tipped with ash-colour ; the ears long ; inside, of a pale yellow, covered with long hair ; the spaces bordering on the eyes and mouth, black ; the chest, belly, legs, and inside of the thighs of a yel-

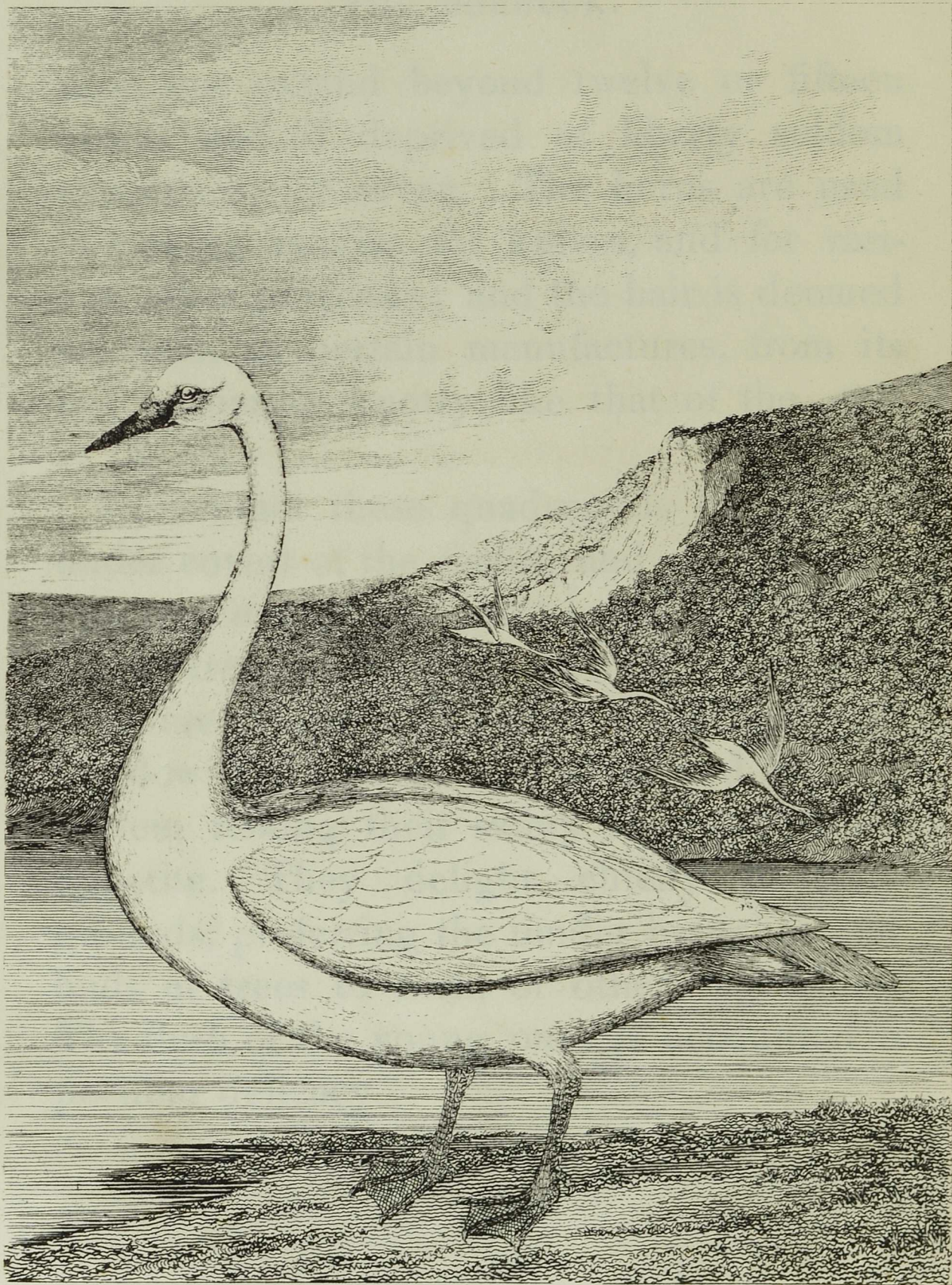
THE ROEBUCK.

lowish white; the haunches of a pure white; and the tail very short. The form of this little animal is very elegant, and its swiftness equals its beauty. Although far inferior in strength and size to the stag, it is more beautiful, more active, and even more courageous. All its motions are graceful and easy; it bounds without effort, and continues the course with but little fatigue. It is endued with more cunning, is more difficult of pursuit, and although its scent is much stronger than that of the stag, it more frequently makes a safe retreat. Instead of herding together, these animals live in separate families; the sire, the dam, and the young ones form a little community until the latter are able to provide for themselves, into which they never admit strangers. The female generally has two at a time, usually male and female. The roebuck is an animal of the most delicate constitution, requiring variety of food, air, and exercise. It must be paired with a female, and kept in a park of at least a hundred acres in extent. The flesh is reckoned particularly delicate, far superior to any other venison. The roebuck's life

THE ROEBUCK.

does not extend beyond twelve or fifteen years, and if deprived of liberty seldom exceeds six or seven. The horns are used in making handles for knives, and for various other purposes ; and the hair is deemed valuable, in certain manufactures, from its not becoming knotty like that of the stag or the ox.

In summer these quadrupeds keep close under covert of the forest, and seldom venture out, except in violent heats, to drink, at some streamlet or fountain ; for in general they are contented to slake their thirst with the dew that falls on the grass and leaves ; seldom risking their safety to gratify their appetite. They delight chiefly in hilly grounds, preferring the tender branches and buds of trees to corn, or other vegetables. The flesh of the young ones is accounted a peculiar delicacy.



WILD SWAN.

THE WILD SWAN.

THIS large and very beautiful bird is an occasional visitor of our shores, particularly in hard winters; they are gregarious and difficult of approach. This species is less than the tame swan. The lower part of the bill is black; the base and the space between it and the eyes is covered with a naked yellow skin; the eyelids are bare and yellow; the entire plumage, in old birds, of a pure white; the down, soft and thick; the legs, dusky. The cry of the wild swan is loud and harsh, and may be heard at a great distance; it is sometimes called the *Hooper*.

As the swan often feeds upon marshy herbs it fixes itself in preference upon rivers of a winding and tranquil course. The ancients cited the Meander, the Mincio, the Strymon, and the Caisre, as rivers famous for the multitude of swans by which they were covered. The island cherished by Ve-

THE WILD SWAN.

nus, Paphos, was filled with them. Yet the regions of the north appear nevertheless to be the true districts of the swan, since it is in northern countries that they build and multiply. They are never seen in a wild state in the provinces of France, except in very rigorous winters. Gesner says that he saw many swans come upon the lakes during a rough and long winter which he passed there. In this same severe season they appear upon the coasts of France and England, and upon the Thames, where they are preserved under a heavy penalty.

In February 1828, a noble specimen of the wild swan was shot in the Humber, near Whitton Sands. The quill feathers were of extraordinary size, and the feet presented a web of vast expanse; the wings, when extended, measured, from tip to tip, eight feet; from the point of the bill to the extremity of the claws, five feet six inches: it weighed twenty-four pounds. This fine bird was stuffed, and deposited in the Museum of the Yorkshire Literary and Philosophical Society.

THE WILD SWAN.

All palmipede birds are furnished with a guarding down under the feathers, which protects them against water. The down of the swan is remarkably fine, extremely soft, and perfectly white, and beautiful tippets and linings are made of it, which are as delicate as they are warm.

The flesh of the swan is as black as it is hard, and it was more as a show dish than as a delicacy that it was served at the festivals of the ancients.

Although the swan is very silent, it has, nevertheless, organs of voice like those of the most loquacious water-birds. Yet the voice of the tame swan is rather dull than loud; it is a sort of creaking, perfectly like that called by the common people, *cat swearing*. It seems to be an accent of menace or anger; and it was not of those nearly mute swans, as are ours in a domesticated state, that the ancients could have imagined the harmonious birds which they have rendered so celebrated. But it would seem that the wild swan has preserved the prerogatives better, and that, with the sentiment

THE WILD SWAN.

of perfect liberty, it also retained its accents. We can, in fact, distinguish a sort of measured modulated chant, the sounds of the braying of a clarion, in the tones of its voice, but the sharp notes of which are very far removed from the tender melody, the varied softness and brilliancy, of the warbling of our singing birds.

Besides, the ancients are not content with making the swan a wonderful singer—alone, among all others which groan at the aspect of death, it sings in the moment of agony, and preludes its last sigh with melody “It is,” they say “when at the point of expiring that the swan, bidding a sad and tender adieu to life, utters those soft and touching accents, equal to the low and mournful murmur of a plaintive and sorrowful base voice. This song was heard at the rising dawn, when the winds and waves were calm; and swans, have even been seen expiring in music, and singing their funeral hymns.”

In such high estimation were swans held, that by an act of parliament passed in the 22nd year of the reign of Edward the Fourth,

THE WILD SWAN.

no person, except the king's son or a freeholder of five marks, a year was allowed to keep a swan: and by an act of James the First, to take or destroy their eggs, subjects the offender to a fine of twenty shillings for each egg, or imprisonment for three months. It is felony to steal any swan lawfully marked or domesticated in private moats, or rivers.

THE WILD GOOSE.

THE goose, in its wild state, always retains the same marks: the whole upper part is ash-coloured; the breast and belly, of a dirty white; the bill, narrow at the base; black at the tip; the legs, of a saffron-colour; and the claws black. The wild goose is smaller than the tame. Both invariably retain a white ring round their tail, a proof that both are descended from one original. The wild goose breeds in the northern parts of Europe; and, in the beginning of winter, visits the more temperate regions: they have also been known to breed in the fens of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. They are often seen in flocks of from fifty to a hundred, flying at very great heights. Their cry is heard when at an imperceptible distance above us; and this seems bandied from one to another, as among hounds in pursuit. On coming to



THE GREY WILD GOOSE.

THE WILD GOOSE.

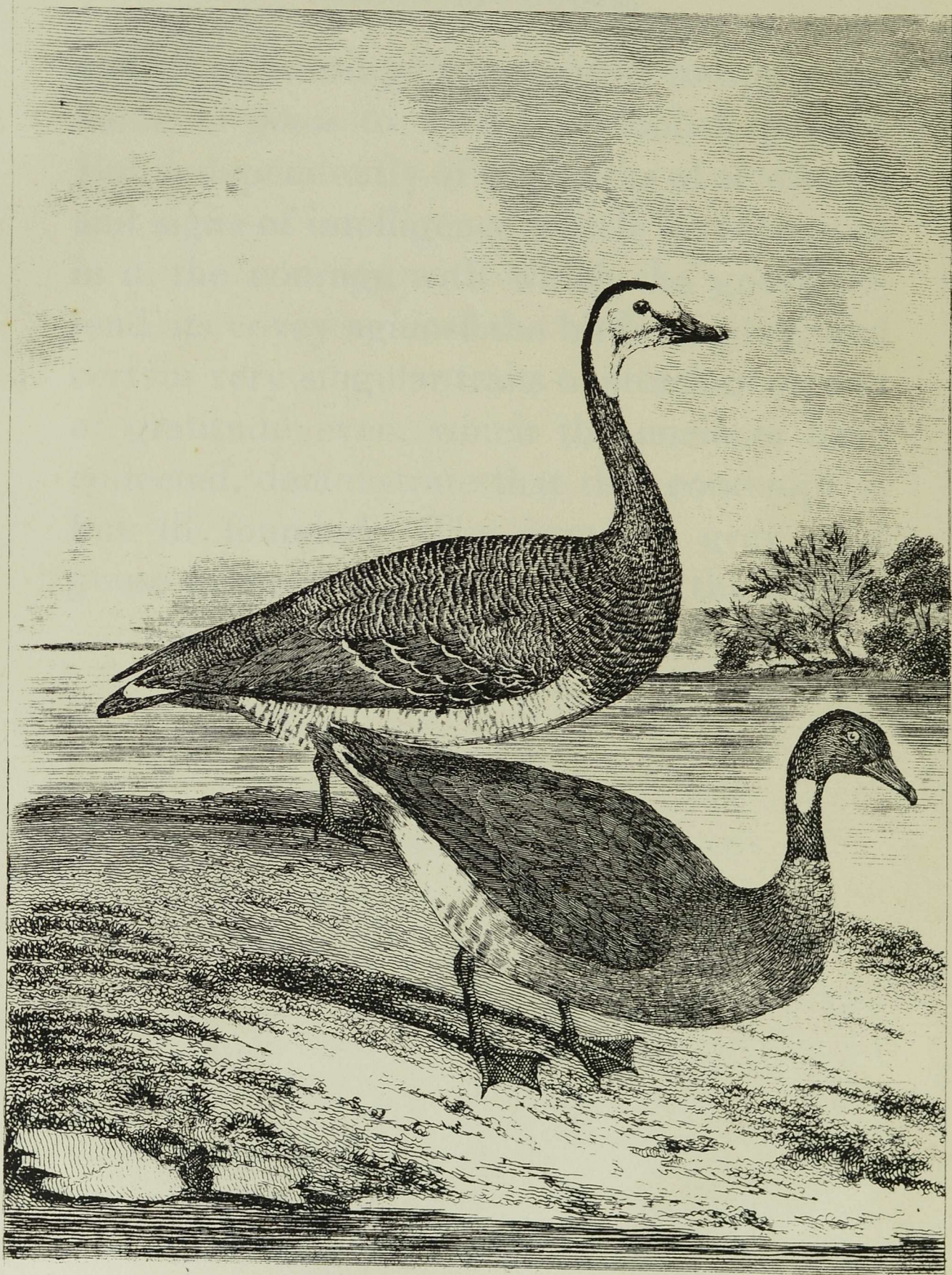
the ground by day, they range themselves in line, and appear rather to have descended for rest than refreshment. After continuing in this form for an hour or two, one of them, with a loud long note, sounds a charge; to which the rest attend, and they all pursue their journey with renewed alacrity. Their flight is regularly arranged; they either go in a line abreast, or in two lines, joining in an angle in the middle. Their track is generally so high, that it is very difficult to reach them with a fowling-piece: in long and severe frosts, however, they fly much lower, and at such times afford good sport to the gunner.

Its accents are brief and often repeated, and when attacked it utters a whistling, which may be compared to that of the adder.

The goose repeats these cries of vigilance or indication every moment, and this great loquacity or vociferation has attained for it, according to the ancients, the name of *Goose*, which is applied to indiscreet prattlers, lying writers, or base informers, as its heavy walk

THE WILD GOOSE.

and its awkward gait prompt us to apply the name of *goose* to sottish or foolish people. But, independently of the marks of sentiment and signs of intelligence which we recognise in it, the courage with which the goose defend its covey against the birds of prey, and certain very singular traits of attachment, and of gratitude even, which the ancients have collected, demonstrate that this contempt is but ill founded. The common grey wild goose forms an excellent dish for the table.



BRENT & BERNACLE GOOSE.

THE BERNACLE AND BRENT GOOSE.

THE bernacle is smaller than the common wild goose, weighing about five pounds; the bill black and very short; the head, small; the forehead and cheeks, white; a black line runs from the bill to the eyes; the hind part of the head, the whole neck, and upper part of the breast and back, of a deep black; the under side of the body and coverts of the tail, white; the back, scapulars, and coverts of the wings, beautifully barred with black, grey, and white; the rump, tail, and legs, black.

Bernacle geese appear in flocks during the winter on the north-west coasts of this kingdom and in Ireland. They visit the south only when the season is most inclement. They are very shy and wild, but soon become familiar. It is hardly necessary to combat the idle error of this bird being bred from a shell sticking to the bottoms of ships. It is

THE BRENT GOOSE.

well known to be hatched from an egg in the ordinary manner, and to differ in few particulars from the rest of its kind.

THE BRENT GOOSE

Is not larger than a Muscovy duck, except that the body is longer. The bill, the head, the neck, and upper part of the breast and legs are black; on each side the slenderest part of the neck is a white spot; the lower part of the breast, the scapulars, and coverts of the wings, are ash-coloured, clouded with a deeper shade; the feathers above and below the tail, white; the tail and quill feathers, black. They are much esteemed for their delicacy.

These varieties agree in one common character of feeding upon vegetables, and being remarkable for their fecundity; but the tame geese are most fruitful. Leading a more secure life, and partaking of plenty, they increase in numbers in proportion to their ease; and though the wild goose seldom lays more than eight eggs, the tame bird frequently lays above twenty.



WILD DRAKE & PINTAIL.

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

THIS elegant variety of the duck tribe is rather larger than the widgeon, but more slender, in form, and its neck longer. The bill is black in the middle, blue on the sides; the head is ferruginous, the hinder part tinged with purple; a white line, bounded by black, commences from beneath the *ears*, which runs some way down the neck: the hind part of the neck, the back, and sides, are neatly marked with white and dusky lines; the forepart of the neck and belly, white; the scapulars, striped with black and white; the coverts of the wings, ash-coloured; the lowest tipped with dull orange: the middle quill feathers barred with green, black and white; the exterior feathers of the tail, ash-coloured; the two middle black, and three inches longer than the others; the feet of a lead colour. The female is of a light brown, spotted with black.

As these birds possess the faculties of fly-

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

ing and swimming, they are in general migratory, and are supposed to perform their journeys across the ocean, as well on the water as in the air. As soon as they arrive in England from the northern regions, they are generally seen flying in flocks to survey those places where they may take up their winter residence, so as to be supplied with food, and yet remote from interruption. They are commonly found on lakes that have a marsh on one side, and a wood on the other; where they are seen in great numbers huddled together, extremely busy and very loud, though it is impossible to ascertain the cause of their noise, or the nature of their employment.

Prodigious numbers of these birds are annually taken in decoys in various parts of the kingdom, and particularly in Lincolnshire. In only ten decoys in the neighbourhood of Wainfleet, so many as thirty-one thousand two hundred have been caught in a season.

A decoy is a large pond, generally situated in a marsh, and surrounded with reeds

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

and wood, to render it as sequestered as possible. Here the birds sleep during the day, and as soon as the evening is set in, the *decoy rises*, as it is termed, and the wild fowl feed during the night. If the air be serene, the noise of their wings, while flying, is heard at a great distance, and is a pleasing though rather melancholy sound. The *decoy-ducks*, (which are either bred in the pond-yard, or the adjacent marsh, and which regularly come to be fed with the tame ones that never quit the pond) subsist on hemp-seed, oats, and buck-wheat, and are taught to appear at the sound of their owner's whistle. In taking the wild birds, hemp-seed is thrown over the screens, to allure them forward into the *pipes*, of which there are several, leading up a narrow ditch, that terminates at last in a *funnel-net*; and over these pipes, which grow narrower from their first entrance, there is a continued arch of netting supported by hoops. It is necessary to have a pipe for almost every wind that can blow, as that circumstance determines which pipe the birds will take to. The decoy-man, likewise, is

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

under the necessity of keeping to the leeward of the wild fowl, and of burning in his mouth or hand a piece of Dutch turf; as they would otherwise discover him by his effluvia, and instantly take flight. Along each pipe are placed *reed screens* at certain intervals, to conceal the man, till he thinks proper to show himself, or till the birds are either allured up the pipe by the trained ducks, or drawn thither by the hemp-seed. Sometimes a little dog is directed to play backwards and forwards between the screens; which excites the attention of the wild fowl, and draws them nearer to the entrance of the pipes. The decoy-man then appears from behind the screens, and the birds, not daring to pass by him, press forward to the end of the funnel-net, which terminates upon the land, where a person is stationed to receive them. The decoy-ducks, however, never enter the funnel with the rest, being taught to dive under water as soon as the rest are driven in.

To this mode of taking wild fowl in England, we may subjoin another still more

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

extraordinary, which is frequently practised in China. Whenever the fowler perceives a number of ducks settled in any particular pond, or splash of water, he sends off two or three gourds to float among them. These gourds resemble our pompions; but being hollowed out, they swim on the surface of the water, and twenty or thirty of them may often be seen floating together. The fowl at first are shy of coming near them, but by degrees they become familiar; and the fowler prepares to put the remaining part of his plan in execution. Accordingly, he hollows out one of the gourds, and making holes to breathe and see through, puts it on his head. Thus accoutred, he wades slowly into the water, keeping his body under, and nothing but his head, in the gourd, above the surface; and in that manner moves imperceptibly towards the fowls, and at last gets into the midst of them while they are perfectly unconscious of danger. On approaching a bird, therefore, he seizes it by the legs, draws it under the water with a sudden jerk, and fastens

THE WILD DRAKE AND PINTAIL.

it to his girdle, and in this manner proceeds till he has loaded himself with as many as he can conveniently carry, and then slowly retires, without attempting to disturb the rest of the fowls on the pool.

The pintail is seldom seen in England, except during the severity of winter. Its flesh is considered as more delicate in flavour than most other wild fowl. It weighs about a pound and half.



Howitt

GARGANEY & TEAL.

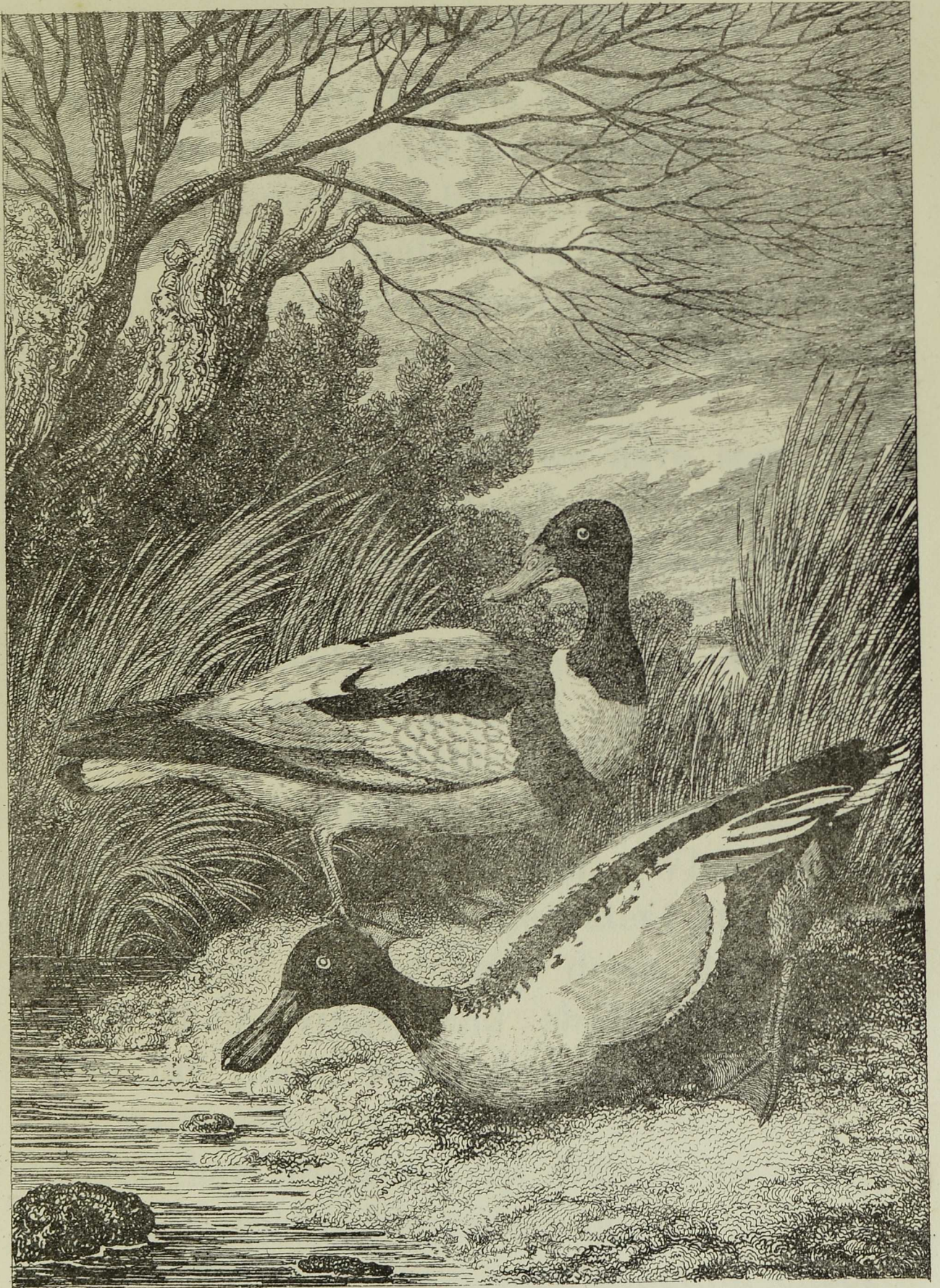
THE GARGANEY AND TEAL.

THE bill of the garganey is of a deep lead-colour; the crown of the head dusky, with oblong streaks; a white line extends from the corner of each eye to the back of the neck, the upper part of which is of a pale purple, marked with minute oblong lines of white, pointing downwards; the breast of a light brown, with semicircular bars of black; the belly, white; the lower part varied with specks and bars of a dusky hue; the coverts of the wings, grey; the first quill feathers, ash-coloured; the scapulars, long and narrow, beautifully striped with white, ash-colour, and black; the tail, dusky; legs, ash-colour. The head, coverts of the wings, and scapulars of the female, are of a brownish ash-colour; the breast, white, dusky, and orange; the space round the eyes, dark. As regards size, the garganey is larger than the teal, and smaller than the widgeon.

THE SHELDRAKE AND SHOVELER.

THE sheldrake is the only web-footed bird that has any relation to the fox, and lodges like him, in a burrow for the night. It is without doubt from this natural habit that the sheldrake has been designated as the *fox bird*, for not only does this bird lodge like the fox, but it builds and incubates in the troughs which it disputes for and takes away from the rabbits.

The bill of the sheldrake is of a bright red, and at the base swells into a knob, which is the most conspicuous in the spring; the head and upper part of the neck, of a fine blackish green; the lower part of the neck, white; a broad band of bright orange environs the breast and upper part of the back: the coverts of the wings and middle of the back, white; the scapulars, black; the greater quill feathers, black; the exterior webs of the next, green; and of the



SHELDRAKE and SHOVELER.

THE SHELDRAKE AND SHOVELER.

last, orange : the coverts of the tail and the tail itself, white, with the exception of two feathers tipped with black ; the belly white, divided longitudinally by a black line ; the legs, of a pale flesh-colour. In winter they congregate in vast numbers. The flesh is very rank and bad.

The sheldrakes which we have seen did not appear to us naturally wild, for they suffered themselves to be readily taken, and made scarcely any effort to escape. They eat bread, bran, wheat, and even the leaves of plants and twigs. Their general cry is like that of the duck. They bathe very often, particularly in warm weather and at the approach of rain. When swimming, they play upon the water ; and when they come to land they dress their feet, beat their wings, and shake themselves like the duck, very often arranging their plumage with their bills.

As they are not very difficult to tame, so their striking plumage is observable from a distance, and has a very beautiful effect upon pieces of water ; and it is desirable

THE SHOVELER.

that we should obtain a domestic race of these birds, but we could only attempt to multiply them in a domestic state with any hope of success in districts near to salt water.

THE SHOVELER

THE bill of the shoveler is black, three inches in length, and remarkably broad at the end; furnished with a small hook and the edges of each mandible supplied with thin laminæ, that lock into each other when the mouth is closed; the irides are of a bright yellow; the head and upper part of the neck, of a blackish green; the scapulars, the breast, and lower part of the neck, white; the back, brown; the coverts of the wings, sky-blue; those next the quill feathers, tipped with white; the larger quill feathers dusky; the middle, a glossy green; the tail consists of fourteen feathers; the outside, white; those in the middle, black edged with white; the vent feathers, black; the belly, of a very light orange colour; the

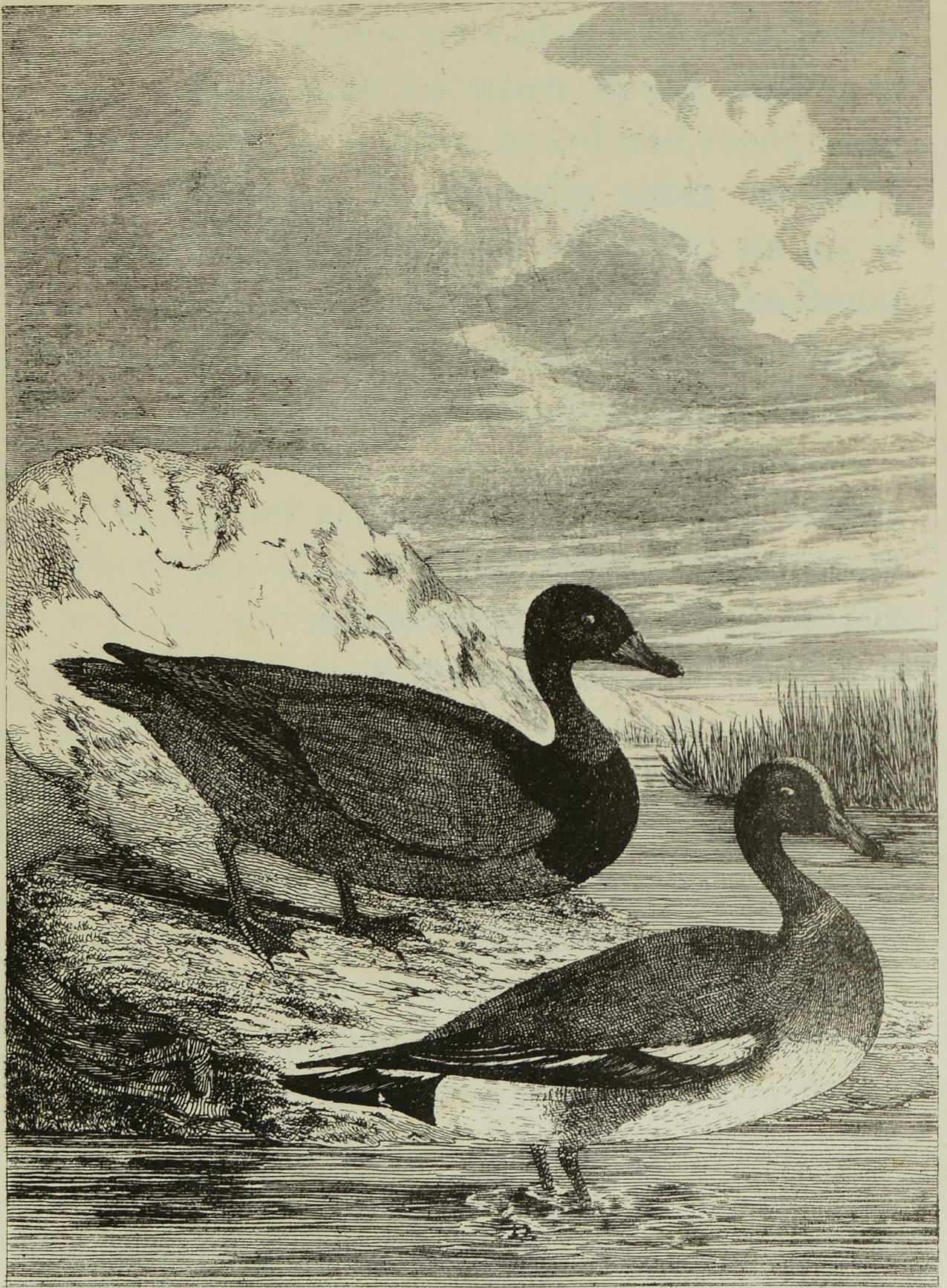
THE SHOVELER.

legs red. The wings of the female are similarly marked with those of the male, but possessing less brilliancy. The rest of the plumage resembles that of the common wild duck.

THE WIDGEON AND POACHARD.

THE widgeon is less than the wild duck, its usual weight not exceeding twenty-two or three ounces. The top of the head is of a cream-colour; the other portion of the head and neck, light bay; the plumage of the back and sides under the wings undulated with black and white lines; wing coverts, brown, more or less mixed with, and in some birds, almost white; the greater quill feathers dusky; the two middle feathers of the tail longer than the others, black and sharp-pointed. The head of the female is of a rusty brown, spotted with black; the back, of a deep brown, edged with a paler colour; the tips of the lesser quill feathers, white; the belly, white. These birds are met with in great numbers during the winter months.

The voice is clear and whistling, and might be compared to the shrillness of a fife, distinguishing this duck from all the other spe-



WIGEON & POCHARD.

THE WIDGEON AND POACHARD.

cies, whose voices are rough and even croaking. As it whistles when flying, and very frequently, it is often heard and recognised at a distance. It ordinarily takes its flight in the evening, and even at night; its air is more gay than that of the other ducks, being very agile and always in motion. In figure it is somewhat smaller than the common duck.

Widgeons always fly and swim in bands. There are always some flocks in France in winter, even in those provinces which are the most distant from the sea, such as Lorraine and Brie.

These birds see very well during the night, at least in the obscurity which is not totally dark. They look for the same food as wild ducks, and eat, like them, the grains of reeds and other herbs, insects, crustacea, frogs, and worms. The rougher the wind is the more are these ducks seen to wander. They keep to the sea and the mouths of rivers in spite of thick weather, are very hardy, and endure the cold without apparent inconvenience.

THE POACHARD

Is nearly the size of the widgeon, but its bill is broader, and of a deep lead-colour, tipped with black; the head and neck, bright bay; the breast and that portion of the back which joins the neck, black; the wing coverts, the scapulars, back and sides under the wings, of a pale grey, elegantly marked with narrow lines of black; the quill feathers, dusky; the belly, ash-coloured and brown; the tail consists of twelve short deep grey feathers, the legs, lead-coloured; the irrides of a bright yellow, tinged with red. The head of the female is of a pale reddish brown; the breast rather of a deeper hue; the wing coverts and belly, ash-coloured; the back marked like that of the male.—These birds frequent the mouths of fresh-water creeks, &c. in large flocks.

Generally speaking, wild ducks congregate in the winter, and fly in pairs in summer, bringing up their young by the water-side, and leading them to their food

THE POACHARD.

as soon as out of the shell. The number of ducks, teal, widgeon, &c. caught in decoys is truly surprising. The season commences in October and ends in February: taking them earlier, subjects the offender to fine or imprisonment.

THE HERON.

“ Lo ! at his siege, the heron
Upon the bank of some small purling brook
Observant stands, to take his scaly prize,
Himself another’s game.”—SOMERVILLE.

THE common heron or heronshaw is remarkably light in proportion to its bulk, scarcely weighing three pounds and a half, yet it expands a breadth of wing more than five feet from tip to tip; its bill is five inches from the point to the base; claws long and sharp, the middlemost toothed like a saw, for the better seizing and retaining its slippery prey.

Its length is somewhat more than three feet, exclusive of the bill which is of a dusky colour. At the back of the head there is a long, pendent crest; the plumage is of a blue-gray colour, and there is, in front of the neck, a double row of black spots. Herons are found in all the four quarters of the world.



Hewitt

HERON.

THE HERON.

Of all other birds, this commits the greatest devastation in fresh waters ; there is scarcely a fish, however large, that he will not strike at, though unable to carry it away ; but the smaller fry are his principal subsistence ; these, pursued by their larger fellows of the deep, take refuge in shallows, where they find the heron a still more formidable enemy. He wades as far as he can go into the water, and patiently awaits the approach of his prey, which he darts upon with inevitable aim. His usual attitude in fishing is to sink his long neck between his shoulders, and keep his head turned on one side, as if to watch the water more intently.

Several gentlemen who kept tame herons to try what quantity one of them would eat in a day, have put several roach and dace in a tub, and they have found fifty consumed in a day, one day with another. Willoughby also tells us, that he saw a heron which had seventeen carps in his belly at once, and that, had he been permitted to live, these would have been digested in six or seven hours ; when he would have required a fresh supply.

THE HERON.

With our ancestors, heron-hawking stood pre-eminent as a field sport; and laws were enacted for the preservation of the species.

“ Our fathers’ prime delight !
Who fenc’d thine eyrie round with sacred laws.
Nor mighty princes now disdain to wear
Thy waving crest, the mark of high command,
With gold, and pearl, and brilliant gems adorn’d.”

The poet of the Chase glowingly describes the pursuit of this bird :—

“ Up springs the heron, redoubling ev’ry stroke,
Conscious of danger, stretches far away,
With busy pennons and projecting beak,
Piercing th’ opponent clouds : the falcon swift
Follows at speed, mounts as he mounts, for Hope
Gives vigour to her wings. Another soon
Strains after to support the bold attack ;
Perhaps a third.”

Not to know the hawk from the heronshaw, is an old proverb, originating from this diversion, but in course of time absurdly corrupted to “ He does not know a *hawk* from a *hand-saw*.” The heron, too, was regarded as one of the greatest dainties of the table, and although the sportsmen of the old school have handed down the fact, they have neglected to state the manner in which

THE HERON.

it was rendered so highly palatable. It was then said that the flesh of a heron was a dish for a king; at present, nothing about the house will touch it but a cat.

However numerous the heron tribe may be, all differing in size, figure, and plumage, they have but one character—cowardice, rapacity, indolence, yet insatiable hunger. Though the heron lives chiefly on the banks of rivers and in marshes, it builds its nest, made of sticks and lined with wool, on the tops of the highest trees, and sometimes on cliffs overhanging the sea, in which the female deposits four large eggs of a pale green colour.

When the young are excluded, as they are numerous, voracious, and importunate, the parents are for ever on the wing, to satisfy their cravings; and the quantity of fish they take upon this occasion is truly surprising.

Their depredations are committed in solitude and silence; but in the spring, the heron becomes gregarious, and, like the rook, fearlessly approaches the habitations of man,

THE HERON.

building its nest in company with a number of its kind. It must be conceded, however, that, in wild and unfrequented districts, great numbers form their nests, and rear their young on the ground, among reeds, &c.



BUTTERN

THE BITTERN.

THIS bird, though of the heron kind, is neither so destructive nor so voracious. Concealing itself in the midst of reeds and marshy places, it lives upon frogs, insects, and vegetables, during summer; but in the autumn it repairs to the woods in pursuit of mice, which it seizes dexterously and always swallows whole; the bill is four inches long, of a greenish brown colour, with jagged edges; legs, of a pale green; claws, long and slender; the inner side of the middle claw serrated, for the purpose of holding its prey more securely; the plumage is beautifully variegated; the ground, a ferruginous yellow, palest beneath, with numerous bars, streaks, and zig-zag lines of black; the breast-feathers, long and loose.

The bittern breeds in the fens, making its nest in April, amidst a tuft of rushes. The female lays six or eight eggs of a pale green-

THE BITTERN.

ish ash-colour. Hawks, which plunder the nests of most water-fowl, seldom venture to attack that of the bittern.

The most remarkable part of the history of this bird, however, is that hollow noise which distinguishes it from the rest of the feathered creation; hence the superstitious detestation in which it is held by the ignorant and vulgar. Of all sounds, perhaps, there is not one more dismal than the *boom-
ing* of the bittern. Indeed, words are unequal to convey an adequate idea of its solemnity: it resembles, in some sort, the interrupted bellowing of a bull, but hollower, and, perhaps, louder.

These boomings are given six or eight times in rapid succession, then discontinued for a short space, when they again follow in a similar way; and although so awful to the ear of man, are the expressions of connubial felicity, or the invitations to love.

This noise was formerly believed to be made while the bird plunged its bill into the mud; hence Thomson,—

THE BITTERN.

———“ So that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulf'd
To shake the sounding marsh.”

And Southey also describes the peculiar noise of this bird in his poem of Thalaba:

“ And when at evening, o'er the swampy plain,
The bittern's boom came far,
Distinct in darkness seen—
Above the low horizon's lingering light,
Rose the near ruins of old Babylon.”

The bittern, when attacked by the buzzard or other birds of prey, defends itself with great courage, and generally beats off such assailants.

Its precautions for concealment and security seem directed with great care and circumspection. It usually sits in the reeds with its head erect; and thus, from its great length of neck, it sees over their tops, without being itself perceived by the sportsman; but when on the wing, as it flies sluggishly, it presents an easy mark to the gunner; and, though generally timid, when wounded, makes a desperate resistance.

A gentleman in Lancashire once shot a

THE BITTERN.

bittern that fell on ice just strong enough to bear the dogs, which eagerly attacked it; but being only slightly wounded, it defended itself so fiercely with its bill and claws, that the dogs were unable to master it, and it was ultimately killed by a second shot. In February, 1827, Captain Smith, of Greenham, Berks, wounded a bittern, which he secured: it was exhibited to the farmers on the following market-day, when a gentleman venturing too near, it made a dart at his eye, but fortunately only reached his lip, or the consequence might have been dreadful.

At the latter end of autumn, the bittern is seen rising in a spiral ascent till it is quite lost from the view, making at the same time a singular noise, different from its former boomings. Thus the same bird assumes opposite desires, and while the Latins have named the bittern the star-reaching bird, the Greeks, taking its character from its more constant habits, have styled it the lazy. In some districts it is called the *bitter-bump*; and in others, the *mire-drum*. The flesh is somewhat similar, but superior in flavour

THE BITTERN.

to that of the hare. It is considered as a fashionable dish, and is greatly esteemed among the luxurious.

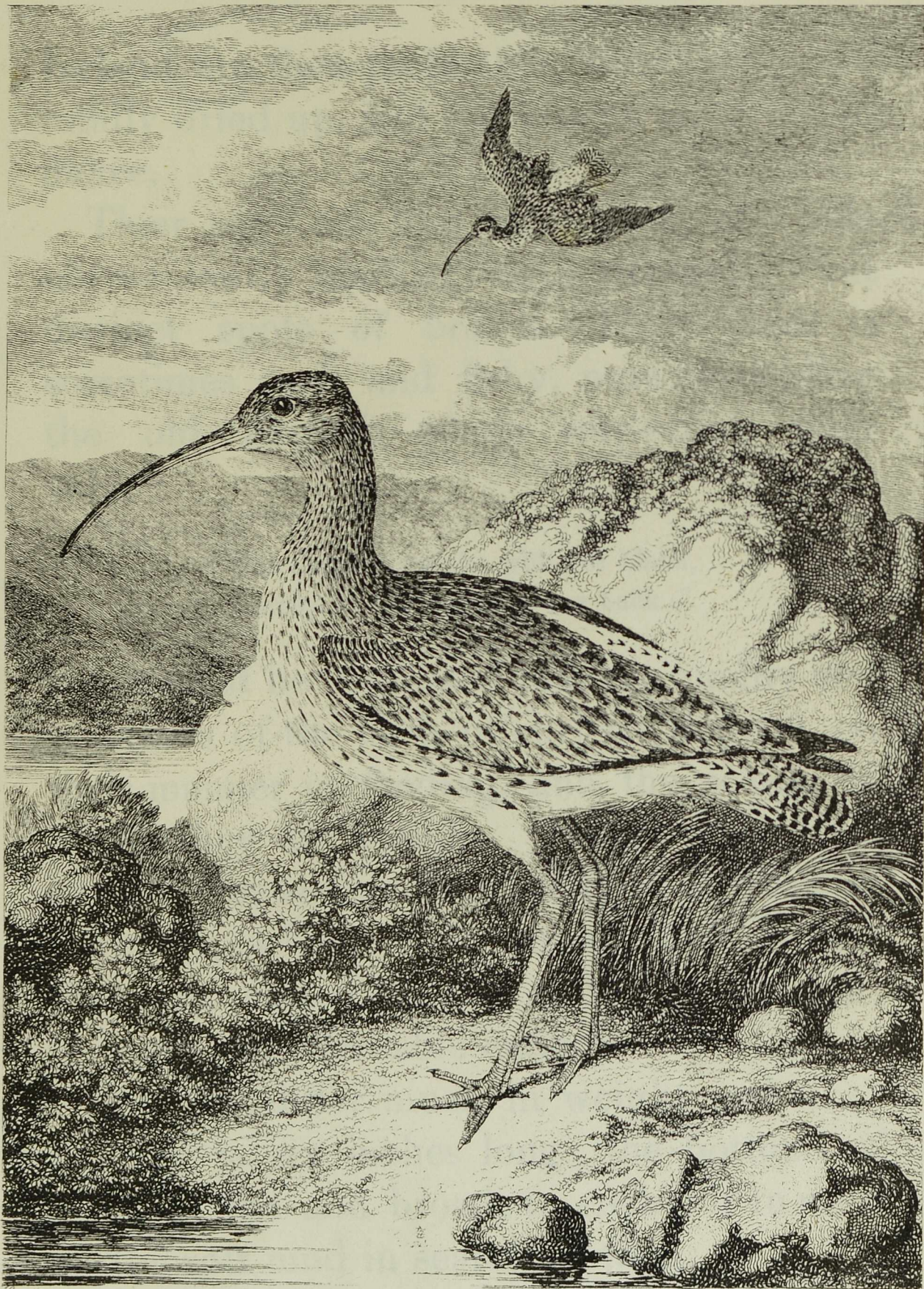
A correspondent in the Magazine of Natural History states that the American Bittern emits from its breast a light, sufficiently powerful to enable it to discover its prey at night.

THE CURLEW.

“ Soothed by the murmurs of the sea-beat shore,
His dun-gray plumage floating to the gale,
The Curlew blends his melancholy wail
With those hoarse sounds the rushing waters pour.”

MISS WILLIAMS.

This bird frequents our coasts and marshes in the winter season, in large flocks; and, like the snipe and woodcock, assiduously employ themselves in seeking insects in their worm state. It is true that the curlew breeds upon the moors of this country, where their nests are frequently found; but where one nest is met with in England, one hundred may be seen in Ireland; our country, during the summer, frequently becomes uninhabitable to the curlew and birds of the like class; the ground parched up by heat; the springs dry; and the vermicular insects already upon the wing, they have no means of subsisting: consequently the bogs of



CURLEW.

THE CURLEW.

Ireland are then preferable, which are never totally dried up, and the insects are in abundance.

Their eggs are four in number, of a pale olive-colour, marked with irregular but distinct spots of brown. Their flesh is sometimes rank and fishy, notwithstanding the old English adage respecting their value :

“ The Curlew, be she white or black,
Carries twelvecence on her back :”

but it must be confessed that the quality and goodness of the flesh of curlews depend on their manner of feeding, and the season in which they are caught. When they dwell on the sea-shore, they acquire a kind of rankness, which is so strong, that, unless they are basted on the spit with vinegar, they are not agreeable eating.

Curlews differ much in weight and size ; the bill is six inches long ; the bottoms of the toes flat and broad, to enable it to walk on the soft mud in search of food.

The legs are somewhat blue. The upper

THE CURLEW.

part of the plumage is varied with ash-colour and black. The rump, chin, and belly are white. The quill-feathers are black, spotted with a few white strokes. The toes are flat and broad.



WOODCOCK.

THE WOODCOCK

Is a very shy bird, rarely taking wing except disturbed; but at the close of day, leaves its favourite haunt, under thick covers, in rotten ditches, woods, &c., and wanders in search of food, directed by an exquisite sense of smelling, to those places most likely to produce its natural sustenance; and by a still more exquisite sense of feeling in its long bill, which it thrusts into the soft earth, not a worm can escape. The eyes of the woodcock are large, and well calculated for collecting the faint rays of light in sequestered woodlands, enabling them to avoid obstacles in their nocturnal excursions. The nerves in the bill, as in that of the duck tribe are numerous, and highly sensible of discrimination by the touch.

In size it is somewhat less than a partridge. The upper side of the body is party-coloured of red, black, and grey, very beautiful to the

THE WOODCOCK.

sight. From the bill almost to the middle of the head is of a reddish ash-colour. The lower part of the body is grey, with transverse brown lines; under the tail the colour is somewhat yellowish; the chin is white, with a tincture of yellow.

An erroneous idea prevails that the woodcock lives by suction.

Easterly or north-easterly winds are supposed to be most favourable to the migration of the woodcock. On their first arrival, they are poor, as if wasted by want of food and a long journey; and so sluggish, that after being *flushed* and shot at they will drop again at the distance of a hundred yards. Mr. White, in his History of Selborne, observes, that he is not able to *determine* whether this laziness be the effect of a recent fatiguing journey; but that, from a variety of observations he has made, they seem singularly listless upon the approach of snowy or foul weather, which Mr. W. conceives to arise from an eagerness after food; the taste of the flesh also is different from that which it acquires by a residence in this climate.

THE WOODCOCK.

If killed just before his departure, he bleeds more freely than at the beginning of winter. The woodcock, when undisturbed, will continue for weeks together in the same cover. This bird first appears on the eastern coast of Scotland, but is seldom seen in the central parts of the kingdom until the middle of October, and forsakes us in the spring. It sometimes happens, that a few woodcocks will remain in England during the summer, and breed; but this is of rare occurrence; the probability is, that they have been wounded, and, therefore, unequal to a flight across the trackless ocean.

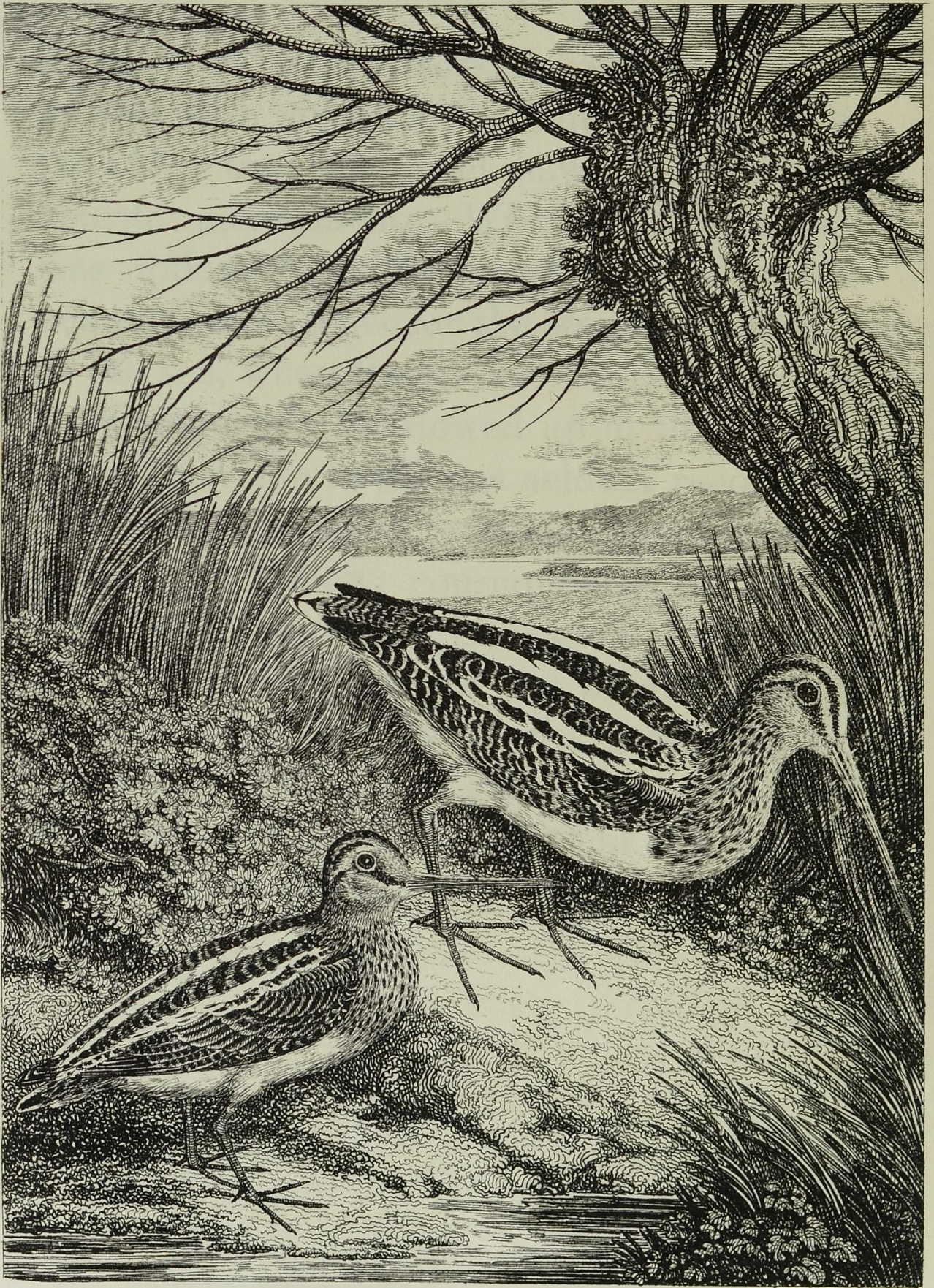
In November and December, 1823, upwards of two thousand woodcocks, in their migration to this and other genial climes, were caught alive on the island of Heligoland, in the German ocean, towards which they had been driven, exhausted, by a gale of wind. A great number were sent to the continent, and sold at from 6d. to 9d. each. Several were caught alive, also, at Harwich.

The woodcock, though generally slow and

THE WOODCOCK.

sluggish, is, nevertheless, capable of winging its way with more than ordinary speed. In the olden time woodcock-hawking was a favourite amusement. When this diversion was followed on the coast, it was no uncommon occurrence for the woodcock to take to the sea, when the pursuer and the pursued were frequently swallowed up in the waves; or, at least, the hawk was seldom recovered.

Woodcocks have, for some centuries, been in high estimation; consequently, before the art of shooting flying had made much progress, they were sought for on the ground by the fowler; but by far the greater quantity were taken in nets and springs, both of which are still in partial use, but the former are the most destructive.



SNIPE & JACK SNIPE.

THE SNIPE AND JACK SNIPE.

“ The snipe flies screaming from the marshy verge,
And towers in airy circles o’er the wood.
Still heard at intervals ; and oft returns,
And stoops as bent to alight ; then wheels aloft
With sudden fear, and screams and stoops again,
Her favourite glade reluctant to forsake.” GISBORNE.

DURING winter, snipes usually inhabit marshy and wet grounds, where they shelter themselves among the rushes. In frosty, and more particularly in snowy weather, they resort in great numbers to warm springs, where the rills continue open. In summer, they are found in the midst of the highest mountains as well as on the moors ; their nests are formed of dry grass ; they lay four eggs of a dirty olive colour, marked with dusky spots. Notwithstanding, that the snipe is a migratory bird, it may be doubted whether they ever entirely quit our shores.

THE SNIPE AND JACK SNIPE.

When disturbed, particularly in the breeding season, they soar to a great height, making a peculiar bleating noise; and when they descend, dart down with vast rapidity.

A pale red line divides the head in the middle longways; the chin under the bill is white; the neck is a mixture of brown and red; the lower part of the body is almost all white. The back and wings are of a dusky colour.

Although the snipe somewhat resembles the woodcock in appearance, and that their food is the same, yet their habits are very dissimilar.

They feed especially upon small red worms, and upon insects, which they find in muddy and swampy places, on the shores of rivulets and brooks, and on the clayish margin of ponds.

The common snipe, when seen on the ground, from the manner in which it carries its head, presents a handsome appearance; though its long bill, compared with its size, seems out of proportion. Snipe shooting has been called, by the author of British

THE SNIPE AND JACK SNIPE.

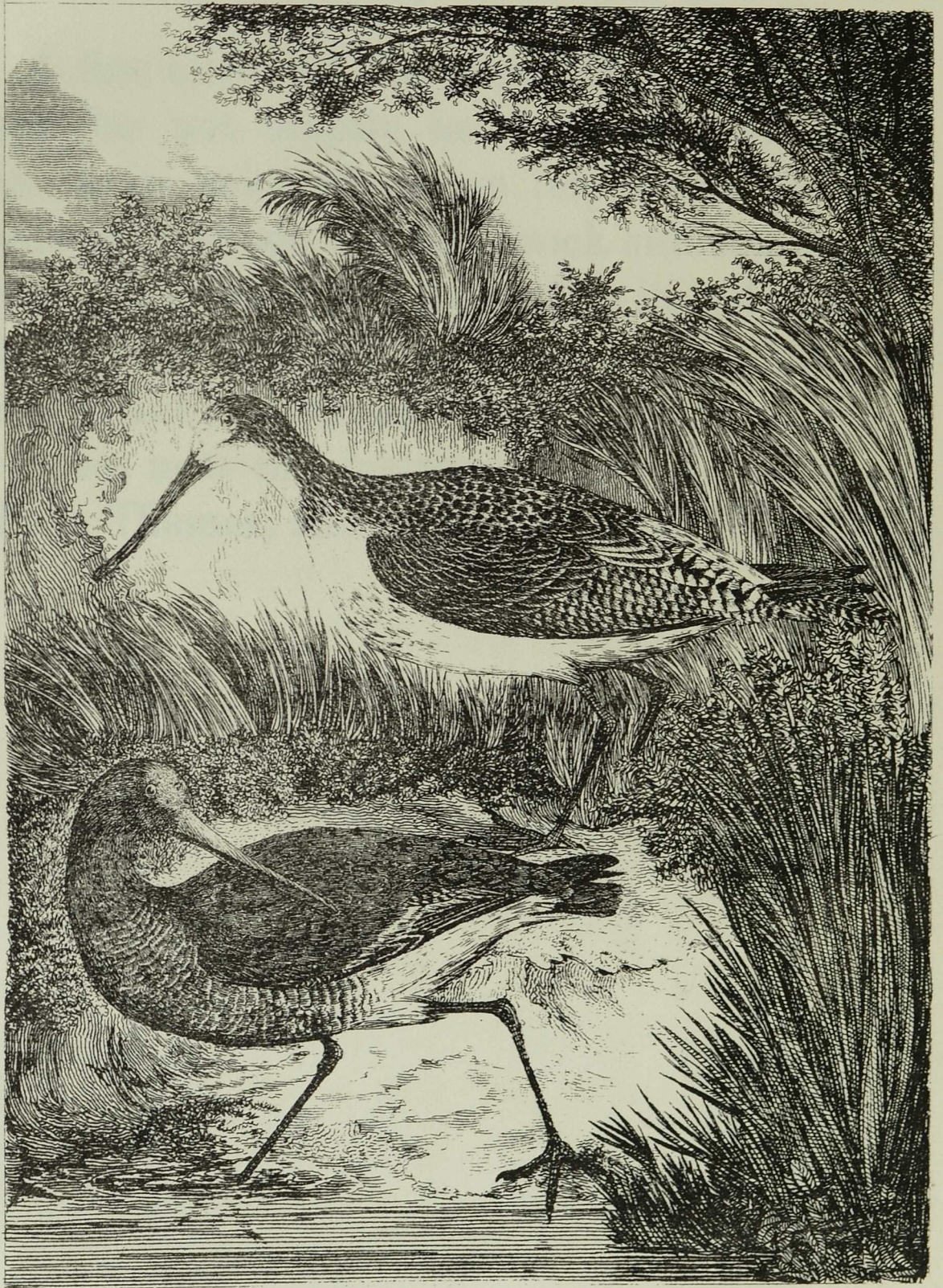
Field Sports, the trial of a marksman's skill. In some parts of Ireland they are found in great abundance; in fact, snipes are met with in nearly all parts of the world. The snipe weighs about four ounces: on the approach of November, they become fat, have a rich flavour, and, like the woodcock are cooked with the entrails.

THE JACK SNIPE.

THE haunts and food of this species, (called also the judcock, the gid, the half snipe,) which does not weigh above two ounces, are the same with those of the snipe above described. It is much less frequent among us, and very difficult to be found, lying so close as to hazard being trod on before it will rise; its flight is never distant, and its motions, compared with the common snipe, altogether sluggish. The dimensions of the two, however, bear not the same proportion: the length of the snipe being thirteen inches; the jack-snipe, ten. The merlin (the smallest of the hawk tribe) is very destructive to snipes.

THE SNIPE AND JACK SNIPE.

A few words on the great or solitary snipe may be not inaptly here introduced. Its size, as its scientific name implies, is about midway between the woodcock and common snipe; it is also distinguished by its bill being shorter and stronger than that of the latter. It is sometimes, though rarely, found in the marshes near the metropolis, on the banks, of the Thames, and in the county of Norfolk.



RED & COMMON GODWIT.

THE RED AND COMMON GODWIT.

THIS bird is not only larger, but is distinguished from the common godwit by the reddishness of its plumage. The bill is nearly four inches long, slightly turned upwards, dark at the tip, and of a dull yellowish red at the base. Its general appearance, however, and habits, are nearly the same as those of the godwit. It is not very common in this country; the flesh is said to be most grateful to the palate.

THE COMMON GODWIT

Is nearly as large as the woodcock; arrives in small flocks in September, and continues with us the whole winter. Its bill is four inches long, bending a little upwards, black at the point, and of a pale purple towards the base; a whitish streak passes from the bill to the eye; the head, neck, and upper

THE COMMON GODWIT.

parts, of a dingy reddish brown; each feather marked down the middle with a dark spot; the forepart of the breast streaked with black. In the female, the throat and neck are grey or ash-coloured. The godwit walks like the curlew, and feeds on worms and insects. When the weather becomes severe, it quits the fens, where it rears its young, and seeks the sea-shore or salt marshes. It is caught in nets in the same way and at the same season as the ruffs and reeves. The godwit is reckoned a great delicacy, and sells high.



RUFF & REEVE.

THE RUFF AND REEVE.

It is curious to see, in our observation of natural objects, how the creative power of Providence seems to have tried all forms and shapes in the composition of species.

The male, or *ruff*, is known by the great length of the feathers round his neck; and is so various in his plumage, that it is said no two ruffs were ever seen exactly of the same colour. In moulting, they lose for a time this character; but a set of small pimples break out above the bill, and another is formed. The *reeve*, or female, never changes its colour, which is brown, spotted in some parts with white or ash-colour; the reeve is less than the ruff, which weighs five or six ounces. These birds are found in Lincolnshire, the Isle of Ely, and in the east riding of Yorkshire. They are much more scarce than they were formerly, when, as Mr. Pen-
nant tells us, in the course of a single morn-

THE RUFF AND REEVE.

ing more than six dozen have been caught in one net; and that a fowler has been known to catch between forty and fifty dozen in a season.

Some, are however, still to be met with in the vicinity of Crowland; but the north fen near Spalding and the east and west fens between Boston and Spilsby, are the only parts that appear to produce them with certainty, and there by no means in plenty. The trade of *catching* them is confined to few persons, which at present scarcely repays the trouble and expense of nets. These people live in obscure places, on the skirts of the fens, and are found out with difficulty, as those who make a trade of *fattening* them for the table sedulously conceal the abode of the fowlers.

When these birds arrive, in the beginning of spring, they pair as others, but not without violent contests between the males for the choice of the female: it is then that the fowlers, seeing them intent on mutual destruction, spread their nets, and capture them. When brought from under the net, they are not immediately killed, but fattened

THE RUFF AND REEVE.

with bread and milk, hempseed, and boiled wheat; if sugar be added, it will make them a lump of fat in a fortnight. A very remarkable trait in their character is, that they feed most greedily the moment they are taken; food placed before them is instantly contended for; and so pugnacious is their disposition, that they would starve in the midst of plenty, if several dishes were not distributed among them at a distance from each other. The feeders keep them in dark rooms; for, if ever so little light be let in, they instantly fall to fighting, and cease not till each has destroyed its antagonist.

Judgment is required in taking the proper time for killing them, viz. when at the highest pitch of fatness; for if that be neglected, they are apt to fall away. They are accounted a very great delicacy, and sell for two guineas a dozen: like woodcocks, they are served up with the train.

The autumnal catching is about Michaelmas, when few old ruffs are taken, from which an opinion has been formed, that they migrate before the females and young. It

THE RUFF AND REEVE.

is, however, more probable, that the few which are left after the spring fowling, like other polygamous birds, keep in parties separate from the female and her brood, until the return of spring.

The females begin laying their eggs, four in number, the first or second week in May; the nest is usually found upon the knoll of a hill in swampy places, surrounded by coarse grass, of which it is formed.



GREAT PLOVER.

THE GREAT PLOVER,

SOMETIMES called the Norfolk plover, or the stone curlew. This bird is found in great plenty in Norfolk, and in many of the southern counties, but is nowhere to be met with in the northern parts of our island. It prefers dry and stony places, on the sides of sloping banks. It makes no nest: the female lays two or three eggs (of a dirty white, with spots of a deepish red, mixed with slight streaks) on the bare ground, sheltered by a stone, or in a small hole, formed in the sand. Although this bird has great power of wing, it is seldom seen in the day-time, except surprised, when it springs to some distance, and generally escapes before the sportsman comes within gun-shot; it likewise runs on the ground almost as swiftly as a dog: after running some time, it stops short, holding its head and body still, and, on the least noise, squats

THE PLOVER.

on the ground. In the evening it comes out in quest of food, and may then be heard at a great distance: its cry is singular, resembling a hoarse kind of whistle three or four times repeated. It feeds principally on worms and caterpillars; when young, it is *said* to be good eating, but the flesh of the old ones is hard, black, and dry. The great plover is migratory, arriving in April, and quitting us at the beginning of autumn.



GOLDEN PLOVER & LAPWING .

THE GOLDEN PLOVER AND LAPWING.

THIS beautiful bird generally visits us about the beginning of November, and takes its departure early in February. The golden plover frequents salt marshes in flocks. It breeds in Ireland; and is also very common in some parts of the Highlands of Scotland, particularly in Caithness and Sutherlandshire. The female lays four eggs of a pale olive colour, variegated with blackish spots. They fly in small flocks, and make a shrill whistling noise, by an imitation of which they are sometimes enticed within gun-shot.

THE LAPWING

Is about the size of a pigeon. Its bill is black; eyes, large and hazel; the top of the head black, glossed with green; a tuft of long narrow feathers issues from the back part of the head, and turns upwards at the

THE LAPWING.

end ; some of them four inches in length ; the sides of the head and neck, of a dingy white, interrupted by a blackish streak above and below the eye : the back part of the neck, a pale brown ; the fore part, as far as the breast, black : the back and the wing coverts, dark green, glossed with purple and green reflections ; the quills black, the first four tipped with white ; the breast and belly of a pure white ; the upper tail-coverts and vent, pale chestnut ; the tail, white at the base ; the rest of it, black with pale tips ; the outer feathers, almost wholly white ; the legs, red ; claws, black ; the hind claw, very short.

The lapwing is a constant inhabitant of this country, and is mostly found on marsh and other cold lands : its food, chiefly insects and worms, until severe weather binds the surface of the earth, and then it is obliged to seek its food on the sea-shore. In spring, and during the time of incubation, it attracts notice from the peculiar and incessant cry it utters, plainly distinctive to the ear, from which it derives the name of *Pe-wit*. When

THE LAPWING.

seen on the ground, it is an active, elegant, and lively bird; and when in the air it sports and frolics in all directions. The female lays four eggs, of a dirty olive, spotted with black, forming a slight nest, with a few bents, upon the ground, which, from the eggs being nearly in colour to the moor land, and like the plovers, are not easily discovered. The young, as soon as hatched, run like chickens.

The parents have been impressed by nature with the most attentive love and care for their offspring; for if the fowler, or any other enemy, should come near the nest, the female, panting with fear, lessens her call, to make her enemies believe that she is much further off, and thereby deceives those that search for her brood; she also sometimes pretends to be wounded, and utters a faint cry as she limps away to lead the fowler from her nest. This bird is really beautiful, although it does not exhibit that gaudiness of colours which other species of the feathered tribe can boast of: it weighs about half a pound.

THE LAPWING.

as it grew dark, and spend the evening and night with his two associates, sitting close by them, and partaking of the comforts of a warm hearth. As soon as spring appeared, he discontinued his visits to the house, and betook himself to the garden : but, on the approach of winter, he had recourse to his old shelter and friends, who received him very cordially. Security was productive of insolence ; what was at first obtained with caution, was afterwards taken without reserve : he frequently amused himself with washing in the bowl which was set for the dog to drink out of ; and while he was thus employed, he showed marks of the greatest indignation if either of his companions presumed to interrupt him. He died in the asylum he had thus chosen, being choked with something that he had picked up from the floor.

An interesting account has been given of a very remarkable species of this bird called the stilt-plover, by the late Rev. Mr. White, in his History of Selborne. The length of the legs is so extraordinary, that, had we

THE LAPWING.

seen such a bird painted upon a Chinese or Japan screen, we should have made large allowance for the fancy of the draughtsman. One of them when embowelled and stuffed, weighed only four ounces and a quarter, though the naked part of the thigh measured three inches and a half. Hence, in the stilt-plovers, the legs are generally more than thrice the length of the whole body; and are, at the same time, very weak and slender. It is a migratory species, a native chiefly of the south of Europe, and rarely visits our island.

The general colour of the plumage is white. The back and the wings are black. The bill is black, and longer than the head; and the legs are red.

The stilt bird is found in America, and Africa. Fernandes saw a species, or rather a variety, in New Spain; and he says that it inhabits cold regions, and only comes down to Mexico in winter; whilst Sloane has enumerated it among the birds of Jamaica. It would follow, from these authorities, that the species of stilt-bird,

THE LAPWING.

although not numerous, is spread, or rather scattered, over widely distant regions.

Of the natural habits of this bird we know little more than that it lives upon insects and worms, on the banks of rivers and in marshes.



COOT and MOORHEN.

THE COOT AND MOORHEN.

THESE birds bear too near an affinity, not to be ranked in the same description. They are shaped alike, their legs long, and thighs partly bare; their necks are proportionable, their wings short, their bills short and weak, their colour black, their foreheads bald and without feathers, and their habits are entirely the same.

The bald part of the forehead in the coot is black; in the water-hen, it is of a beautiful pink colour; the toes of the water-hen are edged with a straight membrane; those of the coot have it scolloped and broader.

The coot frequents lakes and rivers, where it forms its nest among the rushes with grass, weeds, &c., well matted together, floating on the surface, and rising and falling with the water. The reeds keep it fast; so that it is seldom driven into the middle of the stream. When this does occur, however, the female

THE COOT AND MOORHEN.

continues to sit in great tranquillity, regardless of danger, and hatches her young in her moveable dwelling: she lays from twelve to fifteen eggs, about the size of those of a pullet, of a dirty whitish hue, with numerous deep rust-coloured spots, and commonly has two broods in the season. As soon as the young quit the shell, they plunge into the water and swim about with perfect ease. Before they have learned, by experience, to avoid their enemies, they are destroyed, in great numbers, not only by kites and hawks, but by otters and the pike. The coot weighs from twenty-four to twenty-eight ounces, and is about fifteen inches in length.

It changes its whitish colour to a pale red or pink in the breeding season. Coots are very shy, and seldom venture abroad before dusk. When attacked, they defend themselves with their feet, and they do this so energetically, that sportsmen say, "Beware of a winged Coot, or he will scratch you like a cat."

THE MOORHEN.

THE male weighs about fifteen ounces; its length from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail, fourteen inches; the breadth, twenty-two. The body is long and compressed at the sides; the legs placed far behind; the feathers thickly set, and bedded upon down. The moorhen conceals itself throughout the day among reeds and willows, near moats, ponds, rivulets, and pools of water: like the water-crake and water-rail it dives on the slightest alarm. In the evenings it seeks its food, consisting of aquatic plants, water insects, worms, &c., among the loose herbage which overhangs the banks, and on the surface of such waters as are covered with weeds, over which it can run with perfect ease.

The female makes her nest with withered reeds and rushes, closely interwoven, near the water's edge, in the most retired situation, which she never quits without covering the eggs. Willoughby tells us, she builds upon

THE MOORHEN.

low trees and shrubs, and that the nest is formed of sticks and fibres. The eggs are sharp at one end, nearly two inches in length, and are irregularly marked with rust-coloured spots on a dirty white ground. She lays six or seven at a time, and usually hatches twice in the season: the young ones swim the moment they leave the egg, and soon shift for themselves.

There are few countries in the world where these birds are not to be found. They generally prefer the cold mountainous regions in summer, and lower and warmer situations during winter.



CORN CRAKE & WATER RAIL.

THE CORN-CRAKE AND WATER-RAIL.

FROM the circumstance of the corn-crake, or, as it is sometimes called, the land-rail and the daker hen, visiting this country about the same time as the quail, it has been deemed their leader, and styled the king of the quails. This bird is well known from its peculiar *craking* cry; it is very timid, and shuns human observation with all possible care; though frequently heard, it is seldom seen. When driven to extremity, however, it rises with difficulty, and flies heavily with its legs hanging down; but its tardiness of wing is compensated by its speed in running. As soon as the cold weather commences, the corn-crake leaves our shores and repairs to other countries in search of its food, which consists of insects, slugs, and worms, as well as the seeds of broom, groundsel, and trefoil. Vast num-

THE CORN-CRAKE AND WATER-RAIL.

bers resort to the low grounds in Ireland ; they are also to be met with in great plenty in the Isle of Anglesea, and in most parts of the Hebrides and the Orkneys.

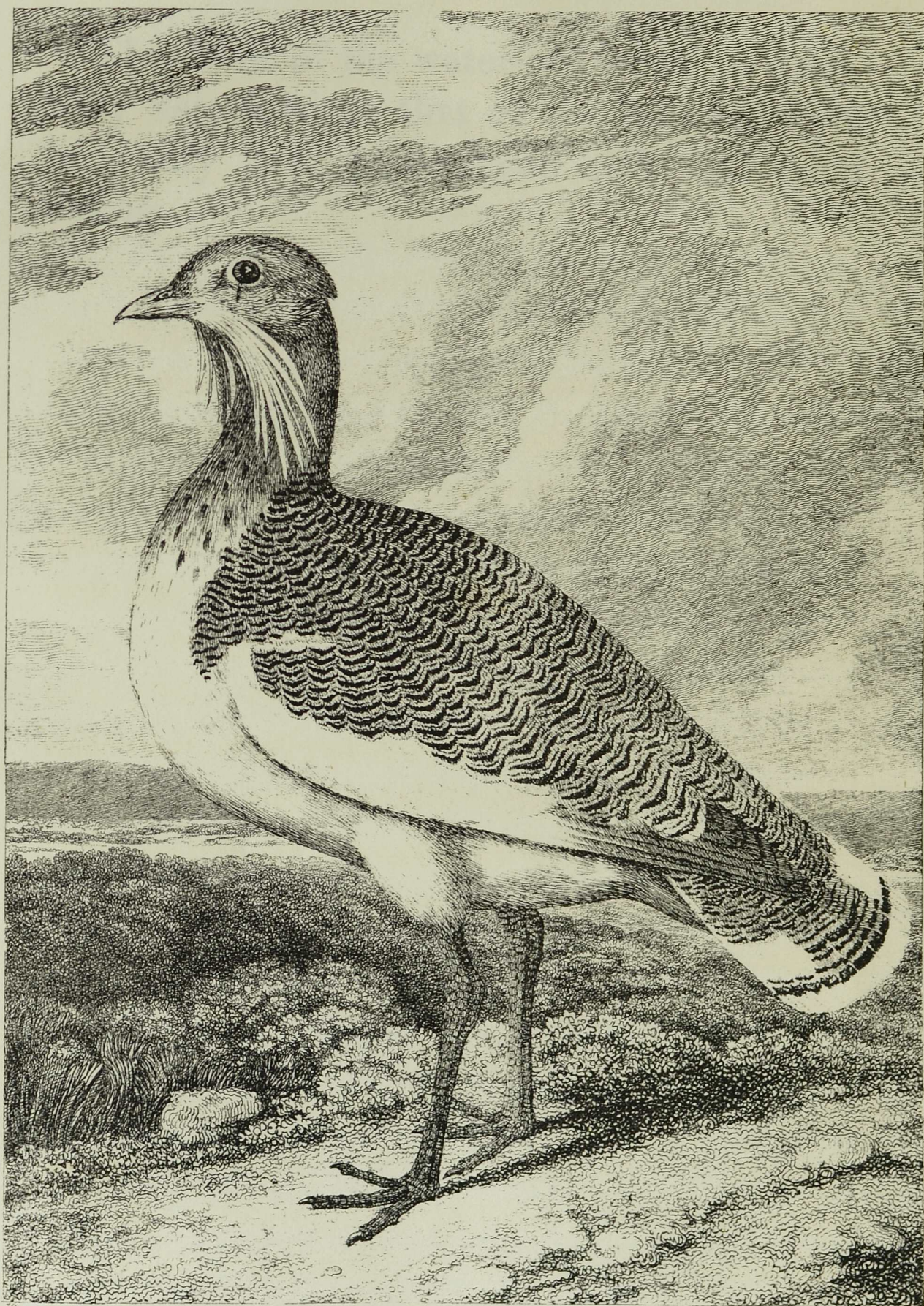
On their first arrival here, they are frequently so lean as not to weigh more than six ounces, from which it may be conjectured that they must come from a far distant land ; before their departure, however, they have been known to exceed eight ; and are then delicious eating. The female lays ten or twelve eggs of a dull white colour, marked with a few dirty yellow spots : the young, which are covered with a black down, run as soon as they are disengaged from the shell. The corn-crake is rather more than nine inches in length ; the bill, light brown ; the eyes, hazel ; all the feathers on the upper parts of the plumage, dark brown, edged with pale rust colour ; the legs, ash-coloured. The feathers of its wing are esteemed excellent for the manufacture of flies for the angler.

THE WATER-RAIL.

THIS bird has many traits in his character similar to the corn-crake and water-crake; it is migratory like the former, to which it also bears some resemblance in size, in its long shape, and in the flatness of its body: its haunts and manners of living are nearly the same as those of the latter; but it differs from both in the length of its bill and in its plumage. Its weight is four ounces and a half, and measures twelve inches in length, and sixteen in breadth. The bill is slightly incurvated, an inch and three quarters long; the upper mandible, black, edged with red; the lower, orange-coloured; the irides, red; the tail, consists of twelve short black feathers, the ends of the two middle tipped with a dirty red; the legs, placed far behind, of a dusky flesh-colour; the toes long, and without any connecting membrane; though the feet are not webbed, it takes the water, but rather runs on it than swims.

THE WATER-RAIL.

The flesh of the water-rail is not so generally esteemed as that of the land-rail; yet by many it is pronounced rich and good eating.



BUSTARD.

THE BUSTARD.

AT periods not very remote, bustards were frequently seen in flocks, on Salisbury plain, on the heaths of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Sussex, the Dorsetshire uplands, the Yorkshire wolds, and in East Lothian. The bustard is said to be the largest native bird of Britain, the male generally weighing from twenty-five to thirty pounds: the female is not much more than half the size of the male; there is also another essential difference between them; the latter is furnished with a sack or pouch, situated in the fore part of the neck, capable of holding about half a gallon; the entrance to it is immediately under the tongue. The world is indebted to Dr. Douglas for this discovery. On each side of the lower bill of the male there is a tuft of feathers about nine inches long; its head and neck are ash-coloured; the back is barred

THE BUSTARD.

transversely with black, bright, and rust-colour; the quill feathers, black; the belly, white; the tail consists of twenty feathers, marked with broad black bars; the legs are long, naked above the knees, and dusky; it has no hind toe; the bottom of the foot is furnished with a callous prominence, which serves instead of a heel. The colours of the female are not so bright as those of the male; the top of her head is of a deep orange; the rest, brown; and she has no tuft. They are exceedingly shy and difficult to be shot; slow in taking wing, but run very fast; their food consists of berries that grow among the heath, and the large earth-worms that appear in great quantities on the downs, before sun-rise in the summer; in autumn, they frequent turnip-fields. In winter, as their food becomes more scarce, they support themselves by feeding on mice, and even on small birds when they can seize them.

The bustard lays two eggs as large as those of a goose, of a pale olive brown, with dark spots; she builds no nest, merely

THE BUSTARD.

scraping a hole in the ground. She sometimes leaves her eggs in search of food; and if, during her absence, any one should handle, or even breathe upon them, she immediately abandons them.

This bird is fast disappearing from our island, but we earnestly hope that every one, sportsman or no sportsman, will respect the little remnant yet remaining of the numerous flocks which once graced our country, and save the breed of this noble bird from utter extinction in England. In the eastern part of the country we fear that it is quite lost, though it was comparatively common some time ago. It is the more necessary to impress on our readers the importance of abstaining from the destruction of the few above alluded to, because there is not much hope of replenishing the breed by captive birds. A male bird lived about three years in confinement; and, though a female was procured from the continent, she never laid while confined. These birds ate turnip, cabbage, lettuce-leaves, also the blades of young corn: during the winter they were

THE BUSTARD.

fed with grain, which they always preferred when soaked in water; they would likewise devour worms and slugs.

The bustard is found in some provinces of France and in parts of Germany and Italy. It is common in Russia and on the extensive plains of Tartary; and Temminck states that it inhabits some departments of France, of Italy, and Germany; that it is less abundant towards the north than in the south; and that it is very rarely and accidentally found in Holland. Graves relates that the species is dispersed over the southern parts of Europe, and the more temperate parts of Africa, and is very abundant in some parts of Spain and Portugal.

The extreme rapidity of their running, and the unwillingness to rise on the wing exhibited by these birds, have been the theme of most ornithologists. We have also many accounts of their being coursed with dogs. The following is from Brookes:—There are also bustards in France, which frequent large open plains, particularly near Chalons, where in the winter-time, there are great numbers

THE BUSTARD.

of them seen together. There is always one placed as a sentinel, at some distance from the flock, which gives notice to the rest of any danger. They raise themselves from the ground with great difficulty; for they run sometimes a good way, beating their wings before they fly. They take them with a hook baited with an apple or flesh. Sometimes fowlers shoot them as they lie concealed behind some eminence, or on a load of straw; others take them with greyhounds, which often catch them before they are able to rise.

As an article of food the flesh of the bustard is held in great estimation. It is dark in colour, short in fibre, but sweet and well flavoured. In the last edition of Montagu's Dictionary it is stated, that in 1804 one was shot and taken to Plymouth market, where a publican purchased for a shilling what would have fetched two or three guineas where its value was known. It was, however, rejected at the second table as improper food, in consequence of the pectoral muscles differing in colour from the other parts of the breast,

THE BUSTARD.

as in some of the grouse. Some country gentlemen supping at the inn on the following evening, and hearing of the circumstance, desired that they might be introduced to the princely bird, and partook of it cold at their repast. The bustard seems, with accidental exceptions, to have always brought high prices. In the Earl of Northumberland's household book, it appears among the birds appropriated to his lordship's table; it has no price placed opposite to it, as in the case of all the other birds with one other exception.

In the autumn of 1819, a large male bird, which had been surprised by a dog on Newmarket Heath, was sold in Leadenhall Market for five guineas, and in the same year a female was captured, under similar circumstances, on one of the moors in Yorkshire.



WOOD GROUSE.

THE WOOD GROUSE.

THE cock of the wood, or wood grouse, is nearly as large as a turkey; and was formerly plentiful in Ireland, where, as well as in England, it is no longer to be found. Mr. Pennant mentions one, as a very rare instance, which was shot near Inverness. In Russia and other northern countries, however, this noble and beautiful bird is not uncommon, living in the extensive pine-forests, and feeding principally on the cones of the fir-tree, which, at certain seasons, renders the flavour of the bird too strong to be palatable. Plants and berries, particularly those of the juniper, are also its food: it is known sometimes wholly to strip one tree of its cones, while the next to it remains untouched.

The female lays from eight to sixteen eggs; eight at first, and more as they advance in age; they are of a white colour, spotted

THE WOOD GROUSE.

with yellow, larger than those of the domestic hen, and are accounted a greater delicacy than the eggs of any other bird : these are deposited on the ground upon moss, in some dry spot, where the female can sit in security. The chicks follow the mother as soon as they are hatched, and, as partridges are sometimes known to do, often with part of the egg-shell attached to them.

The bill of the male is of a dusky horn-colour, very strong and convex ; the irides, hazel, and over the eye is a naked red skin ; the nostrils small, and covered with short dusky feathers, which extend under the throat, and are there much longer than the rest, and of a black colour ; the head and neck are ash-coloured, elegantly marked with transverse, narrow, blackish lines ; the upper parts of the body and wings, of a dark chestnut, irregularly marked with blackish lines ; the feathers at the setting on of the wings, white ; the breast, of a fine glossy blackish green ; the tail consists of eighteen black feathers, those on the sides marked with a few white spots ; the legs are

THE WOOD GROUSE.

covered with feathers, and the edges of the toes pectinated.

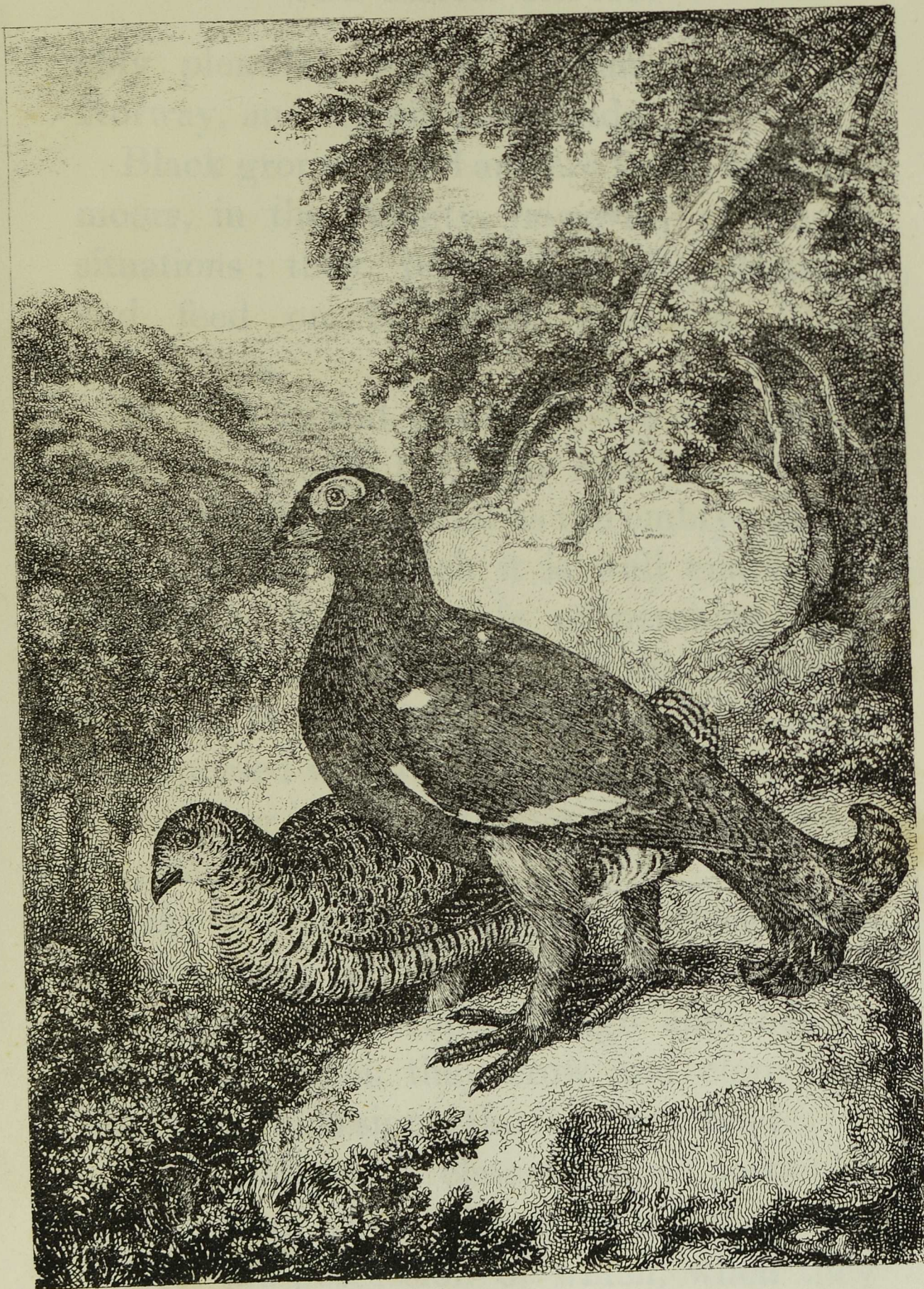
The female is considerably less than the male, and differs from him greatly in her colours: the head, neck, and back marked with transverse bars of orange red, and black; the throat, red; the breast, pale orange; the belly barred with orange and black, and the tips of the feathers white; the back and wings, mottled with reddish brown and black; the tail, of a deep rust colour, barred with black, and tipped with white. When displayed, the white forms a circle.

This fine bird is not unfrequently sent from St. Petersburg to London, its flesh being esteemed one of the greatest dainties.

BLACK GROUSE.

THE black cock or black grouse weighs nearly four pounds; the female much less. The general plumage of the male is of a beautiful shining blue-black; the bill, black; the eyes, dark blue; below each eye, there is a spot of a dirty white colour; and above, a larger one of bright red, extending nearly to the top of the head: the tail, forked; the legs feathered only to the feet. The plumage of the female is of a lighter colour than that of the male, and by no means so handsome; she is nearly one-third less in size; and her tail is considerably less forked.

Black grouse are met with in Cumberland, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and other places in England, but not in great plenty; they are more numerous in Scotland, but even there they are not so abundant as formerly. In Germany, France, and Holland it is toler-



BLACK GROUSE

THE BLACK GROUSE.

ably plentiful, but in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Russia it abounds.

Black grouse breed and are found upon the moors, in the vicinity, however, of woody situations: they perch like the pheasant, and feed on bilberries, mountain fruits, and berries.

In winter, and during severe and snowy weather, it eats the tops and buds of the birch and alder, as well as the embryo shoots of the fir tribe, which it is well enabled to obtain, as it is capable of perching upon trees without difficulty. At this season of the year, in situations where arable land is interspersed with the wild tracts it inhabits, descending into the stubble grounds, it feeds on grain.

Like the cock of the wood, these birds do not pair; but in the spring, the males assemble on the tops of high and heathy mountains, when they crow and clap their wings, to which signal the females attend.

Each individual chooses some particular station, from whence he drives all intruders, and for the possession of which, when they

THE BLACK GROUSE.

are numerous, desperate contests often take place.

At this station he continues every morning during the pairing season, beginning at day-break to repeat his call of invitation to the other sex, displaying a variety of attitudes, not unlike those of a turkey-cock, accompanied by a crowing note, and one similar to the noise made by the whetting of a scythe. At this season his plumage exhibits the richest glosses, and the red skin of his eyebrows assumes a superior intensity of colour. With the cause that urged their temporary separation their animosity ceases, and the male birds again associate, and live harmoniously together. The female deposits her eggs in May: they are from six to ten in number, of a yellowish-grey colour, blotched with reddish-brown. The nest is of most artless construction, being composed of a few dried stems of grass placed on the ground, under the shelter of a tall tuft or low bush, and generally in marshy spots where long and coarse grasses abound.

No person is permitted to kill, destroy,

THE BLACK GROUSE.

carry, sell, buy, or have in his possession, any heath-fowl, commonly called black-game, between the 10th of December and 20th of August. The limitation in the New Forest, Somerset, and Devon, is greater, being from the 10th of December to the 1st of September.

The young of both sexes at first resemble each other, and their plumage is that of the hen, with whom they continue till the autumnal moult takes place; at this time the males acquire the garb of the adult bird, and, quitting their female parent, join the societies of their own sex.

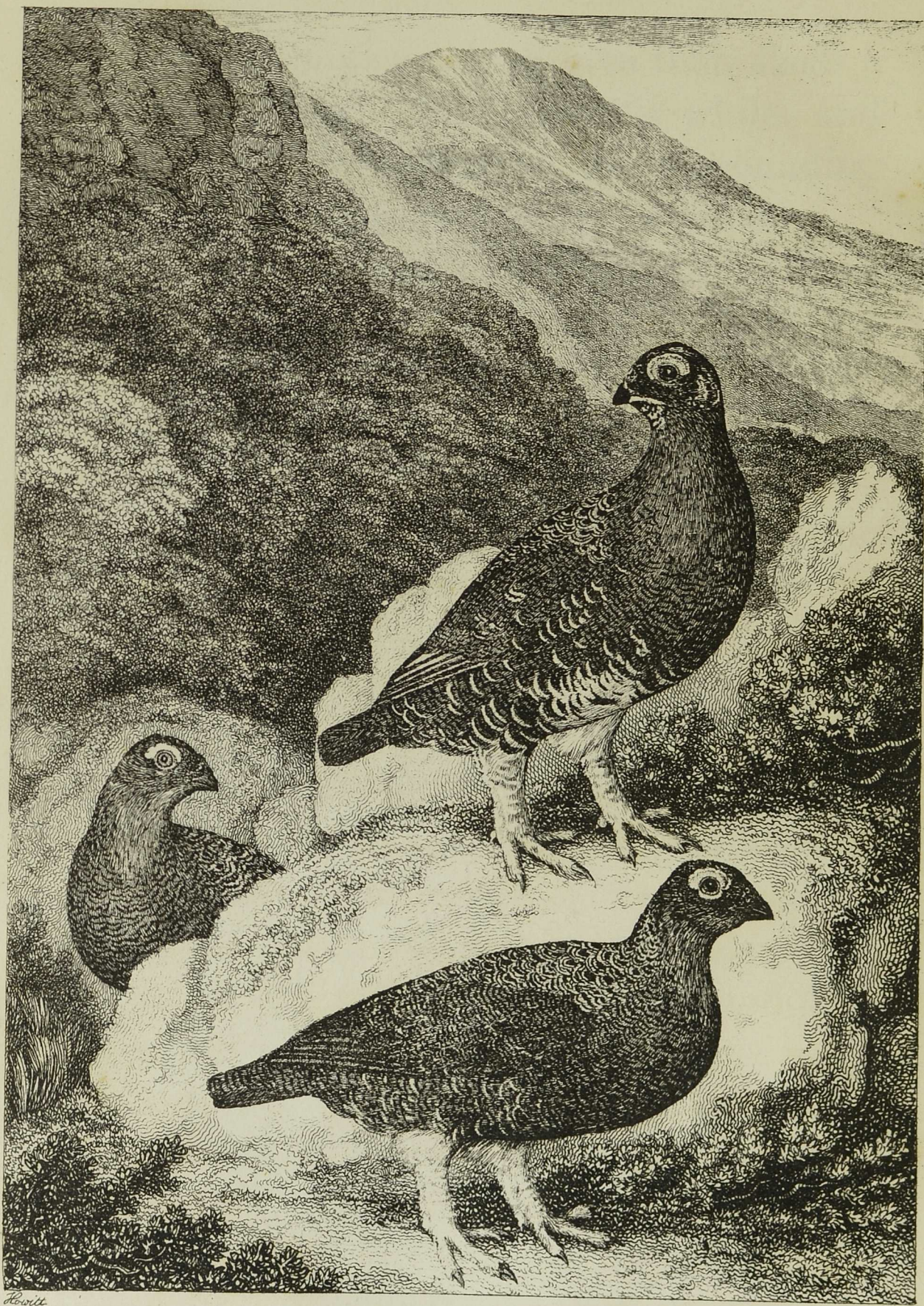
The flesh of the black grouse is much esteemed. The different colour of the flesh of the pectoral muscles must have struck every one. The internal layer, which is remarkably white, is esteemed the most delicate portion. Belon goes so far as to say that the three pectoral muscles have three different flavours: the first that of beef, the next that of partridge, and the third that of pheasant.

They are extremely fond of the seeds of

THE BLACK GROUSE.

the Siberian poplar, which give their flesh a very fine flavour. The breast is white, and forms a striking contrast to the surrounding parts, which are more deeply coloured.

Some may be seen in aviaries, in the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, but they languish in confinement, and all attempts to domesticate them have failed.



RED GROUSE.

THE RED GROUSE.

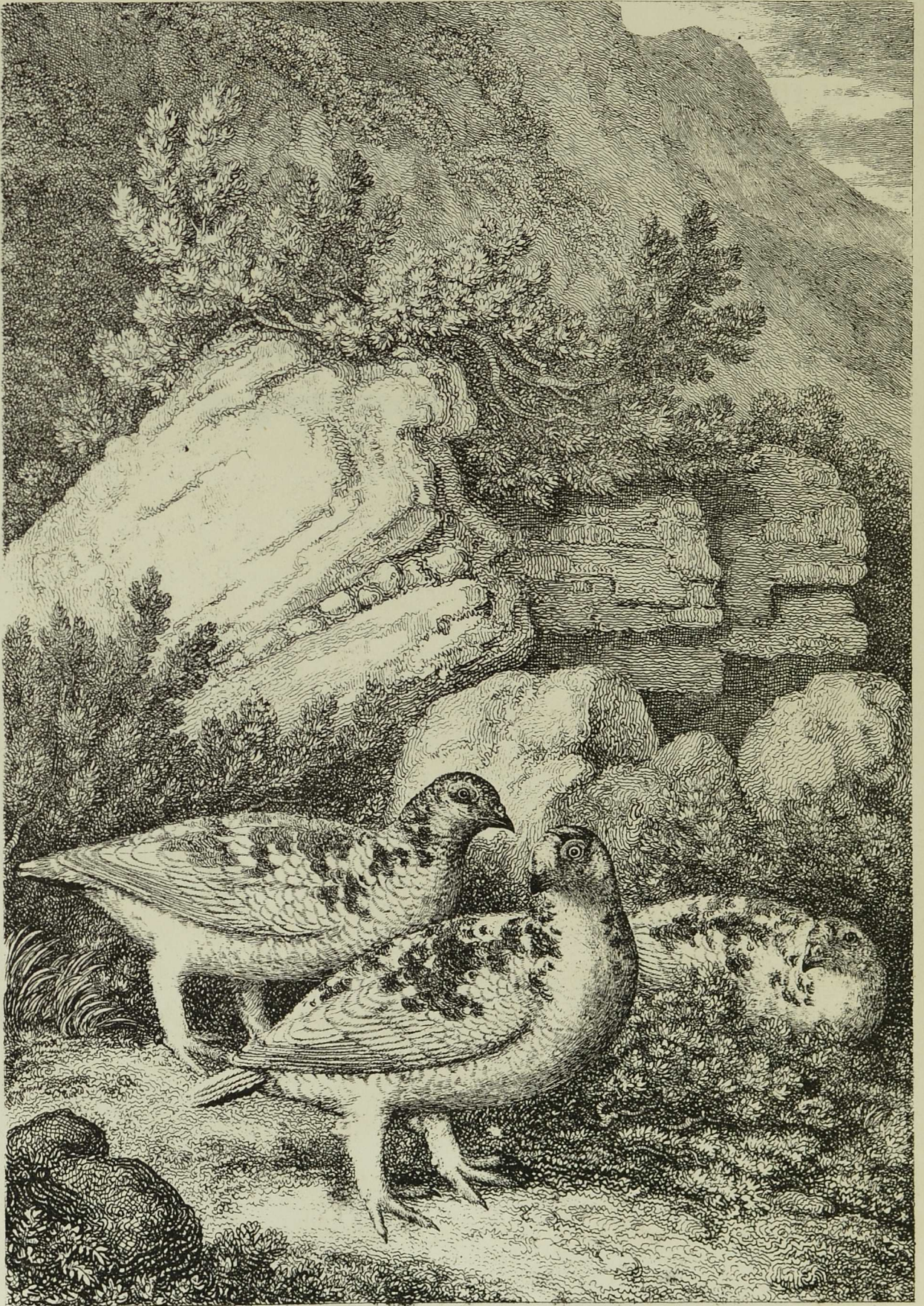
THIS bird weighs about nineteen ounces, and is fifteen inches in length: the upper part of the body is beautifully mottled with deep red and black; the breast and belly, purplish, crossed with small dusky lines; the bill, black; the eyes, hazel; throat, red; eyes arched, with a large naked spot of bright scarlet; the tail consists of sixteen feathers, the four middlemost barred with red, the others black; the legs are clothed with white feathers down to the claws. The female is smaller; the mark above the eye is less prominent, and the colours of her plumage, in general, are much paler.

Red grouse, or moor game, abound in the Highlands of Scotland; they are also met with in Wales, in Staffordshire, in Cumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire. These birds pair in the spring, and lay from six to ten eggs; the young ones follow the hen through-

RED GROUSE.

out the summer; in the winter they join in flocks of forty or fifty, and are then remarkably shy and wild.

They subsist on heath, the mountain-berries, and corn. In most of their habits they are closely allied to the last species. They are in great request for the table.



Hewitt.

PTARMIGAN

THE PTARMIGAN.

THE bill of the ptarmigan is black; the plumage of a pale brown or ash-colour, crossed with small dusky spots and minute bars; the grey colour predominates in the male, except on the head and neck, where there is a great mixture of red with bars of white; the whole plumage of the male is extremely elegant. The females and young birds have much rust-colour about them. In their winter-dress—a pure white—they both agree, except that a black line occurs between the bill and the eye of the males; the shafts of the first seven quill feathers are black; the tail consists of sixteen feathers, the two middle ones ash-coloured in summer and white in winter; the two next slightly marked with white near the ends; the rest wholly black. The female lays eight or ten eggs, about the size of those of a pigeon, spotted with red brown, which,

THE PTARMIGAN.

towards the end of May, she deposits on the ground in a stony situation. The feet are clothed with feathers to the very claws; and long thick hairs, similar to those seen in the hare, grow under the toes, on the sole; the nails are long, broad, and hollow: the first guards them from the rigour of the winter, while the latter enables them to form a lodgment under the snow, where they sometimes lie in heaps, to avoid the severity of the cold. The ptarmigan prefers the loftiest situations, and is found in most of the northern states of Europe; in this country it is to be met with only in the Highlands of Scotland, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and occasionally on the hills of Cumberland and Wales. As the snow melts on the sides of the mountains, it continues to ascend until it gains the summit, where perpetual winter reigns, and there forms holes, and burrows in the snow. Their food principally consists of mountain-berries, the buds of trees, and cones of the pine.

They are so little alarmed at the appear-

THE PTARMIGAN.

ance of mankind that they may be driven in flocks, almost like poultry.

The ptarmigan is about the size of the common grouse, and resembles it much in flavour. In the winter they fly in flocks.

THE PHEASANT,

Now so general in this country, is a native of the East, and was brought into Europe from the banks of the *Phasis*, a river of Colchis, in Asia Minor, whence it derives its name. Next to the peacock, it is the most beautiful of birds: in the common pheasant, the eyes are surrounded with scarlet, sprinkled with small black specks; the iris, yellow; on the fore part of the head, there are blackish feathers mixed with purple; the top of the head and upper part of the neck tinged with a darkish green, varying, according to the light in which it is viewed, to a shining purple. The feathers of the breast, the shoulders, the middle of the back, and the sides under the wings, present a blackish ground edged with glossy purple, under which a transverse streak of gold colour is seen: the two middle feathers of the tail, about twenty inches long; the shortest



PHEASANTS.

THE PHEASANT.

on each side, less than five, of a reddish brown colour, marked with transverse bars of black; the legs, the feet, and the toes, of horn-colour; each leg is furnished with a short blunt spur, which, as the bird advances in age, sometimes becomes sharp as a needle. The female is smaller than the male, and the prevailing colours, brown mixed with black; the breast and belly, freckled with minute black spots on a light ground; the tail short, and barred in some degree like that of the male; the space round the eye, covered with feathers.

There are many varieties of the pheasant, viz. :—The *white*, which will intermix with the common pheasant; of all others, however, the *golden* is the handsomest as to plumage; but the *Bohemian* is unquestionably the finest specimen of the tribe; it is larger than the common pheasant, and both male and female have a peculiar cry: the spurs of the male are longer and more formidable; his gait is more upright, and he approximates more nearly to the game-cock.

Pheasants are much attached to the shel-

THE PHEASANT.

ter of thickets and woods on the borders of plains; they are frequently to be seen in clover-fields and amongst corn, where they very often breed.

The female builds her nest for herself alone, choosing for it the most retired nook. She uses straw, leaves, and other similar things; and, although she has made it very unsightly in appearance, she prefers it to any other better constructed which might not be so retired. To such a degree indeed does she carry this feeling, that, if one were prepared for her well made, she would begin by destroying it and scattering all the materials, in order that she might replace them in her own way.

She lays from twelve to fifteen eggs, smaller than those of the domestic hen; the young follow the mother as soon as hatched. In the breeding season the cocks will sometimes intermix with the common hen, and produce a hybrid breed.

They are found in great abundance in Africa, particularly on the Slave Coast, the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, the country of

THE PHEASANT.

the Issini, and in the kingdoms of Congo and Angola. They are now common in different parts of Europe; in Spain, Italy, and particularly in the Campagna di Roma, in Milan, and some islands in the Gulf of Naples, in Germany, France, and England; but in these latter countries they are not so generally spread.

Many of these birds, brought from the rich provinces of China, are kept in aviaries in this kingdom; but the common Pheasant is the only one of its kind that has multiplied in our island; and of late years they have become so numerous in our preserves, that at feeding time in the morning, they may be seen in the neighbouring fields in large numbers, running about almost as tame as chickens. This beautiful bird is elegantly described in the following passage:—

“ See ! from the brake the whirring Pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings ;
Short is his joy ; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground ;
Ah ! what avails his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, his scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold !”

POPE'S WINDSOR FOREST.

THE PHEASANT.

Pheasants do not associate except during the months of March and April, when the male seeks the female; they are then easily discoverable by their crowing, and the flapping of their wings, which may be heard at a considerable distance. During the night they perch on the branches of trees. The general weight of the cock pheasant is from two pounds and three quarters to three pounds and a quarter; that of the hen is usually about ten ounces less. This bird, though so beautiful to the eye, is not less delicate when served up to the table: its flesh is considered as the greatest dainty.



Howitt.

PARTRIDGE

THE PARTRIDGE.

THE colour of its plumage is brown and ash, interspersed with black; the middle of each feather streaked down with buff; the tail, short; the legs, of greenish white, with a small knob behind; the bill, of a light brown; the eyes, hazel. Partridges are found nowhere in greater plenty than in this country; and, as a delicacy, notwithstanding their numbers, are held inferior to none. Partridges pair towards the end of February; the hen lays from fifteen to upwards of twenty eggs, making her nest on the ground, with grass or leaves, in a clover or corn-field; the young birds run as soon as hatched, sometimes even with a portion of the shell adhering to their bodies.

Their nest is usually on the ground; but on the farm of Lion Hall, in Essex, belonging to Colonel Hawker, a partridge, in the year 1788, formed her nest, and hatched

THE PARTRIDGE.

sixteen eggs, on the top of a pollard oak-tree! What renders this circumstance the more remarkable is, that the tree had, fastened to it, the bars of a stile, where there was a footpath; and the passengers, in going over, discovered and disturbed her before she sat close. When the brood was hatched, the birds scrambled down the short and rough boughs, which grew out all round the trunk of the tree, and reached the ground in safety. It has long been a received opinion among sportsmen, as well as among naturalists, that the female partridge has none of the bay feathers of the breast like the male. This, however, is a mistake; for, Mr. Montagu happening to kill nine birds in one day, with very little variation as to the bay mark on the breast, he was led to open them all, and discovered that five of them were females. On carefully examining the plumage, he found that the males could only be known by the superior brightness of colour about the head; which alone, after the first or second year, seems to be the true mark of distinction.

THE PARTRIDGE.

The partridge is a most prolific bird, and both male and female excessively attached to, and bold, sagacious, and indefatigable, in defending their offspring. Whenever a dog or other enemy approaches the nest, the male sounds the tocsin, by a peculiar cry of distress, throwing himself into immediate danger, in order to perplex or mislead the pursuer; he flies, or rather hops or runs along the ground, hanging his wings, and falling down, then rising at intervals, until he succeeds in drawing the foe from the covey; the female flies off in a contrary direction, and to a greater distance; but soon returns, and hastily collecting her scattered treasure, which instantly assemble at her well-known voice, and follow where she leads them.

If the eggs of a partridge be placed under the domestic hen, she will hatch and rear them as her own. Care must be taken, however, that the young be supplied with ants' eggs, their favourite food, without which it will be found almost impossible to rear them. They also seek and greedily

THE PARTRIDGE

devour all that infinite variety of insects, found on the blades of grass, the leaves of plants, &c. It has been asserted, that eggs thus hatched suffer too great heat, and that in consequence, the feathers of the bird about to come forth adhere to the inner surface of the shell. To obviate this, it has been recommended by Mr. Moubray, to place the eggs under the lightest bantam hen. The partridge, if unmolested, lives fifteen or sixteen years; but it can never be thoroughly tamed like our domestic poultry.

They fly in coveys till about the third week in February, when they separate and pair; but if the weather be very severe, it is not unusual to see them collect together again into coveys. Partridges have ever held a distinguished place at the tables of the luxurious; we have an old distich:—

“ If the Partridge had the woodcock’s thigh,
’Twould be the best bird that e’er did fly.”

Partridges were originally taken with the net; but, through the introduction of the fowling-piece, this sport has undergone

THE PARTRIDGE.

considerable improvement, and now ranks secondary only to grouse-shooting.

In extreme northern countries the partridge becomes white in winter, and acquires an additional clothing in a thick and warm down, which grows at the roots of their feathers.

THE RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE

Is larger and heavier, and appears to fly with more difficulty than the common partridge, with which, however, it has been known to pair. This beautiful variety is found in abundance in some parts of the Continent, particularly in France and Spain: it has also been partially introduced into this country, and is met with in Norfolk and Suffolk. It is said not to be so prolific as the grey or common partridge, which never lights but upon the ground, whereas the red frequently perches on trees.

These birds prefer the mountains which most produce brambles and heath, and upon which the wood-hen, inappropriately called the white partridge, is sometimes met with, but they are also found on the lower, and, consequently, warmer and less savage spots. In winter they retreat under the covering of those rocks which are least exposed; dur-



RED LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

THE RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

ing the rest of the year they keep to the brambles, where sportsmen meet with difficulty in finding them, and in driving them from their cover. They live upon grain, herbs, slugs, butterflies, the eggs of ants, and other insects, but their flesh sometimes savours of the food on which they live.

They do not begin to lay till the month of May, or even of June, when the winter has been long; and generally form their nests without much care or preparation; a little grass or straw clumsily arranged in the footstep of an ox or a horse, sometimes in a natural hollow which they meet with, is all that they require. It has, however, been remarked, that those females which are a little older, and already instructed by the experience of previous layings, exhibit more precaution than the young ones, whether to preserve their nest from those who might submerge it, or to place it in security against their enemies, by choosing a place a little elevated, and naturally defended by brambles. They generally lay from fifteen to twenty eggs, and sometimes twenty-five, but the co-

THE RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

veys of those which are young, as well as of the old ones, are much less numerous. These eggs are nearly the colour of those of the pigeon. The period of incubation is about three weeks, being a little more or less, according to the degree of heat.

The female is charged alone with this duty, and, during its fulfilment, she experiences a considerable moulting, for all the feathers of the belly fall off. They incubate with much assiduity; and it is even pretended that they never leave their eggs without covering them with leaves. The male generally keeps close to the nest, attentive to his mate, and always ready to accompany her whenever she goes to seek for food. His attachment is so faithful and so pure, that he prefers this painful duty to the easy pleasures which are announced to him by the oft-repeated cries of other partridges, and to which he will sometimes respond, but which never induce him to abandon his mate to follow a stranger. About the time stated, when the season is favourable, and the incubation has gone on well, the young

THE RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

ones break the shell with much facility, and run the moment they are liberated; but it occasionally happens that they are unable to force their prison, and die in consequence.

In November 1827, a pied partridge, and another, milk white, were shot in the neighbourhood of Ripon, Yorkshire; they are both preserved in the fine collection of rare birds, &c. belonging to T. Stubbs, Esq, of that place. In January 1828, another white partridge was shot by Mr. Moiser, of Topcliffe; this, also, has been placed in the same museum.

THE QUAIL

Is not above half the size of the partridge, being only seven inches and a half in length; the feathers of the head are black, edged with rusty brown; the breast, of a pale yellowish red, spotted with black; a dark line passes from each corner of the bill, forming a sort of gorget above the breast; the feathers on the back, marked with lines of a pale yellow; the legs, pale brown. The female is easily distinguished, from its plumage being less vivid: she makes a nest similar to that of the partridge, and lays six or seven eggs, of a greyish colour, speckled with brown. Quails, or, as they are sometimes termed, *dwarf-partridges*, although not numerous, are found in most parts of this country: they are birds of passage; some entirely quitting our island, others only shifting from the interior, on the approach of winter, to the coast.



QUAILS.

THE QUAIL.

It may well be supposed that, with the habitude of changing its climate, and from being assisted by the wind in its great traverses, that the quail would be a bird very much spread; and, in fact, it is found at the Cape of Good Hope, and throughout all the inhabited parts of Africa, in Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, in the Low Countries, in Germany, England, Scotland, Sweden, even as far as Iceland; and from that coast to Poland, Russia, and Tartary, as far as China; and it is very probable that it has passed from thence to America. In general it is found upon the coasts, and in the neighbourhood of the sea, rather than inland.

Such prodigious numbers have sometimes appeared on the western coast of the kingdom of Naples, that one hundred thousand have been caught in one day, within the space of three or four miles. In some parts of the south of Russia they abound so greatly, that at the time of their migration they are caught by thousands, and sent in casks to Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Quail fighting was a favourite amusement

THE QUAIL.

among the Athenians, who reared great numbers for the sole purpose of witnessing their combats; but they abstained from its flesh, deeming it unwholesome, under the idea that it fed upon white hellebore. Fashion, however, at whose shrine the majority in all ages and in all countries have paid homage, has changed, in our time, in regard to the quail: we consider its flesh as a very great delicacy, but take no pleasure in their fierce and destructive contests.

Quails are easily caught; the fowler, early in the morning, having spread his net, conceals himself, and imitates the voice of the female with a quail-pipe, which the cock hearing, approaches fearlessly; when he has got under the net, the fowler discovers himself; the bird becomes terrified, and in attempting to escape, entangles himself in the meshes, and is thus taken.

The quail was that wild fowl which God thought proper to send to the chosen people of Israel, as a sustenance for them in the desert.

The Chinese quail is a beautiful little bird,

THE QUAIL.

and specimens are kept in cages in China, for the singular purpose, as it is said, of warming people's hands in winter; as taking the soft, warm body of the bird in the hand diffuses through it an agreeable warmth.

The American quail is larger than the common quail, and is indeed something between a quail and a partridge.

THE WOOD-PIGEON.

THIS species forms its nest of a few dry sticks in the boughs of trees: the female lays two white eggs, and is supposed to have two broods in the year. The wood-pigeon, or, as it is called in some districts, the *ring-dove*, is the largest of the pigeon tribe; it weighs about twenty ounces, and may be at once distinguished from all others, by the white mark on the hind part of the neck.

Some naturalists suppose this to be the parent stock of our large domestic pigeons; but it cannot be domesticated so easily as the stock-dove, and never mixes with the common pigeons in the fields. The beak is reddish white; the iris is pale yellow; the shanks are reddish; the head and throat are dark ash-grey; the front of the neck and the breast are purplish ash-grey; the sides and back of the neck are fine iridescent purple; an almost crescent-shaped



WOOD PIGEON.

THE WOOD-PIGEON.

white streak adorns the sides of the neck towards the base, without quite surrounding it; the belly, the vent, and the thighs, are very pale grey; the sides are light ash-grey; the upper part of the back, the scapulars, and the lesser wing-coverts, are light brownish ash-grey; the coverts of the primary quill-feathers are black; the remaining greater coverts are pale ash-grey; the tail is dark ash-grey, deepening into black at the extremity.

This species, found in Europe and Asia within the temperate zone, is very common in the woods of Germany and Britain: it quits us the beginning of October, in small flights, and does not return till the middle of March, and sometimes later, always some weeks after the stock-dove. During harvest it frequents small groves and detached thickets, to be nearer the corn-fields.

Attempts have been made to domesticate the ring-dove, by hatching their eggs under the common pigeon in dovecotes; but these endeavours have uniformly failed: as soon as the young ones can fly, they betake them-

THE WOOD-PIGEON.

selves to their natural haunts. They feed on herbs, all sorts of grain, and wild fruits; their flesh is truly delicious; but it soon becomes bitter and unpleasant from their eating turnips, which, in severe weather, they are compelled to do, for want of other sustenance.

