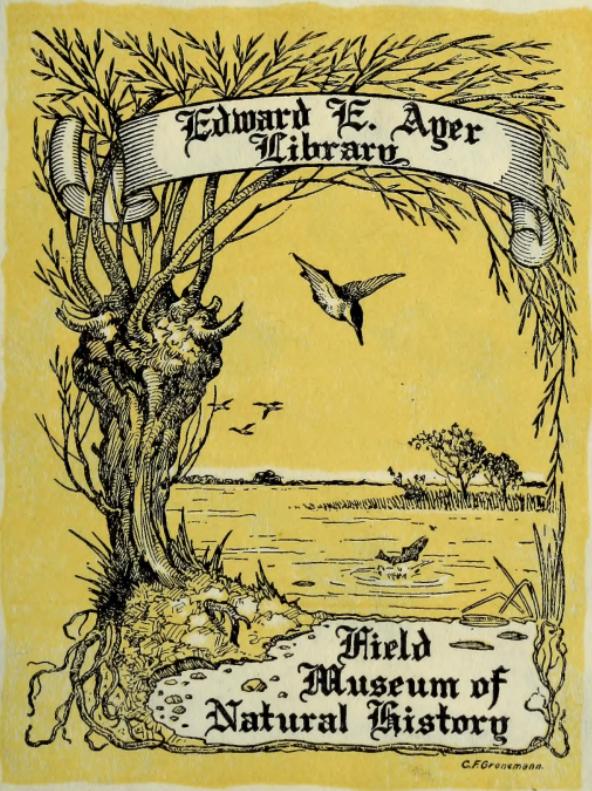




B. 3.



*W. H. Mullens.*



Vol. I 34 pl.

Vol. II 59 pl (incl. 7 uncolored)

Vol. III 99 pl. (incl. 11 col<sup>d</sup> and 4 uncol<sup>d</sup> in the text  
and 77 and 1 uncol<sup>d</sup>)

192 plates

V. 2 has an extra <sup>ed.</sup> plate to that of the Collection  
in Mellen's  
V. 3 has the uncolored plate of the Razor Bill  
not mentioned in the Collection in Mellen's  
Bibliography which gives the number  
of plates in the 3 vols as 191

Mary Fortescue



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British  
ORNITHOLOGY,  
Containing PORTRAITS of all the  
British Birds,  
including those of Foreign Origin,  
which have become domesticated;  
DRAWN, ENGRAVED & COLOURED  
after Nature,  
by  
J. HUN<sup>T</sup>,  
with descriptions compiled from the  
works of the most  
esteemed Naturalists,  
& arranged according to the  
LINNAEAN CLASSIFICATION.

Vol: 1.

Inscribed by Permission  
62962

To SIR J.E. SMITH, M.D. F.R.S.  
and President of the Linnaean Society.

NORWICH; 1815 Printed by BACON & C°

For the Proprietor & may be had of the Booksellers

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# BRITISH BIRDS.



*Sir Charles Linnæus, in his “Systema Naturæ,” divides the feathered race into Six Orders.\**

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## ORDER I.

### ACCIPITRES—RAPACIOUS BIRDS.

The characters of this order are:

*Bill* somewhat hooked downwards, the upper mandible dilated near the point, or armed with a tooth.

*Nostrils* open.

*Legs*, short, strong.

*Feet*, formed for perching, having three toes forwards, and one backwards; toes warty under the joints; claws hooked and sharp-pointed.

\* The Generic and Specific characters are quoted from Turton's translation of Sir Charles's works.

*Body* muscular, flesh tough and not fit to be eaten.

*Food*, the carcases of other animals, which they seize and tear.

*Nest* in high places.

*Eggs* about four.

*Female* larger than the male.

They live in pairs.

This order includes the four following genera :

1. *Vultur*, the Vultures.
2. *Falco*, the Eagles, Buzzards, Falcons, and Hawks.
3. *Strix*, the Owls.
4. *Lanius*, the Shrikes, or Butcher Birds.

## ACCIPITRES.

### GENUS I.

#### VULTUR—VULTURES.

No Birds of this genus were ever taken in the British isles.

## GENUS II.

## FALCO—FALCONS.

This is the most numerous tribe of rapacious birds; the distinguishing characters of which are:

*Bill* hooked, the base covered with a cere.

*Head* covered with close-set feathers.

*Tongue* bifid.

Birds of prey take an elevated range of flight, and subsist altogether on animal food; yet seldom feed on carrion, except when driven to it by necessity. They are able to sustain hunger for a great length of time, are not so prolific, but more bold and ferocious than other birds. Buffon observes, that “Accustomed continually to scenes of carnage, and torn by angry passions, they contract a stern and cruel disposition; all the softer feelings are eradicated, and the parental affection of the female is blunted. She regards not the imploring calls of her helpless young, but when straitened for food, she rudely thrusts them upon the world, or murders them in a transport of fury.” These birds are very quick-sighted, and can discern

their prey from an amazing height, darting down upon it with the swiftness of an arrow, and their strength is so great, that some of them have been known to carry to their young a load nearly as heavy as themselves, from a considerable distance.

They prefer the most solitary tracts; and commonly breed in crags of rocks or on the tallest trees, but some few of the species build their nests upon the ground.

Birds of this genus emit the exuviae and bones of their food at the mouth, in the form of round pellets.

Contrary to the general rule which prevail in every other species, the females of birds of prey are larger and stronger than the males.





*Falco Albicilla.* — *White-tailed Eagle.*

**FALCO ALBICILLA.****CINEREOUS EAGLE.****SPECIFIC CHARACTER.**

Cere and feet yellow; quill-feathers white, the middle ones tipped with black.

**SYNONYMS.**

*Vultur Albicilla*, Linnæus.

*Falco Albicilla*, Gmelin.

*Le Grand Pygargue*, Buffon.

*White-tailed Eagle*, Willughby, Bewick.

*Cinereous Eagle*, Pennant, Latham, Lewin, Shaw, Montagu.

**PROVINCIAL—GREAT ERNE.**

Linnæus originally classed this bird with the Vultures; but as Gmelin, in his edition of Sir Charles's work, has placed it with the Falcons, we have followed his example.

The Cinereous Eagle measures in length two feet eight inches and a half; in breadth six feet ten inches and a half; and weighs seven pounds six ounces.

The above measurement, &c. was taken from a fine specimen in the possession of G. Montagu, Esq.

The female is rather lighter coloured than the male.

We are sorry it is not in our power to give any description of the nest. But, upon the authority of Mr. Bullock, we are assured that the Cinereous Eagle breeds in the Isle of Hoy, and that he there took a nest, containing two young eaglets, in the year 1812.

G. Montagu, Esq. in his excellent work on Ornithology, informs us, that an acquaintance of his had two of these birds, which were taken from the highest cliffs in the Orknies, and that the nest originally contained three. Dr. Heysham informed Dr. Latham, that in a nest of one of these birds, near Keswick, in Cumberland, was found a trout of about twelve pounds weight; that he obtained the bird alive, and had kept it above ten years when he communicated the account; and that it was either six or seven years before the tail became white. The specimen in the possession of Mr. Montagu

lived in confinement nearly nine years; it did not appear to be particularly partial to fish, but devoured flesh with equal avidity. He usually plucked birds pretty clean of their feathers before he devoured them, and those unavoidably swallowed, were, with a part of the bones, disgorged. He drank more frequently than is usual with this tribe of birds. He was not a bold bird, but fearful of strangers; and in his violent struggles often broke his chain. Two or three times he fled for a mile or more; but this being an exertion to which he was unaccustomed, he was recaptured without much difficulty.

This bird is found in Scotland and the adjacent isles, and in all the northern parts of Europe, as far as Iceland, Lapland, and Greenland.

It is said to remain in Greenland the whole year; and if not more vigorous than the common Eagle, it is at least more bloody and rapacious. It will attack large animals, fish, and birds, especially those which dive. It watches with great attention, and pounces on them as they rise. It will even venture to attack young seals; in which attempt it

sometimes loses its life by being drawn under water by the animal.

Buffon supposes, *Falco Albicilla* (*Cinereous Eagle*), *Falco Albicaudus* (*Lesser White-tailed Eagle*), and *Falco Leucocephalus* (*Bald Eagle*), to be varieties of the same species; the two first distinguished by their size, and the last by the whiteness of its head and neck.





F. M. Gray

1866

**FALCO OSSIFRAGUS.****SEA EAGLE.**

Cere and legs yellow; legs somewhat downy; body ferruginous; tail feathers white on the inner side.

*Falco Ossifragus*, Lin. Gme.

*L'Orfraie*, Buffon.

Sea Eagle, Will. Lath. Pen. Don. Shaw.  
Bew. Mont.

It will be observed, that our figure does not exactly correspond with the specific character given by Linnæus, the tail feathers not being white on the inner side; but we pledge ourselves for the correctness of the drawing in that respect, having had several specimens to compare, and not less than three during the spring of the present year, (1815.)

A beautiful specimen of the male of this bird was shot at Gunton, in the county of Norfolk, in the month of February, from which our drawing was made. It measured two feet nine inches in length and seven feet

in breadth, and weighed seven pounds and a half.

A female now before us was shot at Rollesby, near Great Yarmouth, on the 20th of January, 1815. It measured three feet two inches in length, and seven feet eight inches in breadth, and weighed ten pounds and a half. It differs but little in the colour of the plumage from the male.

We have had another specimen of the female, whose extent across the wings was eight feet.

This bird generally builds its nest in the neighbourhood of large lakes, or on the sea-coast amongst the most stupendous cliffs. It lays two or three eggs, round, and of a dirty white colour.

It is by far the most plentiful of the Aquiline race in the British dominions; not a year passes but many are shot in England.

This bird inhabits Scotland, Ireland, the North of Europe, North America, and was met with in Botany Island by Captain Cooke.

It is said to watch the Osprey while catching fish, and to pursue that bird till it

quits its prey, which it seizes most dexterously in the air as it falls. But although it feeds chiefly on fish, it is probable every animal of inferior strength suffers from its rapacity.

The female before noticed was observed, at different times, before it was killed, to pounce upon, and to carry away, wild fowl from out of the decoy.

The Sea Eagle rises in the air to an astonishing height, having been observed, from the top of the highest mountains in Scotland, soaring at so great a distance, as to appear scarcely larger than a swallow.

The contest between birds of prey, in the season of love, is sometimes extremely desperate, and not unfrequently fatal.

“ Two of this species (says Montagu) contending in the air, over the extensive lake of Loch Lomond, in the Scottish Highlands, both at last became so firmly grappled to each other by their talons, that they were precipitated into the water. The uppermost regained the power of its wings, but the other was taken alive by a Highlander, who witnessed the scene, and who waited till the wind had wafted it near the shore.”

The same author mentions a ludicrous circumstance of two living Eagles of this kind, that were sent him from Ireland, and which were, on their arrival at Bristol, detained by an officer of the customs, upon a plea that there was a duty upon all singing birds. Had this happened on the other side of the water, it might have been termed an Irish story. The unfortunate birds would however have been starved at the custom-house, if application had not been made to the head of that department, in the port of Bristol, offering to pay any demand for their release, if legally detained for their vocal abilities. By this officer it was most wisely determined, after some consideration, that Eagles could scarcely be considered as singing birds.

The story of one of these Eagles, brought to the ground after a severe conflict with a cat, which it had seized and taken up into the air in its talons, is very remarkable. Mr. Barlow, who was an eye-witness of the fact, made a drawing of it, which he afterwards engraved.





E  
Circus aeruginosus. Gmelin. Cuckoo Hawk.  
I. H. 1817

**FALCO CHRYSÆTOS.****GOLDEN EAGLE.**

Cere yellow; legs downy, yellowish-rusty; body variegated brown and rusty; tail black, waved at the base with cinereous.

*Falco Chrysaetos*, Lin. Gme.

*Le Grand Aigle*, Buffon.

*Golden Eagle*, Lath. Pen. Graves, Bew.  
Mont. Shaw.

The Golden Eagle is regarded as the chief of the European Eagles. It measures, from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail, three feet six inches, and from tip to tip of the wings, when extended, somewhat more than eight feet. It weighs from twelve to fourteen pounds.

The female has been known to measure nine feet in breadth, and four feet in length, and to weigh sixteen pounds. It differs but little in the colour of its plumage from the male.

This bird builds its eyry or nest in the

most sequestered situations, and commonly places it between two rocks. The same nest, it is said, serves this Eagle for the whole course of its life. Buffon observes, that “ It is indeed a work laborious enough not to be repeated, and solid enough to last for a considerable time. It is constructed nearly like a floor with small sticks, five or six feet long, supported at the extremities, and crossed with pliant branches, covered with several layers of rushes and heath: the nest is several feet broad, and so firm as not only to support the male, the female, and the young, but to bear the weight of a large quantity of provisions. It is not covered above, but is sheltered by the projection of the upper part of the rock. In the middle of this structure, the female deposits her eggs, which seldom exceed two or three.”

The same author observes, “ It is more uncommon, perhaps, to see two pairs of Eagles in the same tract of the mountains, than two families of Lions in the same part of the forest. They separate from each other at such wide intervals, as to afford ample range for subsistence, and esteem the

value and extent of their kingdom to consist in the abundance of the prey with which it is replenished."

The young of this Eagle are said to be white, and afterwards to become of a pale yellow, which deepens as they advance in age.

The exquisite sight of this bird enables it to see objects at an amazing distance. It is by this sense, and not by the smell, that it is directed in pursuit of its prey. When he has seized his booty, he stops his flight, and for a moment places it upon the ground, before he carries it off.

They are very destructive to fawns, lambs, kids, and all kinds of game, particularly in the breeding season, when they carry a vast quantity of prey to their young. Several instances have been recorded of children having been seized and carried off by Eagles.

The following anecdote is mentioned by Bingley, as a proof that these birds sometimes suddenly and severely revenge ill treatment, though by gentle and kind usage they

are capable of great docility, and, in some cases, of inviolable attachment :

“ A gentleman who lived in the South of Scotland had, a few years ago, a tame Eagle of this species, which the keeper one day injudiciously thought proper, for some petty fault, to lash with a horsewhip. About a week afterwards, the man chanced to stoop within reach of its chain, when the enraged animal, recollecting the late insult, flew in his face with so much fury and violence, that he was terribly wounded, but was luckily driven so far back by the blow, as to be out of all further danger. The screams of the Eagle alarmed the family, who found the poor man lying at some distance in a very bloody plight, equally stunned with the fright and the fall. The animal was still pacing about and screaming in a manner not less threatening than majestic. It was even dreaded, whether, in so violent a rage, he might not break loose ; which circumstance actually took place, but fortunately, perhaps, for them, not till after they had withdrawn, and he escaped for ever.”

The Golden Eagle has reputation for great longevity and for the power of sustaining abstinence from food for an unusual length of time. Pennant mentions one that died at Vienna after a confinement of 104 years; and another which lived nine years in the possession of Owen Holland, Esq. of Conway, having previously lived thirty-two years with the gentleman who made him a present of it, but what its age was when the latter received it from Ireland is unknown. The same bird also furnishes a proof of the truth of the other remark, having once through the neglect of servants endured hunger for twenty-one days, without any sustenance whatever.

This bird is found in various parts of Europe. It is known to breed in Ireland; and Pennant says that there are instances of their having bred on Snowdon Hills. Mr. Bullock has recently taken the nest of this bird in the Isle of Hoy.

In 1811 a female of this species was shot near Brompton, in Middlesex, and presented to Mr. Bullock, proprietor of the London Museum. Within a week of the same time

a male of this species was shot near Goodalming, in Surrey. (Graves.)

Our drawing was made from a specimen in the London Museum, finely preserved, in the act of preying on the white hare of Scotland,





*Falco Falvus.* — Ring-tailed Eagle.

J. Harris.

**FALCO FULVUS.****RING-TAILED EAGLE.**

Cere yellow; legs downy, rusty; back brown; tail with a white band.

*Falco Fulvus*, Lin. Gme.

L'Aigle Commun, Buffon.

Black Eagle, Pennant.

Ring-tailed Eagle, Will. Pen. Lath. Shaw,  
Bew. Mont.

White-tailed Eagle, Edwards.

The Ring-tailed Eagle nearly equals in size the Golden Eagle, and its manners are similar.

Sonnini observes, that "almost all naturalists who have written upon birds have made two distinct species of the Brown and Black Eagle; some indeed have considered them only as the male and female of the same species, and in the eyes of Buffon they appeared to be simple varieties. Although this opinion (adopted by a more recent ornithologist, Daudin) is very probable; it is not however proved. The question does

not appear to me to be quite decided ; and we need a greater number of observations for that purpose than are yet within our reach. It is not, in fact, by a minute comparison of the dead carcases of birds, nor by a scrupulous indication of their colours, that we can hope to trace with a steady hand the line of demarcation which separates the species. Age, sex, season, all produce various changes in the covering of birds of prey ; and diversities of plumage, in various situations, are common to them with many other species of birds."

From the observations we have made upon different specimens, we have not the least doubt but that they are of the same species, differing only in the shades of their plumage.

Willughby gives a curious account of the nest of this species, found in the woodlands near the river Derwent, in the Peak of Derbyshire. He says it was made of large sticks, lined with two layers of rushes, between which was one of heath ; that in it was one young and an addled egg, and by them a lamb, a hare, and three heath-poults. The young Eagle was black, hav-

ing a white ring about the tail. From this mark in so young a bird, it should appear to be a characteristic of the species in all ages; for though it varies in the breadth of that band, yet it never entirely loses it.

The Ring-tailed Eagle is more numerous and diffused than the Golden Eagle, and prefers more northern climates. It is found in France, Germany, Switzerland, and in America as far as Hudson's Bay.

In our own island it is chiefly seen in Scotland; where, as Pennant informs us, it very frequently occurs, and is called the Black Eagle. He adds, "it is very destructive to deer, which it will seize between the horns, and by incessantly beating it with its wings, soon makes a prey of the harassed animal: that it builds in the cliffs of rocks, near the deer forests, and makes great havoc, not only amongst them, but also amongst the white hares and ptarmigans."

As Mr. Montagu and some friends were sporting in the neighbourhood of Ben-Lomond, on the summit of one of the lower mountains that form its base, a grouse (*Tetrao Scoticus*) was wounded, and flew with diffi-

culty eighty or a hundred paces. An Eagle, apparently of this species, perceiving the laborious flight of the grous, descended with rapid wing from the adjacent lofty cliffs, before their guns were reloaded, and in defiance of the shouts made to deter him, carried off his prey.

Not having it in our power to refer to the original work, we copy the following anecdote from Dr. Shaw's General Zoology, which he extracted from the Life of the celebrated Thuanus or De Thou, viz. that "when himself and Monsieur Schomberg were passing through a part of France, on an embassy from Henry the Third to the King of Navarre, they were entertained for several days, together with their suite, at Mande, the seat of the Bishop and Count of Gevaudan. At the first repast it was observed, with some surprise, that all the wild fowl or game brought to table wanted either a head, a wing, a leg, or some other part, which occasioned their host pleasantly to apologize for the voracity of his caterer, who always took the liberty of first tasting what he procured, before it was brought to table."

On perceiving the increased surprise of his guests, he informed them, that in the mountainous regions of that district the Eagles were accustomed to build their eyries amongst the almost inaccessible rocks, which can only be ascended with ladders and grappling irons. The peasants, however, when they had discovered a nest, raised a little hut at the foot of a rock, in which they screened themselves from the fury of the birds, when they convey provision to their young, which the male carefully nourishes for the space of three months, and the female continues the employment till the young are capable of quitting the eyry. While the young continue in the eyry the parents ravage all the country, and conveyed to the nest capons, chickens, ducks, lambs, kids, pigs, &c. But that the fields and woods supplied them with the choicest game; for from thence they seized pheasants, partridges, woodcocks, wild ducks, hares, and young fawns. When therefore the shepherds perceived that the Eagles had left the eyry, they planted their ladders, climbed the rocks, and carried off what the Eagles had conveyed to their young,

leaving instead the entrails of animals or other offal ; but as this could not be done so expeditiously as to prevent the young Eagles from devouring a part of what had been brought them, it followed that it was generally mutilated ; in recompence however for this disadvantage it had a much finer flavour than any thing the markets could afford. He added, that when the young Eagle had acquired strength enough to fly, the shepherds fastened him to the eyry, in order that the parent birds might supply him so much the longer with food ; that three or four Eagles' nests were sufficient to furnish a splendid table throughout the year ; and that, far from murmuring at the ravages of Eagles, he thought himself very happy in being situated in their neighbourhood, and reckoned every eyry as a kind of annual rent."

Sonnini informs us, that " this bird presents a phenomenon which is peculiar to it. When it swallows pieces of food, two drops of liquor issue from the apertures of the nostrils, run along the top of the beak, unite themselves at the point, and then enter the mouth and mix with the aliments. This

liquor is rather salt, and of a light blue colour; it continues to flow as long as the repast of the Eagle continues. The ejection of this fluid is most probably produced by the compression of the glands which contain it: its use is not known; but it is likely that it mixes with the aliments to soften them and facilitate digestion."

As the birds of this genus (in a state of captivity) are seldom observed to drink, future observations may prove the above not to be peculiar to the Ring-tailed Eagle, but common to the whole tribe.

## FALCO LAGOPUS.

## ROUGH-LEGGED FALCON.

Cere and downy legs yellow; body black, spotted with white; tail feathers white, towards the tip black.

*Falco Lagopus*, Lin. Gme.

Rough-legged Falcon, Pen. Lath. Mont.

Greenland Falcon, Arctic Zoology.

Mr. Montagu is of opinion, that the Rough-legged Falcon and the Booted Falcon (*Falco Pennatus*) are the same bird, differing only in age or sex.

The description and figure of this bird was first published by Mr. Pennant in the British Zoology. It was shot near London, and was in the Leverian Museum.

Montagu says this species measures upwards of two feet in length; the wings are long, and reach near to the end of the tail when closed.

A specimen of this bird was taken up dead on the coast of Kent, and presented to





*Buteo lagopus*.

Rough-legged Falcon.

G. Montagu, Esq. by Dr. Latham; another was shot in Suffolk.

These birds differed much in plumage, and are thus described by the above author:

The first specimen—"The bill dusky; cere and irides yellow; the head, neck, and breast yellowish white, with streaks of brown, those on the breast large; the lower part of the sides above the thighs and belly, except a line down the middle, dusky brown; the scapulars and wing coverts blotched with dusky brown; the former mixed with yellowish white, the latter inclining to ferruginous; the quill feathers white at the base, dusky black at the ends; the outer webs dashed with cinereous, shafts white; the tail is brown one third from the end, across which are two faint bars of dusky black, the rest white, with a few spots across the upper part, resembling a broken bar of brown; the tip white; upper tail coverts white, streaked with brown; the legs are covered with pale dull yellow feathers down to the feet, spotted with brown; thighs the same; feet yellow; claws black."

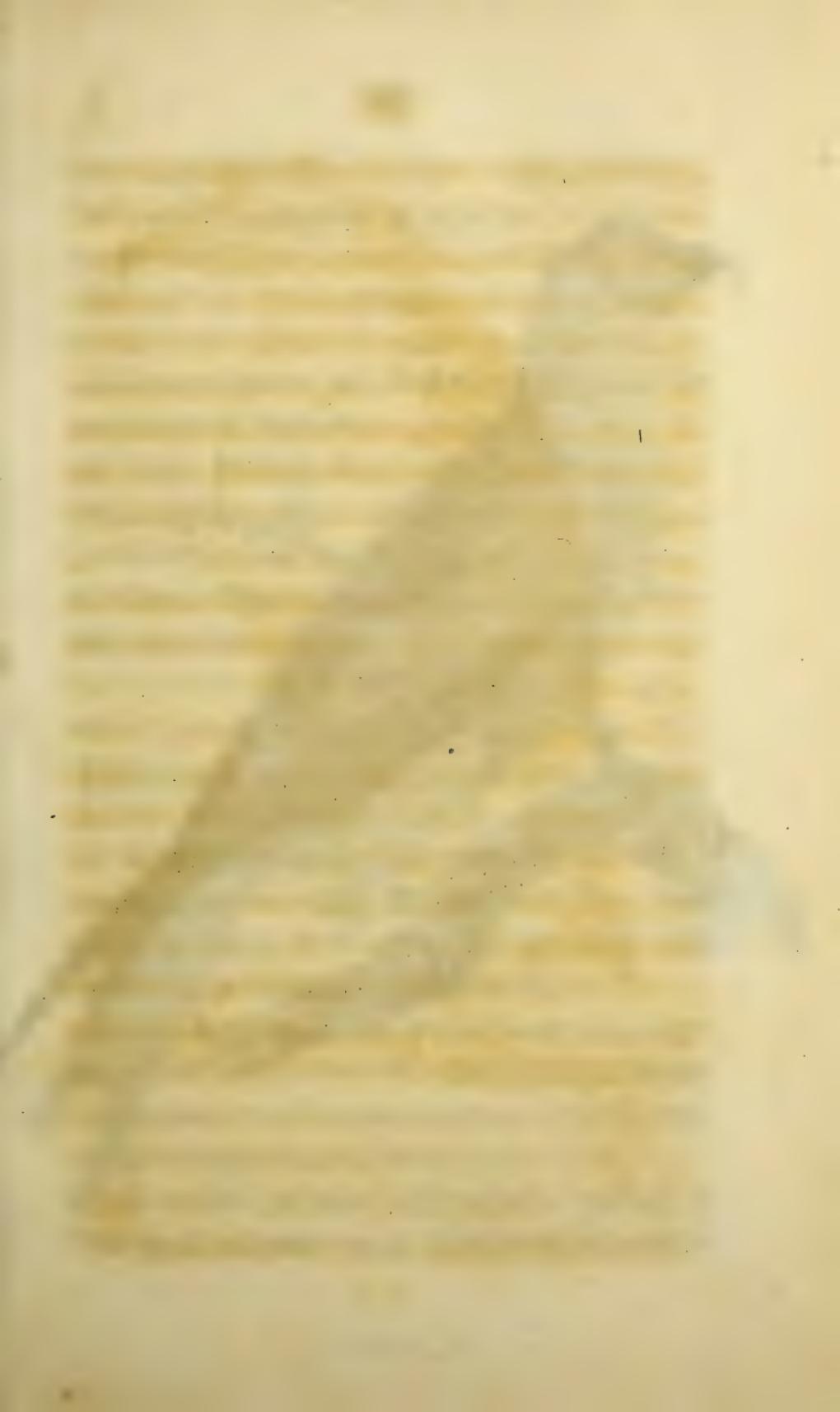
"The other bird had the tail of a cream-

coloured white; near the tip was a brown bar above an inch in breadth, above that another half an inch broad, and above these each feather had a spot upon it in the middle, mimicking, when spread, a third bar; the two outer feathers on each side are marked with a few irregular spots of brown on the outer webs, almost the whole of their length. This bird was less than the former, measuring only one foot ten inches."

The specimen described by Pennant had the extreme half of the tail brown, tipped with dirty white.

Two of these rare and beautiful birds were taken in the month of November, 1815, on the warren belonging to Mr. Robert Scales, of Beechamwell, near Swaffham, in the county of Norfolk, and are now alive in his possession.

The Rough-legged Falcon is a native of the more Northern parts, and is rarely met with in England.





*F. Milvus.*

**FALCO MILVUS.****KITE.**

Cere yellow; tail forked; body ferruginous; head whitish.

*Falco Milvus*, Lin. *Gme.*

*Le Milan Royal*, Buffon.

*Kite or Glead*, Will.

*Kite*, Pen. Lath. Shaw, Mont. Don.

*Graves*, Bew.

**PROVINCIAL.****PUTTOCK, FORK-TAILED KITE, GLEAD.**

The specimen from which our drawing was made measured rather more than two feet in length, and in breadth five feet; and weighed two pounds and a half.

The female differs but little in plumage from the male, but is rather larger, being sometimes two feet six inches in length, and five feet eight inches in breadth.

It makes its nest early in the spring, in the fork of some large tree; which nest is

composed of sticks, wool, hair, and frequently pieces of cloth and any other soft materials it happens to meet with. The eggs are generally three in number, rarely four. These are rather larger than those of a hen. They are of a dirty white, with a few rusty spots at the larger end. Sometimes they are quite plain.

This bird continues in England the whole year, but in some parts of Europe it is said to be migratory, retiring to Egypt in great numbers, where (according to Bewick) "it is said to breed, and returns in April to Europe, where it breeds a second time." We have not the opportunity to prove or disprove the assertion; but should it be correct, it establishes a fact contrary to the nature of rapacious birds in general.

Buffon observes, that the Kite "is neither bold nor timid; it has a kind of stupid ferocity, which gives it an air of cool intrepidity, and seems to remove the sense of danger. It is easier to approach and to kill it than the Eagle or Vulture; when detained in captivity it is less capable of instruction; and it has always been proscribed and erased

from the catalogue of noble birds, and banished from the school of falconry. In all ages it has been common to compare a gross shameless man to a Kite, and a disgusting stupid woman to a Buzzard."

The same author informs us, that in France "it was formerly an amusement for princes to hunt this bird with the falcon or sparrow-hawk. It is indeed entertaining to see it, though possessed of all that ought to inspire courage, and deficient neither in weapons, strength, nor agility, decline the combat, and fly before a sparrow-hawk smaller than itself; it constantly circles and rises, as it were, to conceal itself in the clouds, and when overtaken, it suffers itself to be beaten without resistance, and brought to the ground, not wounded but vanquished, and rather overcome with fear than subdued by the force of its antagonist."

Scarcely any one can be unacquainted with the elegant appearance of this bird while sailing aloft in its circling flight, and maintaining its equilibrium by a slight exertion of its pinions at distant intervals. During these wanderings it is meditating its

prey beneath, and occasionally descends from its aerial height, in order to seize some bird or other animal within its view. It principally preys on young chickens, ducks, goslings, &c. and is in consequence proscribed by the universal voice of every village in the country. Were it not for those depredations its appearance would be welcomed as the harbinger of fine weather, for it is in clear skies that it makes its principal excursions.

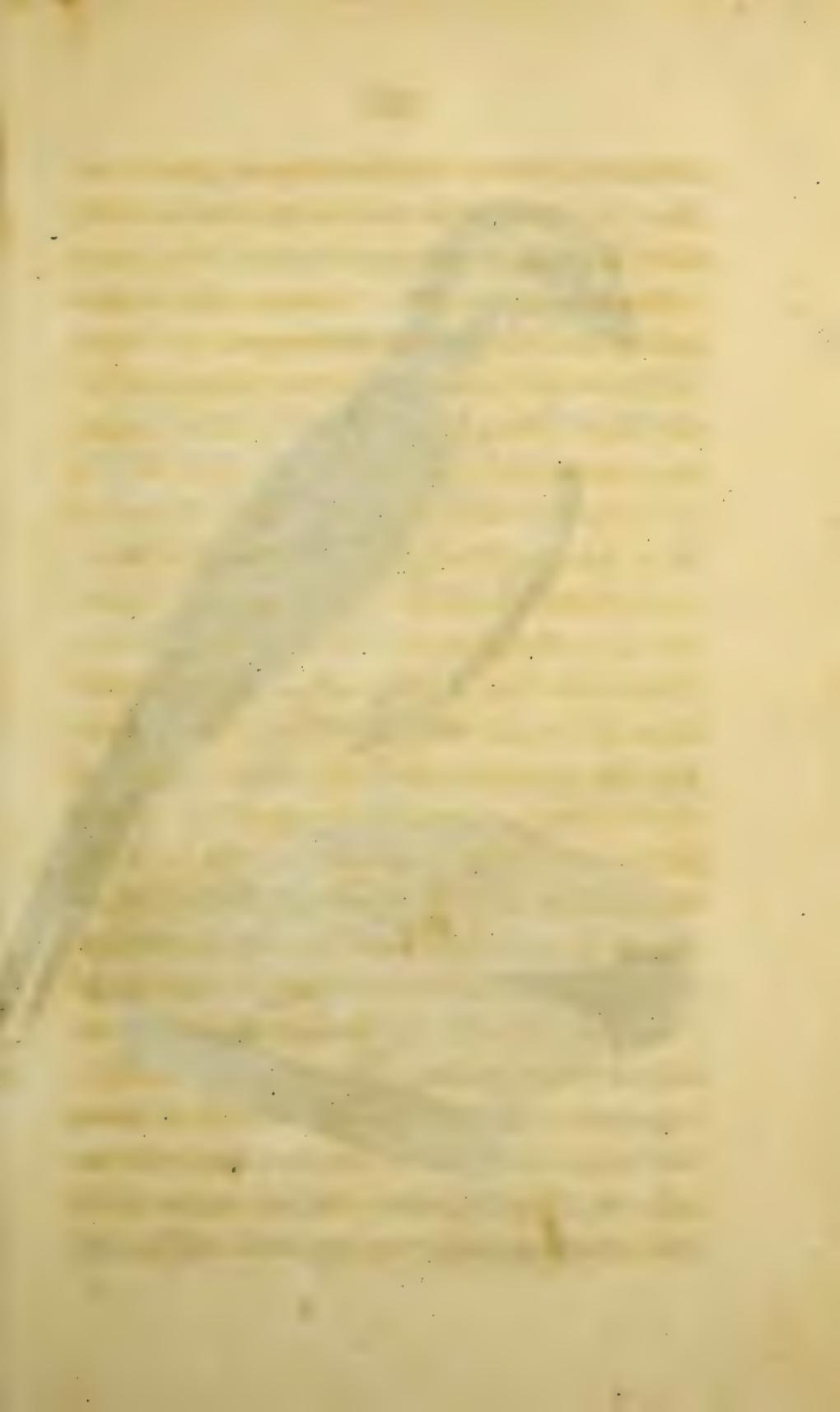
In the days of King Henry the Eighth the British metropolis swarmed with Kites, which were attracted by the various kinds of offal thrown into the streets, and were so fearless as to take their prey in the midst of the greatest crowds, it being forbidden to kill them. Thus the Kite was as much reverenced in the streets of London, in those times, as the Vulture is at this day in those of Grand Cairo or Alexandria. The descent of a Kite at the present day in Cheap-side or Charing-Cross would probably attract as sudden a crowd as any other unexpected phenomenon, and would doubtless be recorded in the public prints as an event of singular curiosity.

In the supplement to the Ornithological Dictionary, Montague observes, that “shy and guarded as birds of prey usually are, it is curious to observe how totally they are off their guard when intent upon their prey, especially if pressed by hunger. A remarkable instance of this (says the Rev. Mr. Wheatear, in a letter to the author) occurred at a farm-house in the neighbourhood of Hastings, and will serve as a proof. A servant girl, the only person in it, was alarmed by an unusual uproar amongst the poultry; on looking out, she saw a large bird hovering close to the window, over some coops, in which were some broods of ducks and chickens. Upon this, she sallied forth to drive the bird away, but it took so little notice of her, that she snatched up a broom, and actually knocked it down and killed it. It proved to be a Kite, which had probably a nest in a neighbouring wood.”

The same author mentions an anecdote of two of these birds being so intent in combat for the softer sex, that they both fell to the ground, holding firmly by each other’s talons, and actually suffered them-

selves to be killed by a woodman, who was close by, and who demolished them both with his hook.

Kites are met with in Sweden, and as far southward as Guinea and Senegal.





*Falco Halicetus*. — *Osprey*.

**FALCO HALIAETOS.****OSPREY.**

Cere and feet blue; body brown above, white beneath; head white.

*Falco Haliaetus*, Lin. Gme.

Balbuzard, Buffon.

Osprey, Pen. Lath. Mont. Bew.

Osprey Eagle, Shaw.

**PROVINCIAL.****FISHING HAWK, FISHING EAGLE, SEA EAGLE, BALD BUZZARD.**

This bird is usually about two feet in length, and somewhat more than five feet in breadth; weighing from three pounds six ounces to four pounds.

It is said to make its nest generally on the ground, by the side of the water, composed of flags and rushes; and lays three or four white eggs, rather smaller than those of a hen. Mr. Montagu says, that he once saw

the nest of this bird on the top of the chimney of a ruin in the island of Loch Lomond, in Scotland ; it was large and flat, formed of sticks laid across, and resting on the sides of the chimney, lined with flags.

The legs and toes of this species are remarkably roughened with scales ; and on the inner side of the extremity of the outer toe are three spines. The thighs are covered with remarkably short feathers ; and a sort of downy plumage continues half way down the front of the legs, but they are bare behind. The roughened feet and the unusual disposition of the talons, which are formidable, are well adapted to secure the fish, which form its principal food.

An Osprey was seen to stoop and carry off a young wild duck, half grown, from the surface of the water at Slapton Ley ; the duck by struggling fell from the talons of the bird, but was again recovered before it reached the water.

Another was observed over the river Avon hawking for fish ; at last its attention was arrested, and like the kestril in search of mice, it became stationary, as if examining

what had attracted its attention. After a pause of some time, it descended towards the surface of the water, and there continued hovering for another short interval, and precipitated itself with such violence as to be nearly immersed. In three or four seconds the bird rose without any apparent difficulty, and carried off a trout of moderate size: and instead of alighting to regale upon its prey, it soared to a prodigious height, and did not descend within view.

Bingley, in his Animal Biography, informs us, that this bird often affords amusement to strangers on the larger rivers of America. During the spring and summer months, the Osprey is frequently seen hovering over the rivers, or resting on the wing, for several minutes at a time, without the least visible change of place. It then suddenly darts down, and plunges into the water; from whence it seldom rises again without some fish in its talons. When it does rise into the air, it immediately shakes off the water, which it throws around like a mist, and pursues its way towards the woods. The Bald Eagle (*Falco Leucocephalus*, of

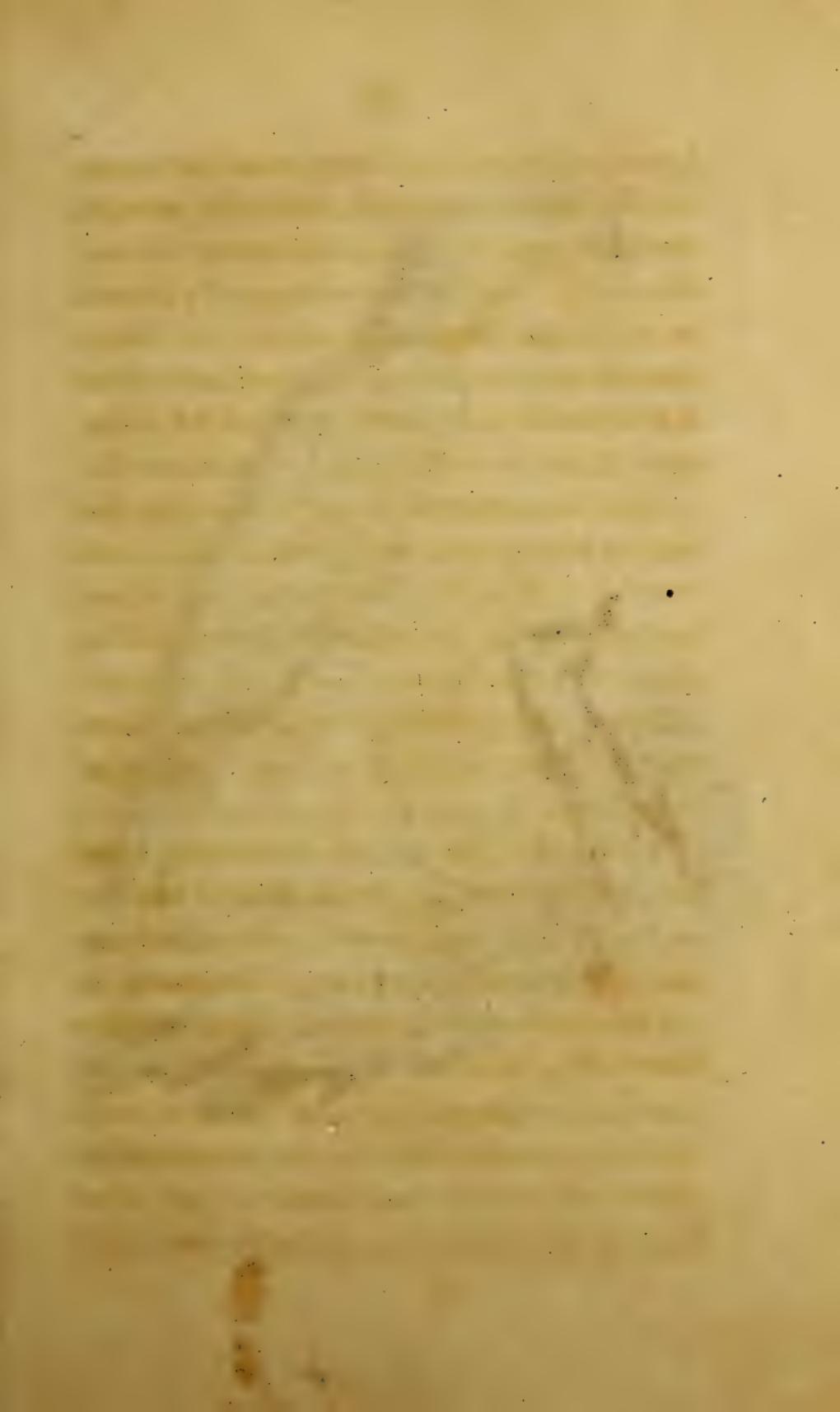
Linnæus), which on these occasions is generally upon the watch, instantly pursues, and if it can overtake, endeavours to soar above it. The Osprey, solicitous for its own safety, drops the fish in alarm; the Eagle immediately pounces at this prey, and never fails to catch it before it reaches the water, leaving the hawk to begin his work afresh.

Many ancient authors have described this bird as having one foot subpalmated, a circumstance that has never occurred in any animal; each side always corresponds in size and shape.

The Osprey can neither swim nor dive, therefore takes its prey near the surface of the water.

These birds are found in Europe, America, and Siberia. From accounts it appears to be more frequently met with in Devonshire, than in any other part of England.

Our specimen was shot at Blickling, October 16th, 1815.





L. Hunt.

Paleo Buteo. — Common Buzzard.

**FALCO BUTEO.****COMMON BUZZARD.**

Cere and legs yellow; body brown; belly pale, with brown spots.

*Falco Buteo*, Lin. Gme.

*La Buse*, Buffon.

Buzzard, Pen. Lath. Bew. Shaw, Graves, Mont.

**PROVINCIAL.****P U T T O C K.**

This is the most common species of the British Falcons. It measures twenty-two inches in length, and somewhat exceeds four feet in breadth; varies much in size, weighing from two pounds and a half to three pounds and a half; and is subject to very great variety in plumage.

The female is a bolder bird than the male. It makes its nest in the fork of a large tree, near the top; sometimes takes possession of a deserted crow's nest. The

male usually perches near the female during the time of incubation. They feed their young for a long time after they are capable of flying. The nest is composed of sticks, and lined with wool and other soft substances. It lays two or three eggs, white, with spots of rust colour, most numerous at the large end. They are rather larger than those of the common hen.

This well-known bird is of a sedentary and indolent disposition ; it continues perched for many hours at a time upon a tree or eminence, from whence it darts upon such prey as comes within its reach. It feeds on birds, small quadrupeds, reptiles, and insects. Though possessed of strength and weapons to defend itself, yet it is cowardly, inactive, and slothful : it will fly from a sparrow hawk ; and when overtaken, will suffer itself to be beaten, and even brought to the ground, without resistance.

Montagu says, this bird never pursues its prey on wing, but is contented with young hares, rabbits, and feathered game, of which it is a great destroyer ; or if old ones are wounded, they become an easy prey.

The following anecdote will shew that the Buzzard may be so far tamed as even to be rendered a faithful domestic. It is copied from a letter of M. Fontaine to the Comte de Buffon.

“ In 1763 (says this gentleman) a Buzzard was brought to me that had been taken in a snare. It was at first extremely wild and unpromising. I undertook to tame it; and I succeeded, by leaving it to fast, and constraining it to come and eat out of my hand. By pursuing this plan, I brought it to be very familiar: and after having shut it up about six weeks, I began to allow it a little liberty, taking the precaution, however, to tie both pinions of its wings. In this condition it walked out into my garden, and returned when I called it to feed. After some time, when I judged that I could trust to its fidelity, I removed the ligatures, and fastened a small bell, an inch and a half in diameter, above its talons, and also attached on the breast a piece of copper, having my name engraved on it. I then gave it entire liberty, which it soon abused; for it took wing and flew as far as the forest of Belesme.

I gave it up for lost ; but four hours after, I saw it rush into my hall, which was open, pursued by five other Buzzards, who had constrained it to seek again its asylum.

“ After this adventure it ever preserved its fidelity to me, coming every night to sleep at my window ; it grew so familiar as to seem to take singular pleasure in my company. It attended constantly at dinner, sat on a corner of the table, and very often caressed me with its head and bill, emitting a weak sharp cry, which, however, it sometimes softened. It is true that I alone had this privilege. It one day followed me when I was on horseback, more than two leagues, flying above my head.

“ It had an aversion both to dogs and cats ; nor was it in the least afraid of them ; it had often tough battles with them, but always came off victorious. I had four very strong cats, which I collected into my garden with my Buzzard : I threw to them a piece of raw flesh ; the nimblest cat seized it—the rest pursued ; but the bird darted upon her body, bit her ears with his bill, and squeezed her sides with his talons so forcibly, that the

cat was obliged to relinquish her prize. Often another cat snatched it the instant it dropped ; but she suffered the same treatment, till the Buzzard got entire possession of the plunder. He was so dexterous in his defence, that when he perceived himself assailed at once by the four cats, he took wing, and uttered a cry of exultation. At last the cats, chagrined with their repeated disappointments, would no longer contend.

“ This Buzzard had a singular antipathy ; he would not suffer a red cap on the head of any of the peasants ; and so alert was he in whipping it off, that they found their heads bare, without knowing what was become of their caps. He also snatched wigs, without doing any injury ; and he carried these caps and wigs to the tallest tree in a neighbouring park, which was the ordinary deposit of his booty.

“ He would suffer no other bird of prey to enter his domain ; he attacked them very boldly, and put them to flight. He did no mischief in my court-yard ; and the poultry, which at first dreaded him, grew insensibly reconciled to him. The chickens and duck-

lings received not the least harsh usage; and yet he bathed among the latter. But what is singular, he was not gentle to my neighbour's poultry; and I was often obliged to publish that I would pay for the damages that he might occasion. However, he was frequently fired at, and at different times received fifteen musket-shots without suffering any fracture; but once, early in the morning, hovering over the skirts of a forest, he dared to attack a fox; and the keeper, seeing him on the shoulders of the fox, fired two shots at him: the fox was killed and the Buzzard had his wing broken; yet notwithstanding this fracture, he escaped from the keeper, and was lost seven days. This man having discovered, from the noise of the bell, that he was my bird, came next morning to inform me. I sent to make search near the spot; but the bird could not be found, nor did it return till seven days after. I had been used to call him every evening with a whistle, which he did not answer for six days; but on the seventh day I heard a feeble cry at a distance, which I judged to be that of my Buzzard; I repeated the

whistle a second time, and heard the same cry. I went to the place from whence the sound came, and at last found my poor Buzzard with his wing broken, who had travelled more than half a league on foot to regain his asylum, from which he was then distant about a hundred and twenty paces. Though he was extremely reduced, he gave me many caresses. It was six weeks before he was recruited and his wounds were healed; after which he began to fly as before, and follow his old habits for about a year; he then disappeared for ever. I am convinced that he was killed by accident, and that he would not have forsaken me from choice."

**FALCO APIVORUS.****HONEY BUZZARD.**

Cere black; feet half naked, yellow; head cinereous; tail brown, with two dusky bands, and tipped with white.

*Falco Apivorus*, Lin. Gme.

*La Bondree*, Buffon.

**Honey Buzzard**, Pen. Lath. White, Bew.  
Mont. Shaw.

**PROVINCIAL.****CAPPED BUZZARD.**

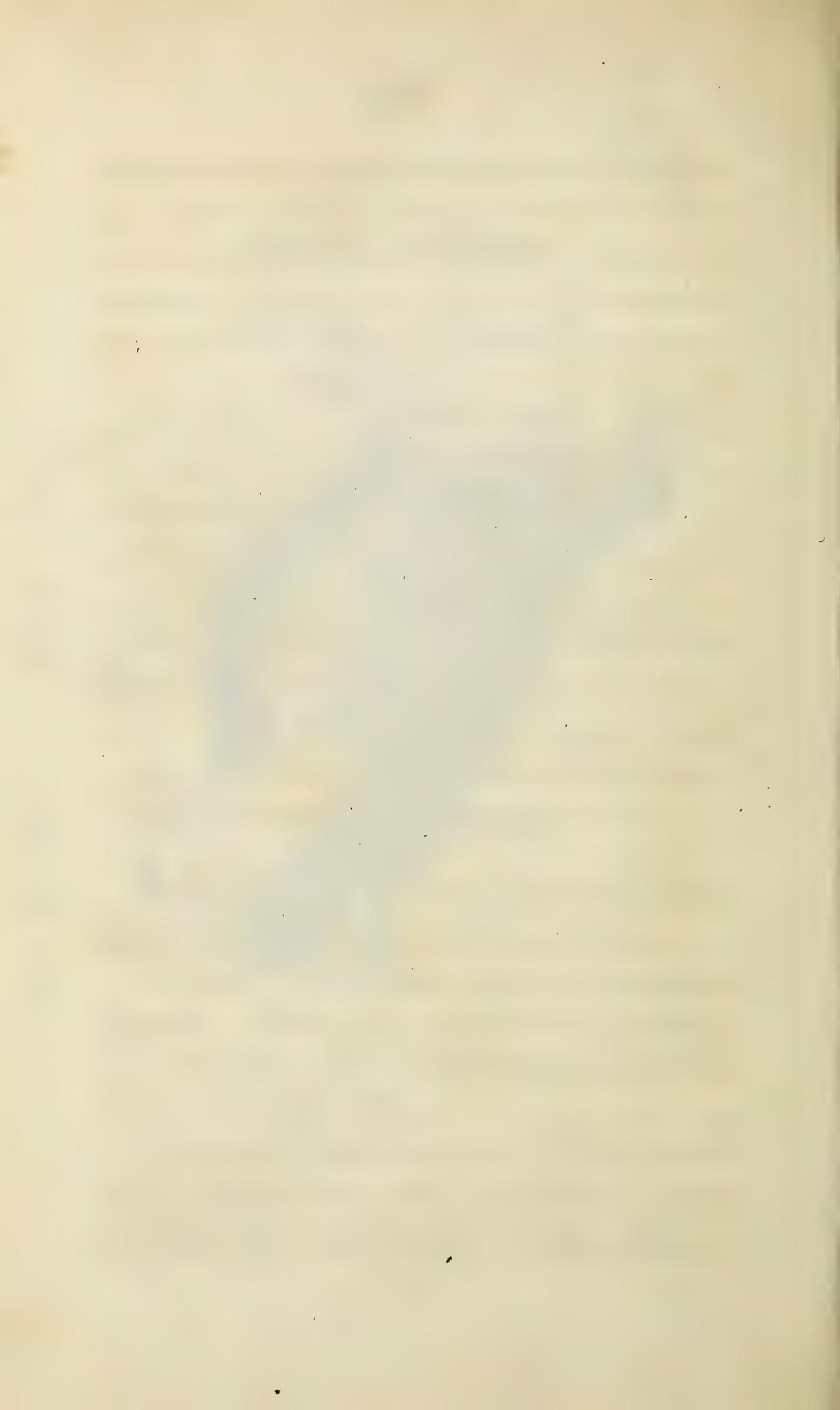
This bird measures twenty-three inches in length, and weighs about thirty ounces.

It builds its nest in trees, like the Common Buzzard. The egg is said to be in colour like that of the Kestrel, dirty white, blotched all over with rust colour.

“A pair of these birds (says White) built them a large shallow nest, composed of twigs and lined with dead beechen leaves, upon a



*Falco apivorus* — Honey Buzzard



tall slender beech, near the middle of Selborne-hanger, in the summer of 1780. In the middle of the month of June, a boy climbed this tree, though standing on so steep and dizzy a situation, and brought down an egg, the only one in the nest, which had been sat on for some time, and contained the embryo of a young bird. The egg was smaller and not so round as those of the common buzzard, was dotted at each end with small red spots, and surrounded in the middle with a broad bloody zone."

Bewick says, the eggs are of an ash colour, with small brown spots.

It feeds its young with the larve of wasps, and perhaps with that of bees.

It does not soar high like the kite, but flies from tree to tree and from bush to bush.

This bird varies considerably in the markings of the plumage, and appears to be a rare species in this country. Willughby says, that it feeds on wasp-maggots, as well as on frogs and lizards.

A bird, apparently of this species, was observed, some years since (by an intelligent observer of nature), skimming over the water

in pursuit of the larger dragon flies, which it seized with its talons, and took them from thence with its beak.

It is found in all the northern parts of Europe.





Brown Toucan. *Toucanus obscurus*

**FALCO ÆRUGINOSUS.****MOOR BUZZARD.**

Cere greenish; body grey; crown, chin, arm-pits, and legs yellow.

*Falco Æruginosus*, Lin. Gme.

Le Busard, Buffon.

Moor Buzzard, Will. Pen. Lath. Bew.  
Mont. Graves, Shaw.

**PROVINCIAL.****BALD HAWK, DUCK HAWK, WHITE-HEADED HARPY.**

Mr. Pennant observes, that the luteous marks which Linnæus gives as characteristics of this species, are by no means so, being varieties only of the common one, which is wholly of a rusty chocolate brown, with a yellowish spot on the head. Even this is not always the case, since Dr. Latham assures us, that he has a specimen, which is chocolate brown throughout, without the least appearance of luteous on the head, or

on any other part. This specimen was shot in Kent.

The Rev. G. Glover favoured us with a note on this species, in which he says, that of two taken from the same nest, and brought up tame, one of them had a bright luteous mark on the head, and the other (as Dr. L. describes his specimen to be) entirely of a dark chocolate colour. The nest was built on a tree.

The male of this species measures twenty-one inches in length, and four feet in breadth, and weighs about twenty-two ounces.

The female measures twenty-three inches and a half in length, and weighs about twenty-eight ounces.

The colours of the female are not so bright as those of the male.

Its nest is most frequently found on the ground, amongst low bushes, furze, and fern, but sometimes it is built on trees. It is formed with sticks, rushes, or coarse grass; wherein it deposits three or four white eggs, considerably less in size than those of the common Buzzard. Sometimes they are splashed with rust-coloured spots at the larger end.

During the time of incubation, the male may be observed on the wing the greater part of the day, and soaring to a great height. They are very attentive to their young, and go alternately in quest of food.

The Moor Buzzard is not so much dispersed as the other species; it is chiefly found on swampy moors and commons, and on sandy spots near the sea. It is by no means a bird of rapid flight, and therefore pounces its prey on the ground; for which purpose it is generally seen skimming near the surface, like the Hen-harrier. It is said to feed on fish occasionally, but its principal food is rabbits, the young of the common coot, lapwing, plover, &c. It is in general a shy solitary bird; but it appears to be the most common of the Falcon tribe about the sandy flats on the coast of Caermarthanshire; as Montagu assures us, that he has observed in this county, nine of these birds feeding at one time upon the dead carcase of a sheep.

The bird now in the possession of the Rev. G. Glover is particularly fond of rats and mice, which it devours with avidity.

In rainy weather, it invariably makes a hole in the earth with its beak, for the purpose of retaining the water, which it seems to enjoy as a luxury.





Falco Palumbinus —  
Gos-Hawk

**FALCO PALUMBARIUS.****GOSHAWK.**

Cere black, edged with yellow; legs yellow; body brown; tail feathers with pale bands; eyebrows white.

*Falco Palumbarius*, Lin. Gme.

*L'Autour*, Buffon.

**Goshawk**, Will. Pen. Lath. Bew. Shaw,  
**Mont.**

**Gentil Falcon**, Pennant.

The length of this bird is from twenty-two inches to two feet. Its weight about three pounds.

This species is very rare in England, but is said not to be uncommon in Scotland, where it builds in trees, and lays four white eggs.

They are subject to variations in the markings of their plumage; but their size and elegant slender shape at once distinguish them from the rest of their species. Buffon informs us that he kept a pair of these birds. The female was at least a third larger than

the male, and its wings, when closed, did not reach within six inches of the end of the tail. It was more bulky at four months old (which he considers to be the term of the growth of these birds) than a capon. During the first five or six weeks, these birds were of a greyish white ; the back, the neck, and the wings became gradually brown ; the belly and the under part of the throat did not change so much, and were generally white or yellowish white, with longitudinal brown spots the first year, and transverse brown bars the following years. During the first year, the feathers under the throat of the male were mottled with a reddish colour; in other respects, the female very much resembled it.

It was observed that, though the male was much smaller than the female, it was fiercer and more vicious. They were both difficult to tame ; they fought often, but rather with their claws than with their beaks, which they seldom employed but in tearing the birds or other small animals given them for food.

This bird was held in great esteem in the

days of falconry, and was used not only to take partridges and pheasants, but also larger fowl, as geese and cranes, and sometimes for rabbits.

The Goshawk takes its prey near the ground, and has great speed for a short distance. If its game take refuge, it waits patiently on an adjacent tree, or stone, until the former, pressed by hunger, is induced to move; and the hawk being capable of greater abstinence, generally succeeds in taking it.

The Goshawk is found in Germany and France, and is common in North America, Russia, and Siberia.

The plate and description of the Gentil Falcon, given by Pennant in the British Zoology, is evidently a mistake; for it is now well known, that the *young* of the Goshawk is very different from the *adult*; and we have not the least doubt but the figure and description given by Mr. P. is that of the Goshawk in its *first* feathers.

Our drawing was made from a beautiful specimen in the collection of the Rev. G. Glover, South Repps.

**FALCO GENTILIS.****GENTIL FALCON.**

Cere and legs yellow; body cinereous with brown spots; tail with four blackish bands.

*Falco Gentilis*, Lin. Gme.

*Gentil Falcon*, Will. Lath. Shaw.

**FALCO COMMUNIS.****COMMON FALCON.**

Body brown; the feathers edged with rusty; tail with darker transverse bands; bill blueish-ash; cere, irides, and legs yellow.

**FALCO PEREGRINUS.****PEREGRINE FALCON.**

Cere and legs yellow; body above cinereous striped with brown, beneath reddish white with blackish stripes; tail dotted with white.

*Falco Peregrinus*, Lin. Gme.

*Peregrine Falcon*, Pen. Lath. Bew. Shaw, Mont.





F. Gentilis. 2.  
Gentil Falcon!



*F. Gentilis.*



**FALCO LANARIUS.****LANNER FALCON. (VARIETY.)**

Cere yellow; legs and beak blue; body beneath marked with black longitudinal spots.

*Falco Lanarius*, Lin. Gme.

*Le Lanier*, Buffon.

*Lanner*, Will. Pen. Lath. Bew. Mont.

**PROVINCIAL.****HAGGARD FALCON, SLIGHT FALCON,  
BLUE BACKED FALCON.**

Naturalists have enumerated a great variety of Falcons; and in order to swell the list, they have introduced the same bird at different periods of its life, and have, not unfrequently, substituted accidental differences, arising from sex, age, or climate, as constituting permanent varieties; so that, as Buffon observes, one would be apt to imagine that there were as many varieties of the Falcon as of the pigeon, the hen, and other domestic birds. In this way supposed new

species have been introduced, and varieties multiplied without end. This has arisen from an over-anxious desire of noting all the minute differences existing in this part of the works of nature, and has led the too curious enquirer into unnecessary distinctions, and been the means of introducing confusion and irregularity into the systems of ornithologists.

Upon the authority of J. D. Downes, Esq. (a gentleman well known in this and other counties for his knowledge in Falconry, and to whom we are indebted for the revival of that grand and noble diversion), we are enabled to state, that the *Falcon*, *Falcon Gentil*, *Slight Falcon*, *Peregrine Falcon*, and the *Haggard Falcon*, are of the same species, and are the *Falco Gentilis* of Linnaeus, differing in age, or circumstances of caption only.

The insufficiency of the specific distinction of this species given by Linnaeus, has no doubt occasioned considerable errors, as neither the colour of the cere and feet, nor of the plumage, are constant. In some specimens the cere and feet are yellow, in others blue; some have a blueish and others a

greenish tint. (Those with yellow are the least esteemed by falconers.) It also varies much in the plumage; the feathers of the head, neck, and back, for the first year are brown with a reddish tint; hence by falconers they are called *Red Hawks*; after moulting the first year's or red feathers, they become invariably of a cinereous or slate colour, but they retain a few of their red feathers until the third moulting, by which their age is known; after that time it cannot be told. This cinereous or slate colour is called *Haggard Feather*, to denote age.

The brown of the head, neck, and back of the young or red hawks, varies from the colour (which in soils is denominated black) to that of a nutmeg.

The male of the Gentil Falcon (or Falcon properly so called) measures about sixteen inches and a half in length, thirty-seven inches in the expansion of its wings, and weighs about one pound six ounces.

The female measures twenty-one inches in length, three feet seven inches in breadth, and weighs about two pounds six ounces.

The above weight and measurement are

taken from specimens in the possession of J. D. Downes, Esq. but it is necessary to observe that they vary considerably in different specimens.

Among falconers, Hawks are divided into long-winged and short-winged, from their wings being, when closed, nearly as long as the tail, or reaching only about half way down of it.

The Gentil Falcon is a long-winged hawk, and may be distinguished in all its varieties, by a large dark mark proceeding from each angle of its mouth, pointing downwards about half way of the neck.

It may easily be distinguished from the Goshawk (which is a short-winged hawk), by the irides, which, in the Gentil Falcon, are always black, but in the Goshawk of a yellowish or kind of orange colour.

The males of this species are called *Tercels*, and the females *Falcons*.

When taken from the nest or eyry, they are called *Eyas Hawks*; when taken preying for themselves, they are either *Red Hawks* or *Haggards*.

This bird builds its nest or eyry in the

most inaccessible parts of our cliffs. The nest is formed of sticks and dry sea-weed. It lays three or four eggs.

These birds are undoubtedly great destroyers of the feathered race. Near a nest discovered on a high cliff, on the coast of Caermarthanshire, lay above a dozen rooks, crows, and gulls.

The Gentil Falcon, from its nature, is limited to certain districts; for it inhabits the mountainous parts, or where it can settle in security upon the shelving rocks of some stupendous cliff. With us therefore it is chiefly confined to the bold and rocky parts of our coasts, where it breeds, not only in security, but in the midst of plenty. From its habits, therefore, it appears to be less common than it really is. It seldom quits those solitary situations, except for occasional migratory purposes, or when the young are driven by their parents to seek fresh quarters; to which violent remedy they have recourse, like the Eagle, from hard necessity, which breaks the bonds of families, and dissolves the union of every society, as soon as the tracts inhabited afford not a sufficient subsistence.

Buffon observes, that “the Falcon is perhaps that bird whose courage, compared with its strength, is the most open and the most conspicuous. It darts directly downwards, without deviating from the perpendicular; while the Vulture, and most of the other birds of rapine, surprize their prey by an oblique descent.” “It frequently attacks the kite, either to amuse its courage, or to seize its prey; but this is rather a contemptuous insult than an obstinate combat. It treats its enemy as a coward, pursues it, strikes it with disdain, and as it meets with but a feeble resistance, it allows the kite to escape with its life, being as much disgusted perhaps with the rankness of its carcase, as conciliated by the meanness of its conduct.”

The flight of a strong Falcon (says Dr. Shaw) is wonderfully swift. “It is recorded, that a Falcon belonging to a Duke of Cleves flew out of Westphalia into Prussia in one day.”

Montagu is of opinion, that the rapidity with which a hawk, and many other birds, occasionally fly, is probably not less than at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles an hour, when either pursued or pursuing, and

their powers fully exerted; and certainly one hundred miles is not beyond a fair computation for migratory continuance.

A bird of this species was observed to take up its residence in the spire of Norwich Cathedral. Mr. R. Kittle, of that city (the gentleman to whom we are indebted for the following anecdote), informed us, "that he paid particular attention to the bird; and observed, that it arrived at the Cathedral about the middle of September, and left it about the first week in March; that it continued to do so for eight successive years; he also remarked, that it was generally to be seen near the top of the spire, and invariably on that side which by sailors is called the lee-ward, from whence it used to fly at pigeons and other birds, who were so unfortunate as to approach its station. From the number of feathers found in the tower of the Cathedral, he supposes, that after it had taken its prey, it used to retire to that part, to eat it free from molestation." It has not been observed for the last two or three years to return to its above-mentioned residence.

This noble species inhabits Europe, Northern Asia, and America.

Our drawing was made from a living bird (a female) in the possession of J. D. Downes, Esq. We preferred giving it with the hoods, bells, jesses, &c. (See History of Falconry.)

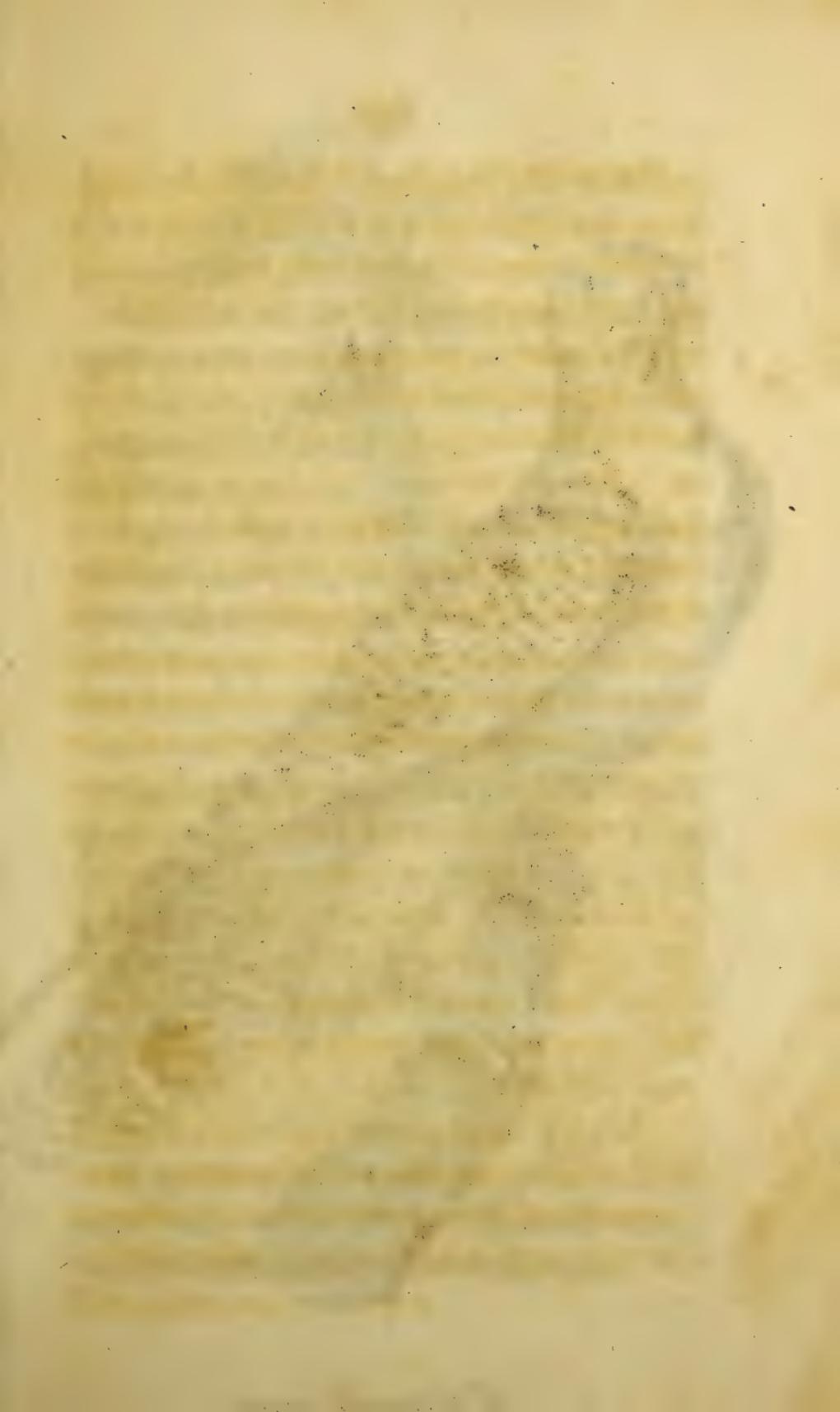
The drawing for plate 2d was made from a beautiful specimen shot near Beccles, just as it had pounced upon a lapwing. It is in that state of plumage described by ornithologists as the Peregrine Falcon (the *Falco Peregrinus* of Linnæus.)

**FALCO LANARIUS. (VAR.)**

**LANNER.**

Dr. Shaw and Montagu are of opinion, that the bird described by naturalists under the title of Lanner is only a variety of the Falcon; and it really appears that the bird described by Pennant is certainly nothing more.

With such respectable authorities before us, we have not hesitated in arranging it under the head *Gentil Falcon*.





*F. Candicans.*

**FALCO CANDICANS.****JERFALCON.**

Cere and legs blueish ash; body white, spotted with brown.

**Falco Candicans, Lin. Gme.**

**Gerfault, Buffon.**

**White Jerfalcon, Lath.**

**Iceland Falcon, Lath.**

**Jerfalcon, Will. Shaw, Mont. Bew.**

**Gyrfalcon, Pen.**

**FALCO GRISEUS.****GREY FALCON.**

Cere and legs yellow; body above dusky grey, beneath white with oblong black spots; tail feathers long, the two middle ones uniform, the rest spotted.

**Falco Griseus, Lin. Gme.**

**Grey Falcon, Pen. Lath. Mont.**

**FALCO VERSICOLOR.****SPOTTED FALCON.**

Cere yellow; head and body above white with pale reddish spots, beneath white; breast a little spotted with ferruginous.

**Falco Versicolor, Gme.****Spotted Falcon, Pen. Lath. Mont.**

This species of the Falcon is considered as the boldest and most beautiful of the tribe. In size it is superior to the Goshawk, measuring nearly two feet in length.

It is subject to considerable variety, either from age, sex, or climate. In the northern countries it is found quite white. Others are said to be brown above, white beneath spotted with brown, tail grey with transverse brown lines, &c. In these varieties it is also observed, that the beak and legs sometimes vary into pale yellow, though more commonly pale blue. From these variations in the plumage of the Jerfalcon, seems to have arisen the wonderful discordance in the descriptions of authors; which have amounted at length to so confused an assemblage of contradictory characters as almost to set at defiance all attempts to reconcile them.

Not only in the plumage, but also in the form of its beak, authors are at variance; some asserting that it has but a very slight appearance of the tooth-like process on each side, while others assert that it is very conspicuous.

On our plate we have given a correct outline of the profile of the beak of this noble bird, the size of nature.

This bird breeds in Iceland, and is capable of braving the coldest climates throughout the year, and of supporting itself in the open air during the most severe winters uninjured, in the latitude of Pittsburgh, when others of the Falcon tribe are destroyed by frost. It has been often observed in May, about Albany Fort, Hudson's Bay, feeding on the white grouse and other birds of the gallinaceous kind.

In Iceland (according to Pennant), "it is reserved for the Kings of Denmark, who send their falconers, with two attendants, annually into the island to purchase them. They are caught by the natives, a certain number of whom in every district are licensed for that purpose. They bring all they take, about Midsummer, to Besested, to meet the royal falconer; and each brings ten or twelve, capped, and perched on a cross pole, which they carry on horseback, and rest on the stirrup. The falconer examines the birds, rejects those which are not for his

purpose, and gives the seller a written certificate of the qualities of each, which entitles him to receive, from the king's receiver-general, seventeen rix-dollars for F, or the purest white falcon; ten for E, or those which are least white; and seven for this species. This brings into the island between two and three thousand rix-dollars annually."

Next to the Eagle, it is the most formidable, the most active, and the most intrepid of all voracious birds; and is the most esteemed in falconry. It is transported from Iceland and Russia into France, Italy, and even Persia and Turkey; nor does the heat of these climates appear to diminish its strength or blunt its vivacity. It boldly attacks the largest of the feathered race; the stork, the heron, and the crane are easy victims. It kills hares by darting directly upon them.

This bird is sometimes found in Scotland and the Orkneys. Our drawing was made from a beautiful specimen in the possession of J. Cooper, Esq. Bungay, Suffolk, who kindly favoured us with the following note:

“A species of Falcon was a few years since shot on Bungay Common, and being only slightly wounded in the pinion, it lived with me some years. It had escaped, I doubt not, from some falconer, as it was perfectly tame, eating readily from the hand of the servant who attended him. I am of opinion it was Latham’s variety B. of the Iceland Falcon, which he calls the Spotted Iceland Falcon. See 1st part of 1st volume of Latham’s General Synopsis of Birds, page 71.”

### FALCO GRISEUS.

#### GREY FALCON.

Mr. Pennant, in the British Zoology, gave a description of a bird (under the above name), shot near Halifax, in Yorkshire, in the year 1762. It now appears, from the opinion of later naturalists, to be the Tercel, or male of the Jerfalcon, in its first plumage.

As it appears to be the only specimen shot in this country, we give Mr. Pennant’s description:

“ This bird was about the size of a raven : the bill was strong, short, and of a blueish colour ; the cere and edges of the eye-lids yellow ; the irides red ; the head was small, flattened at the top, the fore part of a deep brown, the hind part white ; the sides of the head and throat were cream-coloured ; the belly white, marked with oblong black spots ; the hind part of the neck and the back were of a deep grey ; the wings were very long, and when closed reached beyond the train ; the first quill feathers were black, with a white tip ; the others were of a blueish grey, and their inner webs irregularly spotted with white ; the tail was long, and wedge-shaped ; the two middle feathers being the longest, were plain (the colour not mentioned), the rest spotted ; the legs were long, naked, and yellow.”

#### FALCO VERSICOLOR.

#### SPOTTED FALCON.

Pennant also gave a description of a Falcon (shot at Longnor, in Shropshire), under the name of the Spotted Falcon, and on

whose authority ornithologists have continued it as a distinct species. Dr. Shaw, on the authority of Monsieur Daudin, has given this bird as one of the varieties to which the Common Falcon is subject; but from its superior size, and predominance of white plumage, we should suspect it to be a variety of the Jerfalcon; as such we have arranged it under that head.

According to Mr. P. it was of the "size of a Buzzard; bill black; cere and legs yellow; irides pale yellow; crown and hind part of the neck white, spotted with light reddish brown; back and scapulars of the same colour, edged with white; quill feathers dusky, barred with ash colour; under side of the neck, breast, belly, and thighs white; the two first, also the beginning of the breast marked with a few rusty spots; rump white; middle feathers of the tail barred with white, and a deep brown, the others with a lighter and darker brown; the legs very strong."

**FALCO CYANEUS.****HEN HARRIER. (MALE.)**

Cere white; legs tawny; body hoary blue; a white arch over the eyes, surrounding the chin.

*Falco Cyaneus*, Lin. Gme.

*L'Oiseau St. Martin*, Buffon.

*Hen Harrier*, Will. Pen. Lath. Bew. Shaw, Mont. Don.

*Blue Hawk*, Edwards.

**FALCO PYGARGUS.****RING-TAIL. (FEMALE.)**

Cere and legs yellow; body cinereous; belly pale, with oblong rufous spots; orbits white.

*Falco Pygargus*, Lin. Gme.

*La Soubuse*, Buffon.

*Ring-tail*, Pen. Lath. Bew.

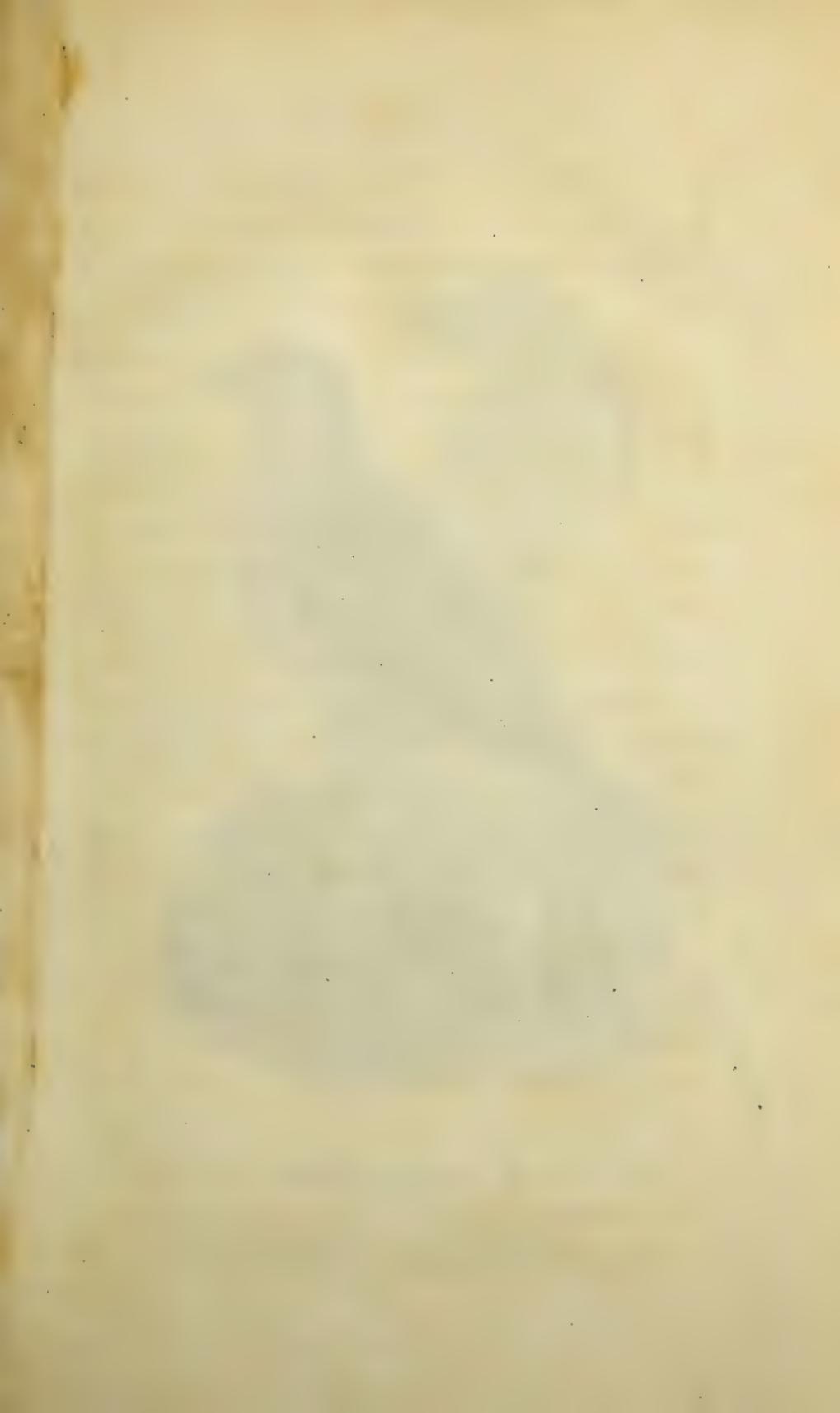
*Ring-tail Hawk*, Edwards.

*Falco Hudsonius*, Lin. Gme.

*Falco Buffoni*, Gme.

*Hudson Bay Ring-tail*, Lath.

*Marsh Hawk*, Edw. Lath.





I. Hunt

*Falco Pygargus*  
Hen Harrier (female)



*Falco Cyaneus* — Hen-harrier.



## PROVINCIAL.

DOVE-COLOURED FALCON, BLUE  
HAWK.

Various are the opinions concerning this bird. Some authors have ever considered the Hen-harrier and Ring-tail as the male and female of the same species; others that they are distinct. In a country where these birds are not uncommon, and where they continue the whole year, it is extraordinary that it has remained so long doubtful.

Mr. Pennant imagined that the long-disputed point had at length been determined by the criterion of dissection; a Ring-tail having, on examination, proved to be a male bird. It appears, however, from the undeniable testimony of the most accurate observers and experienced sportsmen, that the above assertion of Mr. P. though true as far as it goes, is by no means conclusive and complete. This, which appears at first to be highly paradoxical, is explained by observing, that the young male (as is the case with the Kestril also) is so like the female as not

to be distinguished from it, except by its size.

G. Montagu, Esq. (to whose indefatigable exertions the British ornithologist is indebted perhaps more than to any other author, not only for elucidating this class of birds, but of others equally obscure) has published such reasons to prove that they are male and female of the same species, as must convince every reader.

The male of this species, in its most perfect plumage, measures eighteen inches and a half in length, and somewhat more than three feet in the expansion of its wings, and weighs about thirteen ounces.

The female measures twenty inches in length, three feet nine inches in breadth, and weighs about eighteen ounces.

Its nest is composed of sticks, rudely put together, nearly flat. It is generally placed upon some fallen branches of furze near the ground; in which nest it deposits four eggs, of a reddish colour, with a few white spots. The eggs are a little inferior in size to that of the Moor Buzzard.

Montagu says, that "about the latter end

of June, in the year 1805, my friend Mr. Vaughan informed me, that his servant had found the nest of a Hen-harrier in some furze, which contained three young and an addled egg; at this time the infant birds were very small, and only covered with white down: it was therefore determined to take them as soon as we deemed them sufficiently large to be brought up by hand: when that period arrived, the servant was desired to shoot one, and if possible both of the old birds, previously to his bearing away what was considered a prize of no small value.

“On the return of the man with the young, he brought with him also the Hen-harrier, which he assured us he had (under concealment in the furze) shot in the act of dropping a thrush into the nest, while the female (as he seemed to consider the other, and which he described to be a brown Hawk) was covering the young. He afterwards shot at and wounded the female, but could not obtain her.

“Strong as this person’s evidence was in our minds, yet it conveyed no more to the public mind than what had been so repeat-

edly asserted on similar authority; being however in possession of the aerie, the means were in our power of fully determining the point in question; and to enable me to observe and note the changes that might take place in the plumage, I undertook the care of the whole brood.

"At this time the two largest had thrown out many feathers, sufficient to discover the plumage of the Ring-tail approaching; the other, by its appearance, must have been hatched much later. In about a month it was evident from size, that there was but one male, so that all my hopes rested on this single life. As they became full feathered, there was at first no distinction in plumage, but the eyes of the supposed male were always lighter than those of the others, whose irides were so dark as not to be distinguished at a small distance from the pupil. In the dress of the Ring-tail, the whole continued through the winter, when the one which had been weakly from the first died. This circumstance induced me to force a premature change in some of the quill and tail feathers of the others, fearing some acci-

dent might frustrate my earnest desire of bringing the matter to a decisive proof, and about the middle of June, I was highly gratified, by discovering an appearance of the new feathers, in the place of those which had been plucked out, that clearly evinced the smaller bird to be a Hen-harrier and the larger a Ring-tail.

“ Thus I had compelled nature to disclose her secrets before the appointed time ; for in every other respect their plumage was yet similar, excepting about the sides of the face, which were paler in colour in the former, in which also the irides were of a dull yellow, somewhat mottled, whereas in the latter they still continued dark.

“ The shyness of these hawks had occasioned their breaking most of their larger feathers, although in a place ten feet in length by five in width ; and as their regular moulting season was advancing, they were turned into a garden surrounded by a wall, where, after some time, the female died of the cramp in her legs.

“ The male had about the 20th of July thrown out many of the new feathers natu-

rally, especially the greater coverts of the wings, and a few grey feathers in different parts of the body. On the 20th of August the greater part of the quill and tail feathers were grown to their full length, and a gradual increase of grey feathers appeared on most other parts; the eyes also became more orange: but it was not till the middle of October that it had attained that state which made it desirable to be retained as an existing fact of the change; it was then killed, and is now in my museum.

"In this state, the plumage of the Ring-tail, or female, still remains about the neck, the smaller coverts of the wings, the thighs, and part of the belly, intermixed with the male plumage; the top of the head and wreath have also a mixture of the feathers of both sexes: the quills, scapulars, and tail are completely masculine; in the last of these are a few small broken bars of cinereous-brown, on a white ground, in the three outer feathers; the exterior margins cinereous-grey; the six middle feathers are almost wholly grey, and the markings are very obscure beneath.

“ From the account here given of the Hen-harrier, it is quite clear that the change of plumage is effected in the autumn of the year after it leaves the nest, and not in the same year ; and as it is between three and four months in the act of moulting, it is certainly very extraordinary that so few instances have occurred of its being killed in that state which might have been decisive. That such has been taken is evident, by the description of *Falco Hudsonius* of authors, which is doubtless this bird in change of plumage.”

This species of Falcon is often found about heaths and other retired places ; especially in the neighbourhood of marshy grounds, where they destroy vast numbers of snipes ; it likewise devours frogs, lizards, &c. It flies low, skimming along the surface of the ground in search of its prey, and is not known to settle on trees.

A gentleman who was shooting in Hampshire, sprung a pheasant in a wheat-stubble, and shot at it ; when, notwithstanding the report of the gun, it was pursued by a Hen-harrier, but escaped into some covert. He

sprung a second, and a third, in the same field, and these likewise got away; the hawk hovering round him all the while he was beating the field, conscious, no doubt, of the game that lurked in the stubble. Hence we may conclude, that this bird of prey was rendered very daring and bold by hunger, and that hawks are not always in a condition to strike their game. We may further observe, that they cannot always pounce on their quarry when it is upon the ground, where it might be able to make a stout resistance; since so large a bird as a pheasant could not but be visible to the piercing eye of a hawk, when hovering over it. Hence that propensity in game to cowering and squatting till they are almost trod upon; which doubtless was intended as a mode of self-preservation, though it has long been rendered destructive by the invention of nets and guns.

The female differs so strikingly in its plumage from the male, that we have thought proper to give it a separate plate.



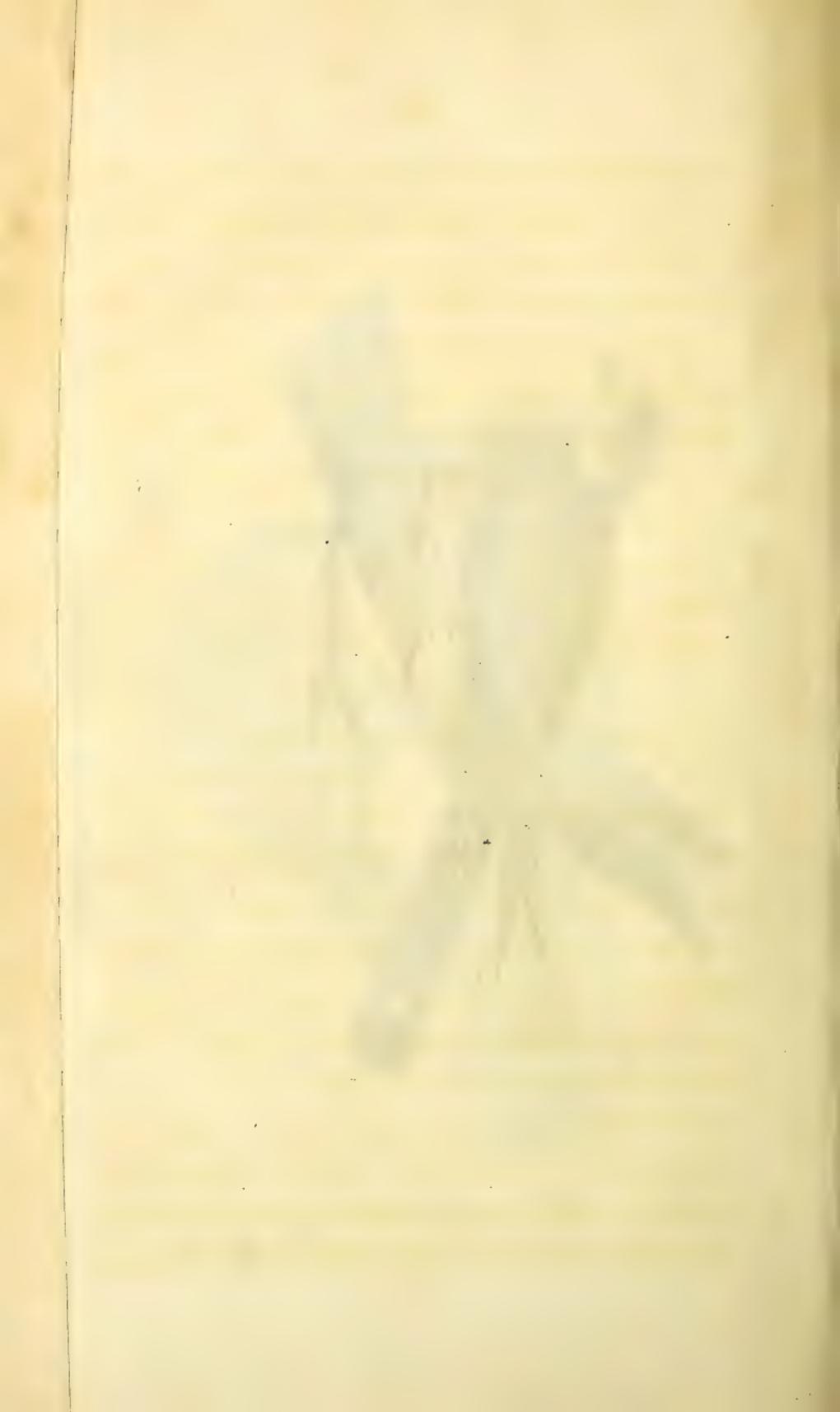
*F. Tinunculus. (Fas.)*  
*♂ Male. Herod. mil.*





*F. Tinnunculus.* (Fox)  
Female Kestrel.

I. Hunt. No 17



**FALCO TINNUNCULUS.****KESTRIL.**

Cere and legs yellow; back purplish red, with black spots; breast with brown streaks; tail rounded.

*Falco Tinnunculus*, Lin. Gme.

*La Cresserelle*, Buffon.

*Kestrel, Stannel, or Windhover*, Will.

*Kestrel, Pen. Graves, Mont. Bew.*

*Kestril, Latham, Shaw.*

**PROVINCIAL.**

**STANNEL OR STANNEL HAWK, STEINGAL OR STONEGALL, WINDHOVER, WINDFANNER.**

The male of this beautiful species of Hawk measures fourteen inches in length, and twenty-eight inches in breadth, and weighs about seven ounces.

The female measures sixteen inches in length, and near two feet six inches in breadth, and weighs about eleven ounces. She differs so much from the male in plu-

mage, that we have felt it necessary to illustrate this point by a distinct plate.

This bird builds its nest in the hollows of trees, in the holes of rocks, towers, and ruined buildings. The nest is made of sticks, and lined with wool and other soft materials. Sometimes it contents itself with the deserted nest of the crow or magpie.

The number of eggs are four or five, of a dirty white, blotched over with rust-colour of various shades; sometimes wholly covered with a deep rusty red; and are in size rather less than those of the Sparrow-hawk.

The young males resemble the female in plumage till after the winter of the first year, when they assume the grey head and tail.

The Kestrel is a very common inhabitant of this country, and in clear weather is frequently observed in the state so well described by Mr. Pennant, viz. "fixed as it were in one place, and fanning the air with its wings." At such times it is intent on its prey below, which frequently consists of field mice, and even rats, frogs, &c. It also preys on the whole tribe of small birds that

flit about our hedges, and in winter the blackbird particularly becomes its easy prey.

Such is the violence with which it sometimes directs its horizontal flight (says Shaw) either in avoiding some more powerful enemy of its own tribe, or in the ardent pursuit of distant game, that it has been known to break through a pane of glass, and fall stunned into the middle of a room in which were two opposite windows. It was supposed, that some pigeons on the opposite side might have occasioned the hawk's mistake.

A circumstance nearly similar occurred very recently at a gentleman's seat in a village near this city (Norwich.)

It becomes very audacious when impelled by hunger, pouncing at the birds used as decoys by the bird-catchers, and has been known to strike at a blackbird confined in a cage, and suspended against the front of a house in one of the most public streets in London.

Graves also mentions a circumstance of which he was an eye-witness: "On the 1st of February, 1812, while passing along Pic-

cadilly, we perceived a Kestrel directing its course from behind St. James's church: whilst we were observing it, a flight of pigeons, from a neighbouring house, attracted its notice. He immediately wheeled round and made a stoop at one, which dexterously eluded his grasp; not deterred by this failure, he made a second pounce, in which he was more successful, and having trussed a bird, he took it still struggling to a projection from the church, where he leisurely devoured it, notwithstanding it was shot at, and attempted to be roused by the shouts of numerous passengers, who were spectators of this unusual circumstance, in one of the greatest thoroughfares in the metropolis."

It has often been trained for purposes of falconry, and employed in the pursuit of the smaller kinds of game; and is said to have proved excellent in the chace of partridges and quails, and sometimes even of pheasants.

When wounded and disabled from flight by the sportsman, it will lie flat upon its back, and in that desperate attitude keeps up a very spirited though unequal contest with its claws and beak, against its more

powerful enemy. By the former of these weapons it will penetrate the thickest glove, and adhere with determined vengeance even in the pangs of death, displaying at once the natural ferocity of the tribe to which it belongs, and the peculiar boldness and determined fortitude of its own species.

According to Buffon the Kestrel is found through the whole extent of Europe, from Sweden to Italy and Spain. It occurs also in the more temperate parts of North America.

**FALCO NISUS.****SPARROW HAWK.**

Cere green; legs yellow; belly white, waved with grey; tail with blackish bands.

*Falco Nisus*, Lin. Gme.

L'Epervier, Buffon.

Sparrow Hawk, Will. Pen. Lath. Shaw, Mont. Bew.

The male Sparrow Hawk measures about a foot in length, and about two feet in the expansion of its wings, and weighs about twelve ounces.

The female measures sixteen inches in length, and thirty inches in breadth, and weighs about fifteen ounces.

Both sexes vary considerably in size and plumage. Mr. Latham mentions a specimen, in the possession of Capt. Davies. The plumage of which is wholly of a milk-white colour, without the least appearance of any bands or other markings. It was shot in Dorsetshire, near which place others have been seen of the same colour. He likewise notices a beautiful spotted variety.



F. Nijss.

Sparrow Hawk.

I. Hunt.



This bird seldom makes a nest, but generally takes possession of that which has been deserted by a crow. It lays four or five eggs of a dirty white; sometimes of a bluish tinge, blotched at the large and sometimes, though rarely, at the smaller end with rust colour.

This species has much of the nature of the Goshawk, and wants only the power of that bird to be equally formidable to the feathered tribe. Like that bird it flies low, skims over hedges and walls, and thus enters a farm-yard or a chicken court, snatches up a young one, and is again out of sight before the mother of the brood can, by her well-known cry of alarm, call them under her protection. Thus are young broods often diminished, as it were, by magic art, and few suspect the real plunderer.

A friend of Mr. Montagu's, who had a brood of young ducks of a favourite breed upon his bowling-green, lost one daily, until nine out of twelve had been taken, notwithstanding every means had been resorted to for the destruction of the enemy. Cats, rats, and other four-footed predators were sus-

pected, and traps were set, and sentinels posted at different times. As this daring robbery was committed in mid-day, and generally about the same time, the gentleman, who was a good shot, took his turn of duty to watch, and at last detected the thief, just as he had seized the tenth duck, and shot him as he was flying over the opposite wall. It proved to be a Sparrow Hawk.

The female of this species has been trained for hawking with success, though its flight is not so rapid as the longer-winged hawks.

Buffon asserts, that the Sparrow Hawk is found scattered in the ancient continent from Sweden to the Cape of Good Hope, and that it is probably more numerous than we suppose; for besides those that remain the whole year in our climate, it appears at certain seasons to migrate in immense bodies to other countries. In proof of which assertion, in Wood's edition of Buffon's Natural History, may be found an extract from Belon (much too long for our limits), giving not only an account of their actual migration, but also pointing out the time when

they begin their flight, and the mode made use of to take these birds at the mouth of the Euxine.

We take the liberty, however, of extracting the following passage from the above work. "Sonnini says, that he has met with vast flights of these birds on the open sea, between Italy and Barbary. He adds, that "they are common in Egypt, where they remain all the year: many never quit the towns, where they find plenty of food; but commonly reside on the flat roofs of the houses, with the vultures and kites. It is singular that these different birds, preying alike on other animals, should, in Egypt, live in a sort of society with the doves, which mix with them in perfect safety."

**FALCO SUBBUTEO.****HOBBY.**

Cere and legs yellow; back brown; nape white; belly palish, with oblong brown spots.

*Falco Subbuteo*, Lin. Gme.

Hobreau, Buffon.

**Hobby**, Will. Pen. Lath. Bew. Mont. Shaw.

The male of this species measures twelve inches in length and two feet two inches in breadth, and weighs about seven ounces.

The female weighs nine ounces, and very much resembles the male in plumage, but is not so dark above, and the lighter parts beneath not so ferruginous.

This bird breeds in England, and migrates in October: it forms its nest in trees, but sometimes takes possession of that which has been deserted by the crow. It lays three or four eggs, which are said to be white.

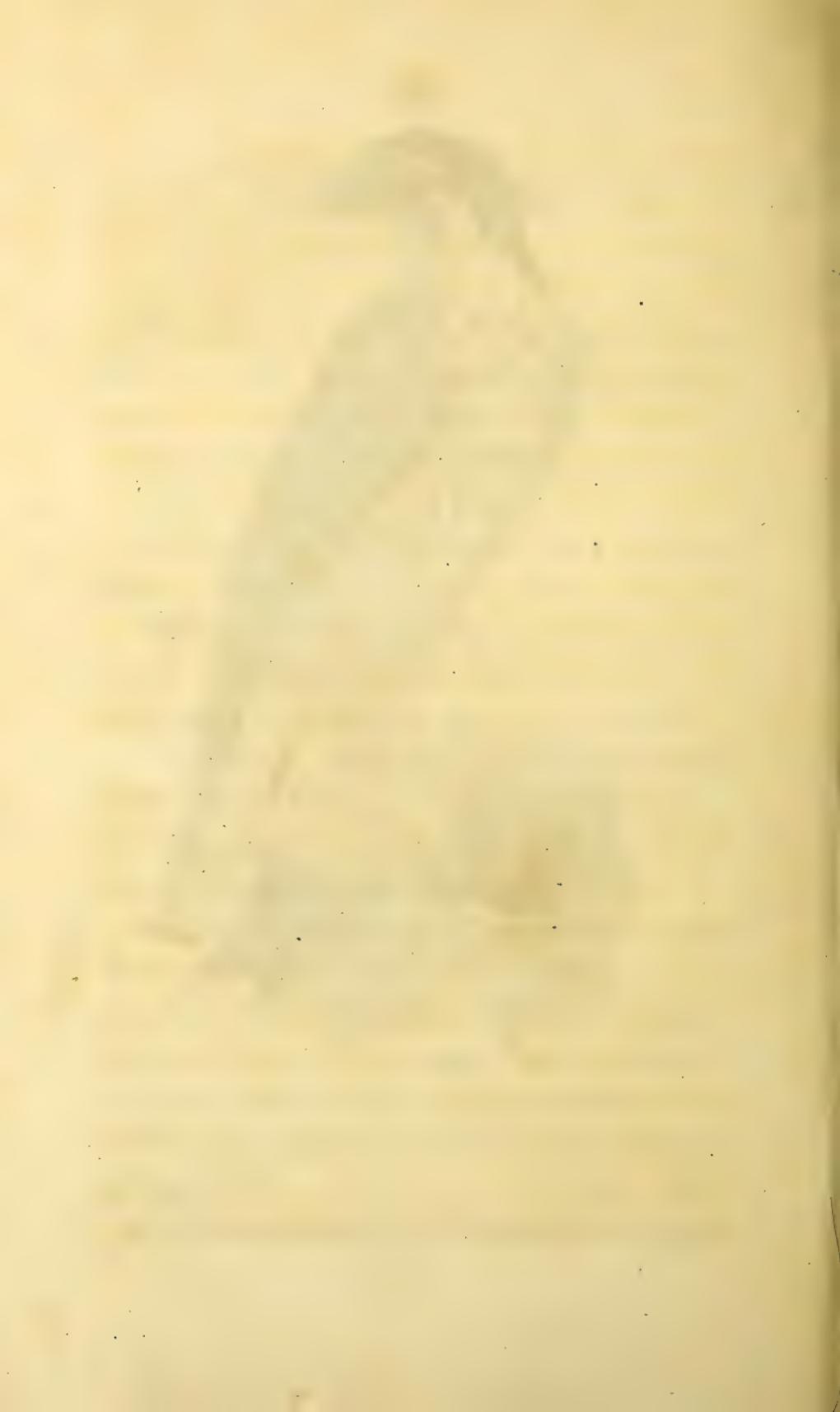
The young birds are not so dark-coloured as the adults.

Small as this species of Falcon is, it is in-



Hunt.

*Falco subbuteo. Illustr.*



ferior to none in point of courage; it has frequently been seen to pounce a partridge; but their favourite game seems to be the lark, to which it is a great enemy, and is frequently taken in pursuit of them by the bird-catchers in their nets.

Buffon informs us, that “ no sooner does it espy the sportsman and his dog, than it hovers in the train, and endeavours to catch the small birds that are put up before them; and what escapes the fowling-piece is caught by the Hobby. It seems not intimidated by the noise of fire-arms, and is ignorant of their fatal effects, for it continues to keep close to the person who shoots.”

The same author says, that “ the term Hobby was applied (in some of the provinces of France) to the petty barons who tyrannized over their peasants, and more particularly to gentlemen of the sport, who chose to hunt in their neighbours’ grounds without obtaining leave, and who hunted less for pleasure than profit.”

The Hobby was formerly trained for hawking, but was more commonly used for taking partridges and larks with a net,

which was termed *daring*; that is, when the hawk was cast off, the birds were so affrighted, that they remained as it were fixed to the ground, and became an easy prey to the fowler, by drawing a net over them.

We have frequently witnessed the flight of this species in pursuit of a sky-lark, and been astonished to observe how dexterously the little bird avoids the fatal stroke, until it becomes fatigued.

A Hobby, in pursuit of a lark, has been observed to be joined by a hen-harrier, who not being so rapid on wing, was usually behind, and ready to avail himself of the sudden turns the unfortunate lark was compelled to make to avoid the talons of the Hobby; however, after numberless evolutions, the hen-harrier relinquished the pursuit, and left the deadly stroke to one better adapted for rapid and durable flight.

"A male Hobby perceiving a gold-finch in a cage within a room, the window of which happened to be open, dashed at the imprisoned bird, notwithstanding several persons were in the room; but being alarmed at the natural vociferations of some young

ladies for the safety of their darling, the intruder mistook the passage by which he entered, and flew against the glass, when his retreat was cut off, and he was secured." (Montagu.)

This species inhabits Europe and Siberia.

**FALCO ÆSALON.****MERLIN.**

Cere and legs yellow; head ferruginous; body above blueish-ash, with rusty spots and stripes; beneath yellowish-white, with oblong spots.

**Falco Æsalon, Gmelin.**

**L'Emerillon, Buffon.**

**Merlin, Pen. Lath. Shaw, Mont. Bew.**

**FALCO LITHOFALCO.****STONE FALCON.**

Cere yellow; body above cinereous, beneath reddish, with longitudinal brown spots; tail cinereous, growing black towards the tip, and terminated with white.

**Falco Lithofalco, Gmelin.**

**Le Rochier, Buffon.**

**Stone Falcon, Will. Lath. Shaw, &c.**

The Merlin and the Stone Falcon have been described by authors as distinct species; but it will be found by a comparison of the description of the specimen of the Stone





Hunt

*Falco columbarius.* — *Female Merlin.*



I. Hunt.

*Falco columbarius*.

*Male Merlin.*



Falcon shot in this country (and preserved in the collection of Mr. Foljambe, and by him communicated to Mr. Montagu) with our figure of the male Merlin, that almost the only distinction to be found between them is in the colour of their irides, (those of the Merlin being of a dark hazel, approaching to black, and those of the Stone Falcon being of a bright yellow); a character which, as experience has taught us, is not wholly to be depended upon. The variations observed in the Moor Buzzard, as well as some other species, in that particular, justify us in agreeing with Mr. M. that the colour of the eyes in the Merlin may also occasionally vary, and that the Stone Falcon is only a variety of that bird.

Upon referring to Buffon, we find the following passage, which agrees with this opinion: "This small bird," he says, "which resembles the common Falcon so much in its disposition and courage, is however shaped more like the Hobby, and still more like the *Stone Falcon*; but its wings are much shorter than those of the Hobby, and reach not near the end of the tail; while in the

Hobby they project somewhat beyond it. We have hinted in the foregoing article, that its relation to the *Stone Falcon* is so clear, in the thickness and length of the body, in the shape of the bill, feet, and talons, in the colours of the plumage, the distribution of the spots, &c. that there is reason to suppose that the *Stone Falcon* is a variety of the Merlin; or at least that they are two species, so nearly connected, that they ought to suspend any decision respecting their diversity."

It will likewise be observed, that the specific distinction of the two birds, as given by Gmelin, varies in a very trifling degree.

It is said, that the Merlin differs from the other species of Falcons, and indeed from all the rapacious tribe, by a character which makes it approximate to the common class of birds, viz. the male and female being of equal size. This fact Montagu denies, assuring us that the male measures only ten inches in length and twenty-five in breadth, and weighs about five ounces; while the female measures twelve and a half inches in length, and weighs about nine ounces. This

is an amazing disproportion in respect to weight, for which we know not how to account, unless it be a typographical error. Such however being the difference of opinions, it is our duty to state them to our readers, feeling extremely sorry that it has not been in our power to procure any specimen of the female in so recent a state as to form any judgment on their respective accuracy; we are therefore compelled to leave it in the same uncertain state, convinced at the same time, if the above weight and measurement be correctly printed, that so accurate an observer as Montagu would not have hazarded the assertion but upon the strongest evidence. He thus describes the female. "Bill, cere, and irides the same as the male, The whole upper parts of the plumage are brown, tinged with ferruginous, with dusky streaks on the shafts, beneath yellowish white, with broad dusky brown streaks; tail brown like the back, with five or six narrow bars of yellowish white, tipped with the same."

The greater quill feathers in the male are black; and the inner webs marked with many oblong white spots; those next the

body are coloured like the back on the outer webs; the inner webs spotted as the others; the two first feathers are much indented towards the point of the inner web, as if cut with a pair of scissors. The third feather rather exceeds the second in length, and is the longest feather in the wing.

Both sexes vary in the number of the bars on the tail, some specimens having thirteen or fourteen, others not more than five or six; but the tip is invariably white.

As most of the specimens of this bird to be found in museums are of a brown colour, similar to the description of the female above given, we think it not improbable that the young male may resemble its female parent (as before observed in the Hen Harrier, &c.) and not acquire its full plumage until the second or third moultling. This may in some measure account for the discordant opinions before stated. Most authors agree that the Merlin varies from ten to twelve inches in length.

It is considered a sa migratory species, arriving in this country in October, about the time that the Hobby disappears. In-

stances are however recorded of their having bred in this country; and Mr. Latham, on the authority of a highly respectable observer, assures us that it breeds in Cumberland, placing its nest on the ground in the manner of the Hen Harrier. Of this two instances have occurred, and in each were observed four young birds. Montagu likewise informs us, that "in the middle of a high clump of heath, upon the moors in Northumberland, he found three young ones, about half grown, but no nest. They were well concealed, and would not have been discovered but by a setting-dog making a point at them."

The eggs are said to be of a plain chocolate colour, roundish, and an inch and a quarter in length.

This bird flies low, though with great celerity and ease, and may be seen skimming along the side of a hedge, or over the surface of the ground in pursuit of small birds. In France it is called the Sparrow Catcher.

Pennant informs us, that it "was known to our British ancestors by the name of Llamysden, was used in hawking, and its nest valued at 12d.

Small as this species of Falcon is, yet it must be reckoned amongst the most spirited of its class. It has the same form and attitude, the same disposition and docility as the common Falcon, and it is not inferior in ardour and courage. It has been successfully flown against Larks, Quails, and even Partridges, although much heavier than itself. It often kills them at one blow, striking them on the stomach, head, or neck.

The pursuit of a Lark by a couple of Merlins is said to be the most delightful spectacle which this sort of sport can afford, being taught to act in concert, so that while the one soars high in the air to strike his prey from above, the other may watch every motion from below; and leave the poor devoted victim no chance of escaping their united efforts.

Montagu observes, that “there would be no necessity of describing the bird, (Stone Falcon,) after what we have said of its exact resemblance to the Male Merlin;” but as several varieties, or supposed varieties, of that bird have been described by different authors, we must be understood when we speak of its likeness generally to the Merlin, as consider-

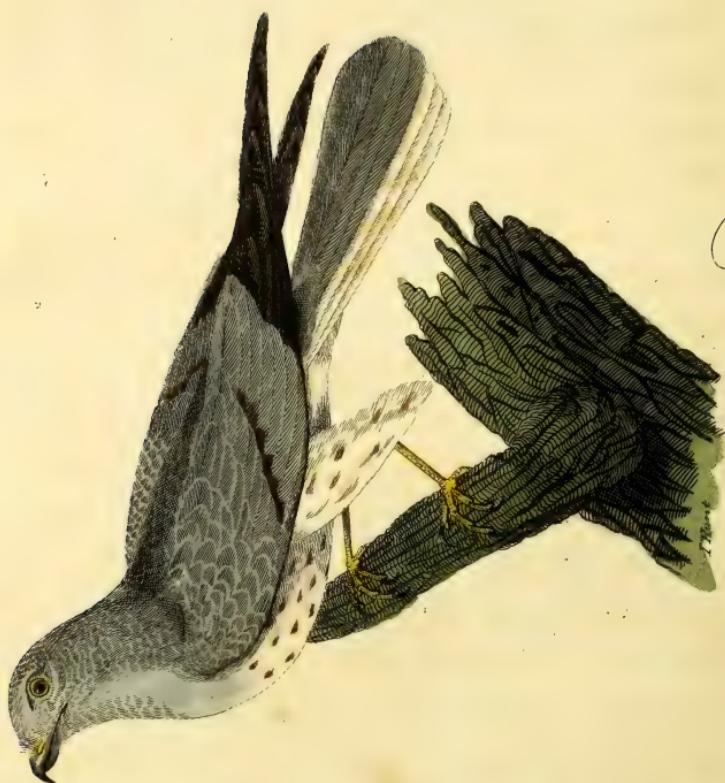
ing it clothed in that plumage and of those dimensions in which it has most usually occurred to us.

The following is the description of the Stone Falcon as given by Montagu. "The length of the bird in question is about twelve inches; bill, lead colour; cere and irides, yellow. The feathers on the crown and back of the head, brownish cinereous, with black shafts; throat, cream colour, with very narrow brown streaks; forehead, cream colour, with a very narrow line extending over the eye; cheeks, back of the neck, and breast, rufous, with longitudinal spots of brown; thighs, pale rufous, with a few very narrow brown lines pointing downwards; the back, scapulars, and wing coverts, blueish cinereous, with black shafts to the feathers: the prime quills have their inner webs marked with six large white spots, the base edged with white; the outer web of the first feather is scalloped with white; the second and third feathers the longest. The wings when closed reach within an inch of the tail. The tail is blueish cinereous, with four black bars; that at the end an inch in breadth, the others nar-

rower; the tip white, the under side of the tail white, barred as above; the legs and toes yellow and slender."

The bird was shot in the month of December, 1810, near Osberton, in Nottinghamshire, and proved to be a male.





*Falco-cinerarius*. — Ash-coloured Falcon.

## FALCO CINERACEUS.

## ASH-COLOURED FALCON.

This bird measures eighteen inches in length, three feet eight inches and a half in breadth, and weighs about nine ounces and three-quarters.

The female builds its nest near the ground, amongst furze, &c. wherein it deposits four white eggs.

The Ash-coloured Falcon was first described as a distinct species by that indefatigable ornithologist, G. Montagu, Esq. from a specimen sent to him from Wiltshire. He says that at first sight it might readily be mistaken for the Hen Harrier, in the state of changing its plumage from the Ring-tail; "but the want of the wreath of short feathers round the head, always conspicuous in both sexes of that bird, at once distinguishes it; the size is also much inferior, though the tail is full as long, and the wings much longer. And as an additional mark of distinction, the wings, when closed, reach beyond the extremity of the tail, which in the Hen Harrier are far

short of it. The wing is also more pointed, the third feather being much longer than any other; whereas in the Hen Harrier the point of the wing is more rounded by reason of the third and fourth feather being of equal length."

Since the first account was published in the Ornithological Dictionary, much new light has been thrown upon the natural history of this bird. Its nest has been taken, and the young ascertained, so that little remains to make the history of this species complete.

The young male of this species continue to resemble the female until after the first moulting.

A nest of these birds was discovered near Ashburton, in the summer of 1808, by Mr. Tucker, (author of *Ornithologia Danmoniensis*,) and the female shot, but unfortunately the specimen was destroyed by being nailed up against the wall. Mr. T. informed Mr. Montagu that it was exactly similar in plumage to that of a young male bird which he sent alive to Mr. M. on the 14th of November, having been taken from the nest.

about five months. It is thus described by that author:—"The bill, dusky; cere, yellow; irides so pale a yellow as to appear nearly white. The whole upper part of the head ferruginous, with small dusky spots; on the hind part of the head, and nape, a broken patch of white; immediately above and beneath the eye is a pale streak; the coverts of the ears, extending down to the lower mandible, is dark chocolate brown; the feathers on the whole upper part of the body, including the scapulars, are dark chocolate brown; the quills the same; the first three or four pale ferruginous about the middle of the inner web; the secondary quills the darkest, and all more or less tipped with ferruginous, except on the upper part of the back; and those on the back of the neck are deeply margined with that colour: the lower part of the rump and coverts of the tail, white, with a few streaks of bright ferruginous; the lesser coverts of the wings are deeply margined with ferruginous: the chin is dusky brown: the whole under parts, from chin to vent, including the thighs, under tail coverts and under coverts of the wings, bright ferruginous, with-

out spots, except the shafts being somewhat darker, appearing, on close inspection, like fine slender streaks: the tail feathers have five alternate darker, and five paler bars, but the upper ones are nearly obsolete; these bars on the outer feather are bright ferruginous and white, with one bar near the end darker ; the second is similar, but has the ferruginous bars inclining to chocolate brown ; and the white ones run into pale ferruginous on the outer webs; the three next become gradually darker, with the pale bars less conspicuous, and more ferruginous than white; the two middle feathers have the bars marked only by a shade of difference in colour, and are scarcely defined."

We have been particular in describing this bird, in order that it may no longer be confounded with the Hen Harrier or Ring Tail ; and after what has been said, it is hardly necessary to remark that the bright ferruginous colour of the markings is always sufficient to discriminate this. In the adult male, these bright markings on the under part of the body, and under the wings, and the black bars on the secondary quills (inde-

pendent of the great difference in the tail,) at once point out the distinction from the male Hen Harrier. In the female, the uniform ferruginous colour of all the under parts is sufficient to discriminate it from the female Hen Harrier, besides the colours being much brighter; and in the adolescent or changing state of the plumage, the same difference exists in the markings.

That this bird has been long known, and confounded with the Hen Harrier, there can be no doubt, a proof of which is evident by the description of what Mr. Pennant supposed a variety of the Ring Tail. In describing that bird, "the breast and belly, (says Mr. Pennant) are of a yellowish brown, with a cast of red, and marked with oblong dusky spots, but they are subject to vary, for we have met with one specimen that had these parts entirely plain."

Mr. Montagu observes, that except this remark of Mr. Pennant, we do not find any description that sufficiently accords with either sex of our Ash-coloured Falcon to refer to with confidence.

Graves informs us that a pair of these birds

were killed in Battersea Fields about the middle of May, 1812.

In the London Museum is a beautiful specimen of the male bird, from whence our drawing was made.

## *History of Falconry.*

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ALTHOUGH by some of our readers it may be thought that a detailed account of Falconry does not constitute a necessary part of the *Natural History* of Birds, yet it appears to be so closely connected with it, and has been so often mentioned in the foregoing remarks on the *Genus Falco*, that we hope to be excused for introducing a short sketch of its history, and of the methods made use of by falconers to train up the Falcon to obedience, in order to shew how far *man* has been enabled, by *harsh* or *kind* treatment, to render these birds (apparently the most wild and untractable of the feathered race) subservient to *his* pleasures.

Numberless treatises have been written upon this subject, which are now almost forgotten; and indeed were they to be more easily met with, to a modern reader they would scarcely be intelligible. The language of

falconers was entirely professional ; they took a pleasure in the use of technical phrases peculiar to the art, and which, to all but themselves, formed a jargon of novel and obscure terms. Goldsmith has extracted a specimen of instructions, delivered by Willughby, by which the reader will be enabled to judge of the truth of these observations. He bids us “ draw our Falcon out of the mews, twenty days before we enseam her. If she truss and carry, the remedy is to cosse her talons, her powse and petty single.” In such mysterious and cant phrases did our forefathers wrap their knowledge of a profession which is now nearly fallen into disuse.

The Roman jurisprudence, which in this point looked only to the manners of the first ages, established it as a law, that, as the natural right of things which have no master belongs to the first possessor, wild beasts, birds, and fishes, were the property of whosoever could first take them. But the Northern barbarians, who overran the Roman Empire, and carried with them all the institutions of feudalism, and the strongest relish for the *sports of the field*, soon circumscribed these

common rights of nature, as they had hitherto been esteemed, and appropriated to their chiefs and leaders the exclusive privileges of hunting and the chase.

When the Saxon Kings therefore had established themselves into a heptarchy, large districts of country, denominated Chases, were reserved by each sovereign as nurseries for game, and appropriated to his own particular amusement. Nor can we much wonder that, in an age so uncivilized, when the exercises of the body have always much greater attractions than the abstract meditations of the mind, and are, in fact, better suited to nourish those qualities of strength and of activity which that state of society requires they should have found in hunting, in hawking, and in the various diversions of the field, the most eligible, and perhaps the most natural mode of filling up the leisure afforded by the intervals of war. Nor, again, had their subjects individually any just reason to complain, inasmuch as they appear only to have appropriated to their pleasures those lands which were before unoccupied and waste. But it was far otherwise when the Norman Kings

were settled upon the throne. The passion for all kinds of *field sports* was then carried to an unjustifiable excess, and every civil right was held subordinate to its indulgence. This ardour was stronger than the consideration of religion, even in that superstitious age.— Whole villages were demolished, and the inhabitants dispossessed of their houses and their lands without any recompense, nay, even the most sacred edifices were thrown down, and all turned into one vast waste to make room for the pleasures of a lawless tyrant. Sanguinary laws were enacted to preserve the game; and it was *less criminal* to destroy one of the *human species* than a *beast of the chase*. These melancholy scenes were all peculiarly exemplified in the formation of the New Forest, in Hampshire, which extended above thirty miles. In allusion to the above circumstances, Pope has the following lines:

“Proud *Nimrod* first the bloody chase began,  
 “A mighty hunter, and his prey was man.  
 “Our haughty *Norman* boasts that barbarous name,  
 “And makes his *trembling slaves* the *royal game*:  
 “The fields are ravish’d from th’ industrious swains,  
 “From men their *cities*, and from *Gods* their *fanes*:

" The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er ;  
 " The hollow winds thro' naked temples roar ;  
 " Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd ;  
 " O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately Hind ;  
 " The Fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,  
 " And Wolves with howling fill the sacred choirs.  
 " Aw'd by his *Nobles*, by his *Commons* curst,  
 " Th' oppressor rul'd tyrannic where he durst,  
 " Stretch'd o'er the *Poor*; and *Church*, his *iron rod* ;  
 " And treats alike his *Vassals* and his *God* :  
 " Whom ev'n the *Saxon* spar'd, and bloody *Dane*,  
 " The wanton victims of *his sport* remain.  
 " But see the man whose spacious regions gave  
 " A waste for beasts, himself deny'd a grave !  
 " Stretch'd on the lawn his second hope survey,  
 " At once the chaser and at once the prey.  
 " Lo *Rufus* tugging at the deadly dart,  
 " Bleeds in the forest like a wounded Hart !  
 " Succeeding Monarchs heard the Subjects' cries,  
 Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful cottage rise."

The Barons also for a long time imitated the encroachments as well as the amusements of the Monarch. But when the feudal institutions at length gave way, when property became not only more equally divided, but its rights successfully maintained, these extensive hunting grounds became more defined and limited, and as the incitements to tillage and husbandry increased by a greater demand for its productions, those vast tracts of land, be-

fore dedicated to the amusements of the great, were contracted to make room for the labours of the industrious. For it is only among the most despotic governments that laws and usages such as we have before mentioned can remain in full force, that vast wastes can be permitted to lie uncultivated for the purposes of sporting.

Falconry, however, though the principal amusement of our ancestors, was but little known to the Greeks and Romans. Aristotle merely mentions some rude practice of this art in Thrace; and *Ælian* speaks of Hawks and Crows among the Indians; but little or no mention of true Falconry occurs before the days of Constantius, son of Constantine the Great.

According to Berkman, Falconry seems to have been in the greatest perfection with the principal Courts of Europe in the twelfth century. Hence some have, therefore, ascribed the invention of it to Frederick the First, and others to Frederick the Second.

"In our own country (says Pennant) I cannot trace the certainty of Falconry till the reign of King Ethelbert, the Saxon monarch,

in the year 760, when he wrote to Germany for a brace of Falcons, which would fly at Cranes and bring them to the ground, as there were very few such in Kent. It seems highly probable that Falconry had its rise in Scythia, and passed from thence to the Northern parts of Europe. Tartary is even at present celebrated for its fine breed of Falcons, and the sport is in such general esteem, that, according to Olearius, there is no hut but what has its Eagle or Falcon. The boundless plains of that country are as finely adapted to the diversion, as the wooded or mountainous nature of most parts of Europe is ill-adapted for that rapid amusement."

Falconry seems to have continued in high repute in this country till about the time of Oliver Cromwell, after which, it appears to have gradually declined. Though this diversion was pursued with such ardour by some, even so late as the reign of James the First, that Sir James Monson is said to have given a thousand pounds for a cast of Hawks, and the laws of that period were very rigorous that tended to preserve this pleasure. In the 34th of Edward the Third it was made felony

to steal a hawk; and to take its eggs, even in a person's own ground, was punishable with imprisonment for a year and a day, besides a fine at the King's pleasure; and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the imprisonment was reduced to three months; but the offender was to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, or to remain in prison till he did.

The amusement of Hawking is now nearly extinct in Britain. An attempt has been made by a few Noblemen and Gentlemen to revive this diversion, but, as population increases, and as inclosures become more general, those *rural sports* must consequently decline in which the game is to be pursued over a long extent of country; and where, while every thing retards the pursuer below, nothing can stop the object of his pursuit above.

We may here observe, that almost every kind of Falcon, from the largest to the smallest, may be trained for the purposes of Falconry; even Eagles have been used in chase of the Roebuck, the Antelope, and the Wolf; but those principally made use of are the Jerfalcon, the Gentil-falcon, and the Goshawk.

*Method of Training the Falcon.*

In order to train up a Falcon, the master begins by putting straps upon his legs, which are called *jesses*, to which there is sometimes fastened a ring, with the owner's name, by which, in case he should be lost, the finder may know where to bring him back. To these are added little bells, which serve to mark the place where he is, if lost in the chase. He is always carried on the hand and is obliged to be kept without sleeping. If he be stubborn, and attempt to bite, his head is plunged into water, or (according to Shaw) a method has been sometimes practised of placing an unquiet Hawk in a Smith's shop for a certain time. Thus, by hunger, watching, and fatigue, he is constrained to submit to having his head covered by a hood, which also covers his eyes. This troublesome employment continues often for three days and nights without ceasing. It rarely happens but at the end of that time his necessities, and the privation of light, make him lose all idea of liberty, and bring down his natural wildness. His master judges of his being tamed

when he permits his head to be covered without resistance, and, when uncovered, he seizes the meat placed before him contentedly. The repetition of these lessons, by degrees, ensures success.

When these first rudiments of instruction have succeeded, and the bird shews signs of docility, he is carried out upon some green, (but confined by a piece of cord) his head is uncovered, and by flattering him with food at different times, he is taught to jump on the hand, and to continue there. When confirmed in this habit, it is then thought time to make him acquainted with the *lure*.— This *lure* is only a thing stuffed like the bird the Falcon is intended to pursue, such as a Heron, a Pigeon, or a Quail, and on this lure they always take care to give his food.

It is necessary that the bird should not only be acquainted with the practice, but fond of it, and delicate of his food when shewn it. When the Falcon has flown upon the lure, the best way is to let him feed, which serves as a recompense for his docility. The use of the lure is to flatter him back when he has flown in the air, the sight of the food he loves,

with the addition of a certain noise made by the Falconer, immediately recall him, and in a short time the voice alone is sufficient.

When these lessons have been long repeated, it is then necessary to study the character of the bird ; to speak frequently to him if he be inattentive to the voice, to stint him in his food if he does not come kindly or readily to the lure, to keep waking him if he be not sufficiently familiar, and to cover him frequently with the hood if he fears darkness. When the familiarity of the bird is sufficiently confirmed on the green, he is then carried into the open fields, but still kept fast by the cord. He is then uncovered as before, and the Falconer calling him at some paces distant, shews him the lure. When he flies upon it, he is permitted to take a large morsel of the food which is tied to it. The next day the lure is shewn him at a greater distance, till he comes at last to fly to it at the utmost length of his cord. He is then to be shewn the game itself alive, but disabled or tame, which he is designed to pursue. After having seized this several times, he is then left entirely at liberty; and is carried into the

field for the purpose of pursuing that which is wild.

When carried out, he is always capped or hooded, to prevent him from seeing any object but his game; and as soon as the dogs either stop, or spring it, the Falconer unhoods the bird and tosses him into the air after his prey. It is then extremely diverting to see him wing the air in all the varieties of his flight, and to behold him soaring by degrees, and repeated springs, till the eye loses him in the clouds. He then commands the plain, contemplates the motions of his prey, which the distance of the enemy deludes into an imaginary security, till at last he launches upon it with the rapidity of an arrow.

The Falconer never fails in the first essays of the bird to present him with the liver, &c. of his prey, as these gratuities, and other caresses of the Falconer, animate the bird to the performance of his duty, keep him in regularity, and a proper fierceness of temper, and particularly prevent him from *bearing away his bells*; that is, from flying off and not returning, an accident which sometimes happens.

When Falcons are taught to fly at Hares, Rabbits, &c. it is called *flying at the fur*; and some are instructed to fly at both *fur* and *plume*, or to the pursuit of Hares and Rabbits as well as of Pheasants and Partridges, &c. For this purpose, when the Falcon is very tame, they either take a live Hare and break one of its legs, or a Hare's skin stuffed; and having fixed to it a piece of Chicken's flesh, or such food as the Falcon is most fond of, they tie this skin, with a long cord, to the girth of a horse, and as the skin thus is dragged along, the bird imagines it to be a Hare in flight, is allowed to dart upon it; and is thus taught to distinguish the animal.

Falcons of the larger kind (as we have before stated) have been taught to fly at the Roebuck, and even at the Wild Boar and the Wolf. With this view they were accustomed to be fed, when young, from out of the sockets of the eyes of a Wolf's or Boar's head, the whole skin of the animal being stuffed so as to make it appear alive. While the bird was feeding, the Falconer began to move the figure gradually, in consequence of which the bird learned to fasten itself so as to

stand firm, notwithstanding the precipitate motions which were gradually given to the stuffed animal. He would have lost his meal if he had quitted his hold, and therefore he took care to secure himself. When these exercises were finished, the skin was placed on a cart, drawn by a horse at full speed, the bird was allowed to follow it, to pounce upon it, and to feed.

When they came to fly him in the field at the wild animals, the bird never failed to dart upon the head of the beast he discovered and began to scoop out the eyes. This put the animal into such distress, that the hunters had time to approach and dispatch it with their spears.

The facts in the compilation of the above slight sketch of Falconry, &c. are chiefly taken from the works of Goldsmith, Pennant, Shaw, the Encyclopædia Perthensis, that of Dr. Rees, &c.

## ACCIPITRES.

## GENUS III.

## STRIX—OWL.

The distinguishing characters of this Genus are—

*Bill hooked, without a cere.*

*Nostrils covered with bristly recumbent feathers.*

*Head, auricles, and eyes, large.*

*Tongue bifid.*

The pupil of the eye of the Owl is capable of great extension, and is furnished with a strong nictitating membrane, or semi-transparent guard, situated beneath the eye-lids, and which can at the pleasure of the bird be drawn over the pupil of the eye when the light is too dazzling. The outer toe of this bird is retractile, i. e. it has the power of turning it backwards in the manner of the Parrot. The outer quill feather in each wing is serrated.

The greater number of the birds of this Genus nestle in the holes of trees, or in some

ruined edifice. They lay two or three eggs, which the male and female alternately sit upon, and they watch over their youthful family with extreme care.

These birds (like the Falcons) after devouring their prey, emit the bones, feathers, hair, and other indigestible parts, at the mouth, in the form of little pettets.

The Genus *Strix* is ranged by Linnæus two sub-divisions, viz. the *eared* and *earless*.

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When nature is displayed in her whole extent, she presents a boundless field, where the various orders of being are connected by a perpetual succession of contiguous objects: She seems to pass gradually in animals from one to the other---nothing is lost in the region of existence. Providence has wisely ordained that the smaller animals should be the most prolific (in order, no doubt, to prevent any part of her works from becoming extinct), immense numbers of them fall a sacrifice to the Falcon and other tribes of predatory beings. But, as the shades of night might conceal from destruction those classes which ap-

pear to be destined to it, there are created, in every class of animals, nocturnal species which, provided with powerful arms, with an acute sense of hearing, and with a piercing sight, traverse the gloomy asylums where those timid races hide themselves. It is not therefore an isolated law in the system of living bodies, but one of those general principles which enter, as a constituent part, into the universal conception of animated nature.

The eyes of most of the species in this *Genus* are so delicate that they seem to be dazzled by the splendour of day, and entirely overpowered by the lustre of the solar rays. Buffon observes, that "they require a gentler light, such as prevails at the dawn, or in the evening shades. They leave their retreats to hunt, or rather to search for their prey, and their expeditions are performed with great advantage; for in this still season, the other birds and small animals feel the soft influence of sleep, or are about to yield to its soothing power. Those nights that are cheered by the presence of the moon, are to them the finest of days---days of pleasure and abundance, in which they seek their prey for sev-

ral hours together, and procure an ample supply of provisions. When she withdraws her silver beams, their nights are not fortunate; and their ravages are confined to a single hour in the morning and in the evening; for we cannot suppose that these birds, though they can distinguish objects in a weak light, are able to perform their motions when involved in total darkness."

The flight of these birds is light and buoyant; they often, as they are flying, touch the surface of the earth on which in general their prey is to be found; and dart unexpectedly on their prey, not pursuing it. It sometimes happen that they continue their search longer than usual, and following the dictates of appetite rather than that of prudence, wait till day-light breaks upon them, they are bewildered, dazzled, and confounded, and however far from home, are obliged to remain in the same spot until the return of evening. If by any means they are forced to leave their retreat, their flight is tardy and interrupted, being afraid of dashing against the intervening obstacles. The other birds, perceiving their fear, or their constrained situation,

delight to insult them : the Tit-mouse, the Finch, the Red-breast, the Black-bird, the Jay, the Thrush, &c. assemble to enjoy the sport. The bird of night remains perched upon a branch, motionless and confounded, hears their movements and their cries, which are incessantly repeated, because it answers them only with insignificant gestures, turning round its head, its eyes, and its body with a foolish air. It even suffers itself to be assaulted without making resistance ; the smallest, the weakest of its enemies, are the most eager to torment it. Upon this play of mockery, or of natural antipathy, bird-catchers have founded a method of taking great numbers of the smaller species of birds. They place an Owl in the situation where a number of limed twigs are spread, in order to lure other birds. The best time is very early in the morning or about an hour before the close of the day ; for if this diversion be deferred later, the small birds which assemble in the day to insult over the bird of night with so much audacity and obstinacy, avoid the rencounter after the evening shades have restored his vigour, and encouraged his exertions.

The above must be understood with certain restrictions, as all the different species of Owls are not equally distinguished by such nice sensibility in the organs of sight, and consequently not equally overpowered by the light of day. This difference in the sight of Owls regulates the time of their depredations; such as nearest resemble other birds, issue from their retreats immediately after the setting of the Sun, (some species are in search of prey the greater part of the day), the more quick-sighted remain concealed till later in the evening.

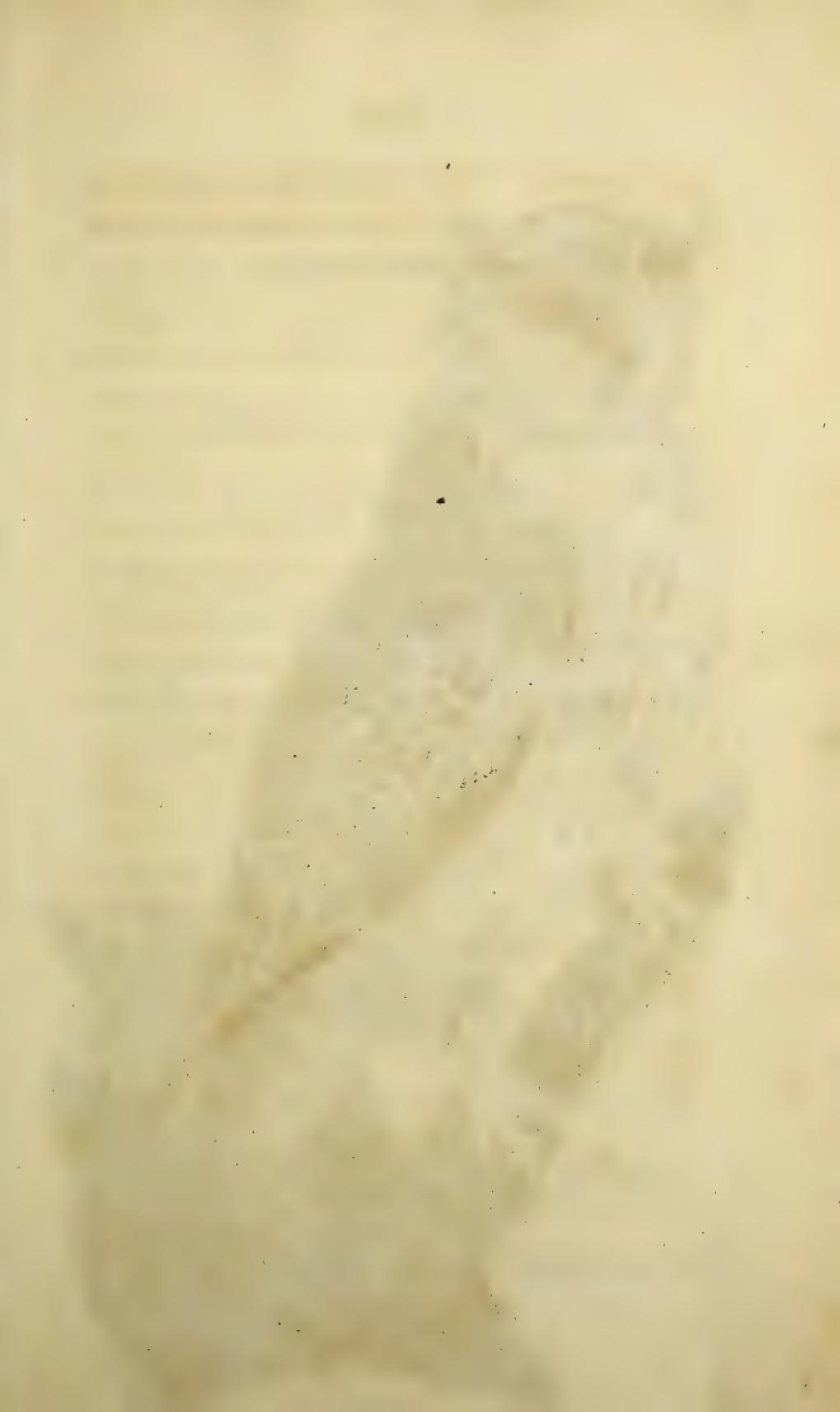
In all ages, and in almost every part of the globe, Owls have been considered birds of ill omen and the messengers of death. Rome itself, during its most prosperous state, underwent a lustration because one of them strayed into its capitol. Virey, in allusion to this superstitious idea, when treating of the Owl, says, "behold them, when twilight begins to cover the earth with its grey and sombre mantle, then they unfold their limbs at liberty; then they make the rocks, the ruined castle, and dilapidated mansion echo with their melancholy hootings. The superstiti-

ous and feeling recluse, who wanders among the tombs, hears this dull and plaintive voice ; he believes it to come from the bosom of the earth, from the charnel-house of the dead ; the light fluttering of the bird of night startles him, and he fancies he hears the unblessed dead wandering near him over the ground that covers in vain their bones. He believes that they call him to his last asylum ; the sterile pomp of grandeur and the transitory pleasures of life touch his heart no longer : he beholds only the coffin, and the dark cemetery where repose in peace, and in inglorious confusion, the turbulent and haughty monarch, the peaceful and unambitious shepherd.”

Such are the ideas that the timid vulgar have conceived, (and which have been handed from generation to generation, and which the tales of the nursery have so instilled into the infant mind that even the present enlightened age is not exempt from their effects,) and which renders ominous the bird of night. Yet far from being injurious, these birds wage war with those species of minute and destructive animals that undermine our dwellings,

pillage our provisions, or ravage our gardens.

The Owl was formerly consecrated to Juno,  
as was the Eagle to Jupiter.





*Strix Bubo.*

**EARED OWLS.****STRIX BUBO.****GREAT-EARED OWL.****SPECIFIC CHARACTER.**

**Body, tawny**

**Strix Bubo---Lin. Gme.**

**Le grand Duc---Buffon.**

**Eagle Owl---Pennant.**

**Great-Eared Owl---Lath. Bew. Mont.**

**Shaw.**

**PROVINCIAL.****GREAT, OR EAGLE OWL. GREAT  
HORNED OWL. STOCK OWL.**

This bird, at first sight, appears to be as large as the Common Eagle; but it is really much smaller, the expansion of the wings not exceeding five feet.

The female differs but little in the colour of its plumage from the male.

Its nest is large, being nearly three feet in

diameter; it is composed of sticks, bound together by fibrous roots, and lined with leaves; it generally lays two eggs, somewhat larger than those of a Hen, and variegated like the bird itself. It builds its nest in the caverns of rocks, in mountainous and almost inaccessible places, and is seldom seen on the plain or perched on trees. It feeds on young Hares, Rabbits, Rats, Mice, and reptiles of various kinds.

This species of Owl sees better during the day than almost any of the tribe. It has been frequently observed preying on birds and the smaller quadrupeds in full daylight.

A pleasing instance of the attachment of these birds to their young is recorded by Bingley, as extracted from the transactions of the Philosophical Society of Stockholm.

M. Cronstedt "resided several years on a farm in Sudermania, near a steep mountain, on the summit of which two Eagle Owls had their nest. One day in the month of July, a young one, having quitted the nest, was seized by some of his servants. This bird, after it was caught, was shut up in a large hen-coop;

the next morning M. Cronstedt found a young Partridge lying dead before the door of the coop. He immediately concluded that this provision had been brought thither by the old Owls; which he supposed had been making search in the night-time for their lost young one, and had been led to the place of its confinement by its cry. This proved to have been the case, by the same mark of attention being repeated for fourteen successive nights. The game which the old ones carried to it consisted principally of young Partridges, for the most part newly killed, but sometimes a little spoiled. One day a Moor-fowl was brought so fresh that it was still warm under the wings. A putrid Lamb was also found at another time, probably what had been spoiled by lying long in the nest of the old Owls ; and it is supposed that they brought it merely because they had no better provision at the time. M. Cronstedt and his servants watched at a window several nights, that they might observe, if possible, when this supply was deposited. Their plan did not succeed, but it appeared that these Owls, which are very sharp-sighted, had discovered the moment when the window

was not watched ; as food was found to have been deposited for the young before the coop one night when this had been the case.

" In the month of August the parent discontinued this attendance ; but at that period all birds of prey abandon their young to their own exertions."

From this instance it may be readily concluded how great a quantity of game must be destroyed by a pair of these Owls during the time they employ in rearing their young. And as the edible species of forest animals repair chiefly in the evening to the fields, they are particularly exposed to the acute sight, smell, and claws of these birds of the night.

The appearance of this bird in cities has been deemed an unlucky omen. The ancients held them in the utmost abhorrence, and thought them (like the Screech Owls) the messengers of death.

This species of Owl is rarely met with in England. It has, however, been shot in Yorkshire and in Sussex, as well as in Scotland. It is not very common in France, nor is it certain that it stays there the whole year.

It is more plentiful in Norway and other Northern parts of Europe and America.

Our drawing was made from a beautiful specimen of the male of this species in the collection of Mr. Seaman, of Ipswich.

**STRIX OTUS.****LONG-EARED OWL.**

Feathers of the ears, six.

*Strix Otus*--Lin. Gme.

Le Hibou ou moyen Duc--Buffon.

Long-Eared Owl--Pen. Lath. Mont. Bew.

**PROVINCIAL.****HORNED OWL.**

This beautiful species measures fourteen inches and a half in length, and the expansion of the wings three feet four inches.

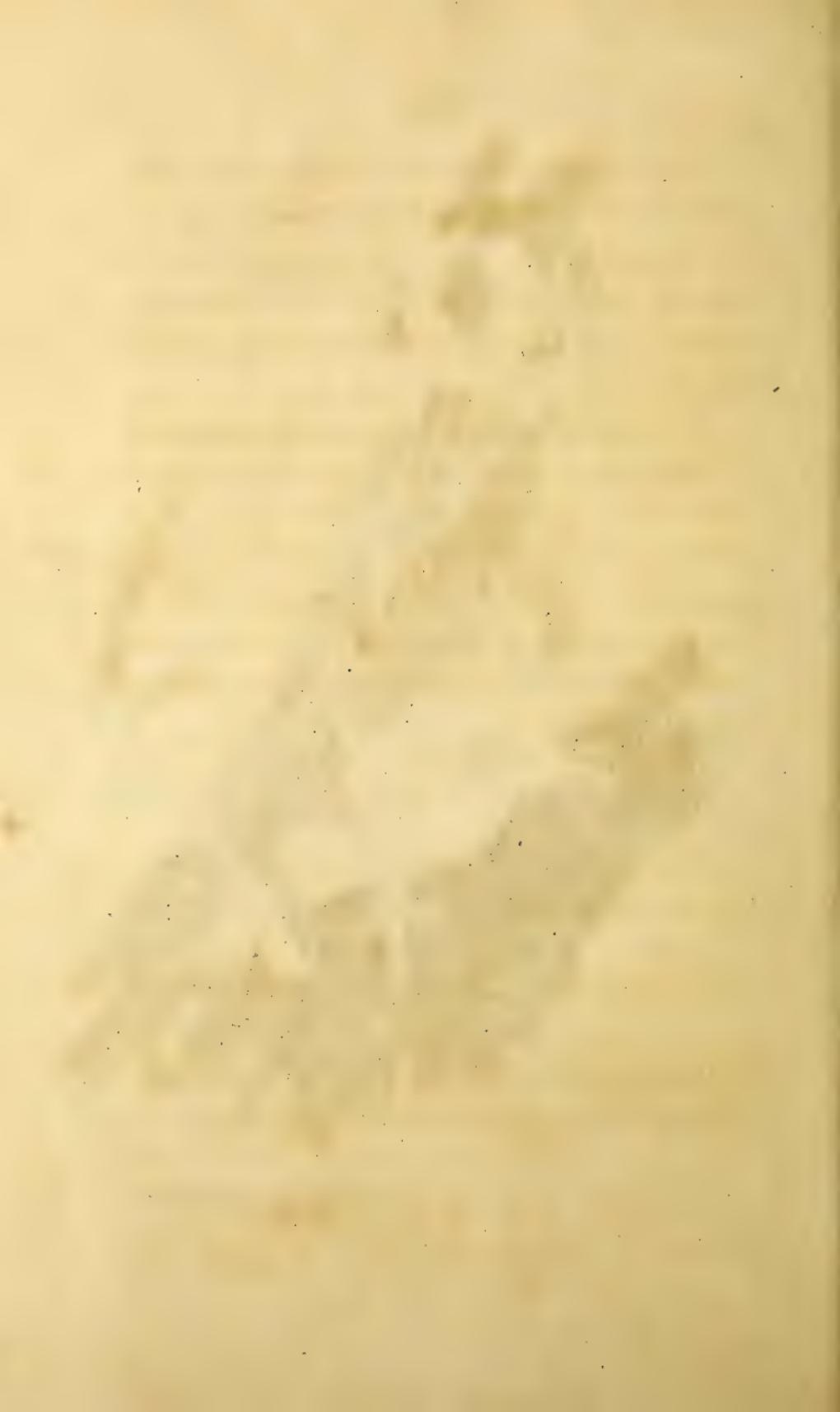
The female differs but little from the male.

This is by no means so common as the Tawny or White Owls, and though it is frequently taken in England (where it remains the whole year,) very little is known of its habits. It is said that it seldom constructs a nest of its own, but not unfrequently occupies that of the Magpie--it lays four or five eggs. Buffon observes that the young are at first white, but acquire their natural colour in about fifteen days.



Hunt

*Strix Otus.*  
Long-eared Owl.



This species frequents large woods and wooded tracts, where it can easily conceal itself during the day. Its principal food is Mice, and sometimes small birds taken at roost. It is never seen to fly during the day unless disturbed.

It is said to be far from uncommon in France, and many other parts of Europe, as far as the Northern parts of Russia. It is also found in some parts of America, and is common at Hudson's Bay, where it has been observed preying by night with much clamour, and often approaching the dwellings of the inhabitants.

## STRIX BRACHYOTUS.

## SHORT-EARED OWL.

Horns, short; body above, brown; the feathers edged with yellow; beneath, pale yellow, longitudinally streaked with dusky; irides very brilliant dark yellow.

*Strix Brachyotus*--Lin. Gme.

Short-Eared Owl--Pen. Lath. Mont.  
Shaw, Bew.

## PROVINCIAL.

MOUSE HAWK, WOODCOCK OWL,  
HAWK OWL.

The male of this species measures fifteen inches in length, and the expansion of its wings is three feet six inches.

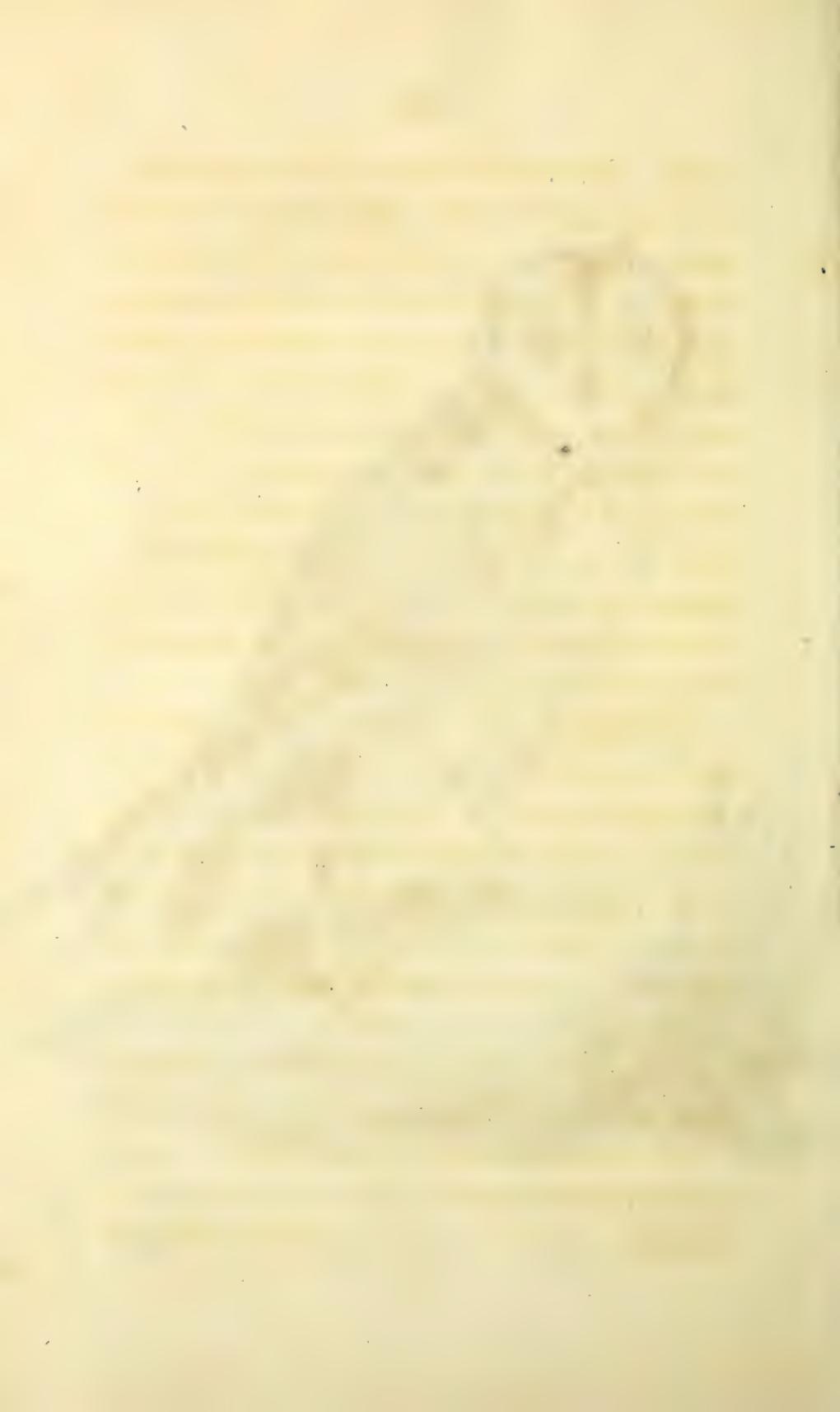
The plumage of the female is less bright in colour than that of the male.

It breeds in the Orkneys, making a nest of dry grass, on the ground, wherein it deposits three or four white eggs.

This species is confounded by Buffon and other Ornithologists with a very different



Asio brachyotus.



bird. The British Fauna is indebted to Mr. Pennant for the first description of this bird. But that excellent naturalist was mistaken when he described it as having only one feather on each side the head capable of erection (which mistake has been followed by most other authors) as upon minute examination these tufts will be found to consist of several feathers, very little longer than the rest. It must, however, be remarked, that these tufts or ears are never erected when the bird is in a quiescent state; in the dead birds they are scarcely discernible.

The Short-eared Owl is a migratory species, arriving in this country in October, about the time the Woodcock makes its appearance, and departs at the same time with that bird in March--hence the name of Woodcock Owl. From the same cause it is probable that its summer retreat is Norway.

It is distinguished from all the other species of Owls by the smallness of its head, which has occasioned it to be called, in some places, by the name of Hawk Owl, or Mouse Hawk. In this country it has not been ob-

served to perch on trees, but generally hides itself in long grass or fern, and seems partial to open barren situations. When disturbed, it seldom flies far, but will alight and sit looking at its pursuer, at which time the horns may be distinctly seen. In dusky weather it will prey by day-light, and sometimes fly at small birds as well as Mice.

It is a very fierce and courageous bird, an instance having been known of one which was shot springing up with great fury at the sportsman when endeavouring to secure it.

Sometimes these birds are found in great numbers, and it is recorded that twenty-eight have been seen in one turnip-field, in the month of November, probably attracted by the number of Mice to be found there. An instance of this kind occurred in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater, where, as Mr. Anstice informed Mr. Montagu, Mice were in such abundance as to destroy a large portion of the vegetation ; and that in the autumn a great many of this species of Owls resorted thither in order to prey on them.

This species, with very slight variation, is found in Hudson's Bay. It is also common in Siberia, Newfoundland, &c.





J. Hunt

*Strix Scops* — Scops Owl

## STRIX SCOPS.

## SCOPS-HORNED OWL.

Ears of one feather each.

*Strix Scops*--Lin. Gme.

Le Scops, ou Petit Duc---Buffon.

Short-Eared Owl---Latham.

Little-Horned Owl---Montagu.

Scops-Horned Owl---Shaw.

On examination of this species, the auricular plumes (on which Linnæus has founded his specific character, and which he erroneously states to consist of only one feather on each side,) will be found to consist of three or more feathers, as is the case with the Short-Eared Owl.

This is a species of uncommon elegance and of very small size, measuring only seven inches and a half in length.

It varies considerably in the cast of its colours, according to various circumstances of age and sex, and when young is said to be wholly grey.

This bird deposits five or six eggs in the hollows of trees, without constructing a nest.

But few instances are recorded of this bird having been met with in this country. Latham informs us that it is common in many parts of Europe.

It appears from the accounts given by authors to be a migratory species. In France it is said to arrive and depart with the Swallow. At particular times great flocks arrive, and wage war against the Field Mice, in years when those animals are unusually numerous.

Spallanzani informs us that in Italy, its favourite residence is in gently rising, wooded regions, and that it lives principally on insects and earth-worms. During the day it continues in the shade of the woods, perched on a branch, and continuing motionless, with its ears or tufts erected; in this state it will permit a very near approach, and then only retires to hide itself among the branches.--- Towards the dusk of the evening it emerges from its retreat, perches on a tree in some open spot, and begins its cry, which consists of a quick and often repeated whistle, somewhat

like the word *chivi*, for which reason it is called in some places by the name of *Chivini*. In Italy the young are full fledged by the beginning of July, when they follow their parents during the night for food, till they are able to feed themselves, and to pursue Grasshoppers, Beetles, and other insects. When this period commences, they leave their parents, and each lives separately. They remain in Italy till October, at which time they become, (especially the old ones) very fat.

A brood of these birds, taken by Spallanzani, were so young as to be scarcely covered with down, but in about a month were become so far trained as to follow him very readily. They fed on any kind of flesh, chopped small, and, when hungry, flew after him, and alighted on his hand, in order to receive their food, and this not only during the twilight, but even at mid-day.

Another brood, taken by the same person, and which was reared beneath a shrub in the garden, which sheltered the young birds from the sun, soon became equally tame; flying to, and following their master when called--settling on his shoulders to receive their allow-

ance. After their evening meal, they flew about the neighbourhood during the night, perching on the adjacent trees, and returning in the morning to their habitation in the garden.

They continued thus attached for about a month, regularly wandering by night and returning in the morning. One day, however, on missing two of the number, Spallanzani, on calling them, received their answer from a neighbouring elm; they refused, however, to descend, departed in the evening, and returned to the elm the next morning. Two days having elapsed since they had been fed by the hand of Spallanzani, he was resolved to sacrifice one of the birds to his curiosity, and bringing it down by a gun, found, on examining the stomach, the remains of Grasshoppers. That it was one of the birds which had been tamed was beyond a doubt, since each bird had been marked by red silk tied round the leg, and which the bird examined had on.

The flight of these two was soon succeeded by that of the rest, and though the time of their emigration from the country was still

far distant, yet they never more returned to their former spot, having found the means of providing subsistence for themselves.

Such, he adds, is the general conduct of almost all wild animals. When taken very young, they become, by constant attention, familiar, and to a certain degree affectionate; but this only continues so long as their dependence is necessary for their support. After that period is elapsed, their familiarity gradually subsides, their confidence diminishes, and at length they make their escape, and seem to fly from mankind as from the general tyrant of nature.

## 2.--EARLESS OWLS.

STRIX NYCTEA.

SNOWY OWL.

Body whitish, with a few brown lunate spots.

*Strix Nyctea*--Lin. Gme.

*Le Harfang*--Buffon.

*Great White Owl*--Edwards.

*Snowy Owl*--Pen. Lath. Mont. Shaw.

This species measures about two feet in length, and sometimes weighs above three pounds.

This elegant bird, though before known to North-American travellers and by drawings made from it, appears to have been first distinctly described by Edwards. It appears to differ considerably in the markings of its plumage. A beautiful variety of this bird existed in the Leverian Museum, and is thus described by Shaw. "It was every where, except on the face and legs, most elegantly spotted with numerous lunated brown marks,



*Strix Nyctea* — Snowy Owl



running into short interrupted bands over the neck, and on all the under parts of the bird."

It has been generally supposed that the Snowy Owl changes the colour of its plumage with the season, and that the snowy whiteness of this bird, observable in the winter, was thrown off on the approach of the warmer months, in exchange for that of a mixture of brown and white. This appears not to be the case, as will be seen by the observation of Mr. Bullock, who procured a specimen in the early part of July, as far South as the Orkneys.

It is probable that the young males for a year or two may not be pure white (but that like many of the species of Falcons,) their plumage may be similar to that of the female, which is described to be mottled with brown.

It inhabits the coldest parts of America, even as high as the remote mountains in the icy centre of Greenland, from which, in intense cold, it migrates to the shores. It adds (says Pennant) horrors even to that country by its hideous cries, resembling those of a man in deep distress. It is common in Hudson's Bay, Norway, and Lapland. It fears

not the rigour of the season, but bears the cold of the Northern regions the whole year. It flies by day, and is scarcely distinguished from snow, and falls perpendicularly on its prey, which consist principally of the White Grouse and Hares; to the last circumstance it owes its Swedish name *Harfang*. It is said also to prey on Mice and carrion.

It is but recently that this species has been taken in the British Isles. A fine specimen having been shot at Felbrigg, in the county of Norfolk, during the spring of the year 1814. The weather had been previously exceedingly severe during nearly three months, which specimen, we are informed by the Rev. G. Glover, was presented to Lord Stanley.

This bird does not conceal itself like most of the Genus, but prefers resting upon the ground, where it can look around and perceive the approach of an enemy. The specimen above mentioned was observed for several days standing on a heap of snow which had been blown against a fir, it had been often roused, and was at length taken with difficulty.

We take the liberty of transcribing the following letter from Bullock to the Linnaean Society, and published in the first part of the 11th vol. of their transactions.

" This remarkable species of Owl, the most beautiful and majestic, was first described by Linnæus in Faun.—Sued. edit. 1. p. 15. n. 54. and was afterwards described and figured by Mr. Edwards as an inhabitant of Hudson's Bay; later authorities mention its being found in Russia and Germany; but it has never till now been added to the catalogue of British birds. In July last (1812), in the island of North Ronaldsha, one of the Orkneys, I was informed that a bird of this kind had been seen on the Links, or Rabbit Warren, for several weeks, and shortly after I had an opportunity of examining it for some time at the distance of about forty yards; it was a male, and its companion had been killed a few months before on the same island. One of them had likewise visited the adjacent isle Westra, and remained there for some time:— In September I was so fortunate as to procure one in Unst, the most Northerly of the Shetland Isles; it had been killed a few weeks

before by Mr. L. Edmonston, a young gentleman well versed in ornithology of that country, and from whose testimony, as well as that of several gentlemen of the isles, I have not the smallest doubt of its breeding and remaining the whole year in the mountainous precipices of both that island and Yell. They are seen at the end of summer in company with their young, three or four together; the latter are then brown, their flight, which I had several opportunities of observing, was more light and buoyant than any of the Hawks, but not so much so as our common Barn Owl. They prey by day on various animals: one wounded in the isle of Balta disgorged a young Rabbit whole; and that now in my possession had in its stomach a Sandpiper, with the plumage entire."

Latham observes that this bird is found in the Northern parts of Europe and America, in Sweden, Iceland, and Hudson's Bay, and sometimes, though rarely, in Pennsylvania.

Our drawing was made from a specimen in the London Museum.





*Strix flammea*

## STRIX FLAMMEA.

## WHITE OR BARN OWL.

Body above, pale yellow, with white dots ; beneath, whitish, with blackish dots.

*Strix Flammea*--Lin. Gmelin.

L'Effraie, ou Fresiaie--Buffon.

White Owl--Pen. Lath. Mont. Bew.

Barn Owl--Shaw.

## PROVINCIAL.

**GILLIHAWTER, HOWLET, MADGE-HOWLET, CHURCH OWL, HISSING OWL, SCREECH OWL.**

This species measures between thirteen and fourteen inches in length, and the expansion of the wings about thirty-seven inches.

This bird breeds in old decayed trees in the neighbourhood of farm-houses or villages, in barns and ruined buildings; it makes but little nest, lays three or four white eggs, not so large or so round as those of the Tawny Owl. The young birds are at first wholly covered with a beautiful snowy down, and in that

state very much resemble a powder puff made with the down of the Swan.

White informs us that a pair of these birds bred for a number of years under the eaves of Selborne church, and as he paid particular attention to the manners of these birds during the breeding season (which lasts the summer through), the following remarks extracted from his history of Selborne may not be unacceptable. “About an hour before sun-set, for then the Mice begin to run) they sally forth in quest of prey, and hunt all the hedges of meadows and small inclosures for them, which seem to be their only food. In this irregular country we can stand on an eminence and see them beat the fields over like a Setting Dog, and often drop down in the grass or corn. I have minuted these birds with my watch for an hour together, and have found that they return to their nest, one or the other of them, about once in five minutes; reflecting at the same time on the adroitness that every animal is possessed of as far as regards the well-being of itself and offspring. But a piece of address, which they shew when they return loaded, should not, I

think be passed over in silence. As they take their prey with their claws so they carry it in their claws to their nest: but, as the feet are necessary in their ascent under the tiles, they constantly perch first on the roof of the chancel, and shift the Mouse from their claws to their bill, that the feet may be at liberty to take hold of the plate on the wall as they are rising under the eaves."

As the young of this species continue in the nest for a great length of time, and are fed even long after they can fly, many hundreds of Mice can scarcely suffice to supply them with food, on this account the farmer holds it in great estimation, and leaves a hole in his barn and granary for its egress.

The generally received opinion that Owls will not eat the *Shrew* appears not to be well founded, as Montagu asserts that he has taken five of those animals from the stomach of one of these birds.

It has also been asserted that Owls have so great an antipathy to the liver of the *Hog* that they will not touch it. This was not the case with one that lived for a considerable time in our possession, as we have repeatedly

given the liver of that animal to the bird, and found that it appeared to be very fond of it.

This bird, when alarmed, snaps its beak together with great force ; it also snores and hisses in a violent manner, and while it flies along, will often scream tremendously ; and as it frequently approaches windows where there is light in the room, a circumstance very common in apartments of the sick at all hours of the night, its voice is equally appalling to the superstitious invalid and his friends.

The Mongul and Kalmuc Tartars pay the greatest honors to this bird, attributing to it the preservation of Jenghis Khan, the founder of their empire. That Prince, with a small army, happened to be surprised and put to flight by his enemies. Compelled to seek concealment in a coppice, an Owl of this species settled on the bush under which he was hidden. This circumstance induced his pursuers not to search there, since they supposed it impossible that that bird would perch where any man was concealed. Jenghis Khan escaped ; and thenceforth his countrymen held the Owl sacred, and every one wore a plume of its feathers on his head. To this

day the Kalmucs continue the custom on all their great festivals; and some tribes among them have an idol in the form of an Owl, to which they fasten the real legs of this bird.

Buffon, in describing the White Owl, says that its irides are of a fine yellow colour. This is undoubtedly an error, and probably occurred from his taking the description from a preserved specimen; wherein yellow eyes had been placed instead of black.

The edge of the middle claw of this bird is serrated.

White Owls are found in Europe, Asia, and America.

**STRIX STRIDULA.****TAWNY OR WOOD-OWL.**

Body, rusty; third quill-feather longer.

*Strix Stridula*--Lin. Gmelin.

*Le Chathuant*--Buffon.

*Wood Owl*--Shaw.

*Tawny Owl*--Pen. Lath. Mont. Bewick.

**STRIX ULULA.****BROWN OWL.**

Body above, brown, spotted with white; tail feathers with linear white bands.

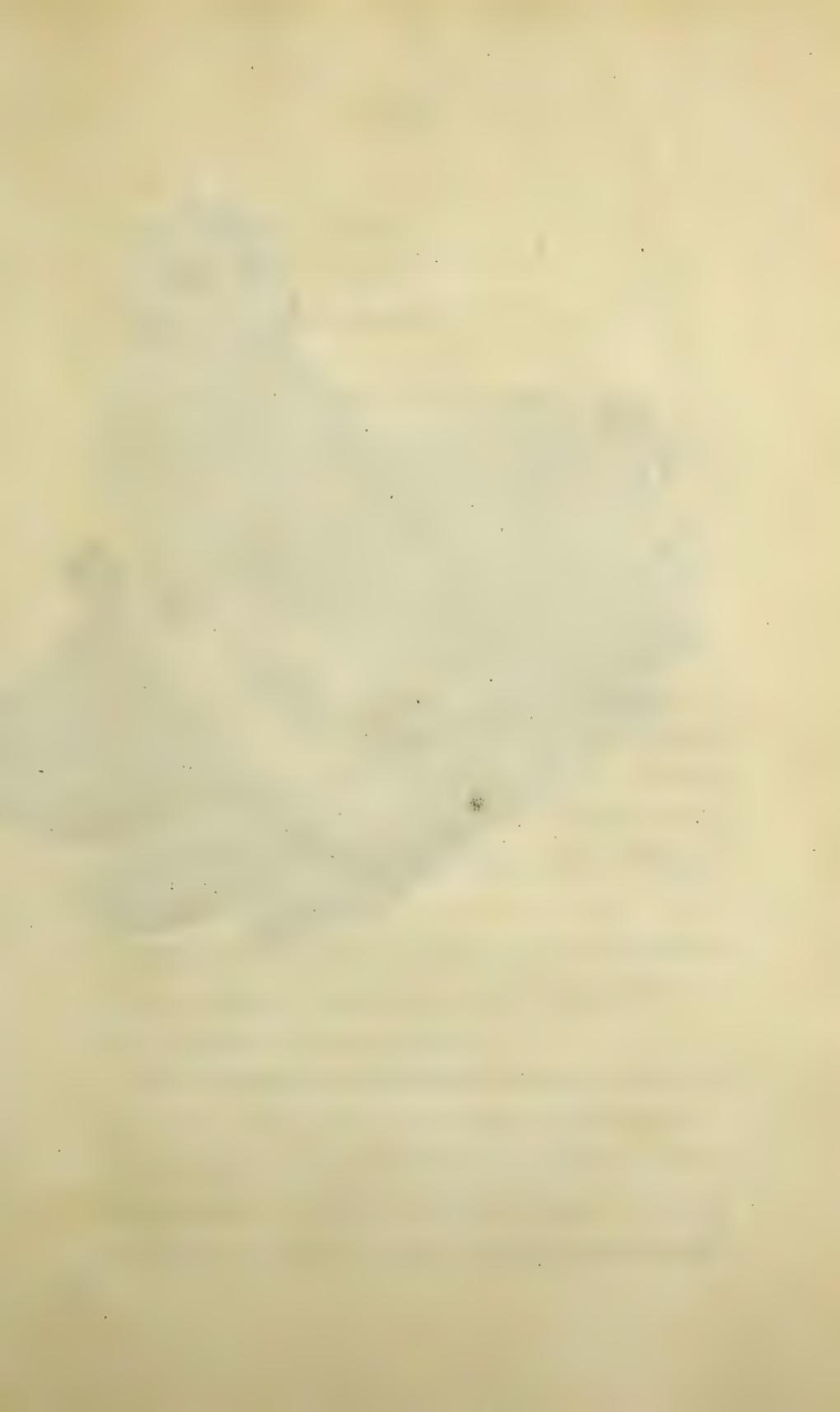
*Strix Ulula*--Lin. Gmelin.

*La Chuette ou Grande Cheveche*--Buffon.

*Brown Owl*--Pennant, Latham.

**STRIX ALUCO.****ALUCO OWL.**

Head, rusty; irides, black; first quill-feather serrate.





I Hunt

*Strix Stridula* — Wood Owl

**Strix Aluco---Gmelin.**

**La Hulotte---Buffon.**

**Aluco Owl---Latham.**

**PROVINCIAL.**

**IVY OWL, WOOD-OWL, HOOTING OWL,  
BLACK OWL, GREY OWL, HOWLET.**

It is now ascertained that the *Tawny* and *Brown* Owls, described by Pennant and other authors as distinct species, are in reality not so. The *Brown Owl* being only a variety of the Tawny or Wood Owl, as several instances have occurred of their having been found in the same nest. We have added the synonyms of the Aluco Owl upon the authority of Montagu, Wood, &c.

The male of this species measures fourteen inches in length and two feet seven inches in the expansion of its wings.

The female is about seventeen inches in length and two feet ten inches in breadth.

This bird breeds in ruined edifices or in the hollow part of decayed trees. Its nest has likewise been found in an ivy-bush, or on

the stump of an old pollard, and an instance has been also known of its laying its eggs in the deserted nest of a Magpie.

The nest is of a very slight texture, composed of such materials as the place may afford, but when it lays in the cavities of trees it mostly deposits its eggs on the decayed wood, without any additional materials at all. It lays two or three and sometimes four dusky white eggs, which are of a roundish form. The young are at first covered with a light-coloured down.

The parent birds are very bold and furious in defending their offspring, as several instances have been known of their attacking boys who have attempted to rob their nests, and the following anecdote, related in the Gentlemen's Magazine, will prove that they are not to be approached with impunity.

"A carpenter, some years ago, passing through a field near Gloucester, was suddenly attacked by an Owl that had a nest in a tree near the path; it flew at his head, and the man struck at it with a tool that he had in his hand, but missed his blow; the enraged bird repeated the attack, and fastening her

talons in his face, lacerated him in a most shocking manner."

This is by far the most plentiful species of Owl in this country. It resides chiefly in woods and plantations, concealing itself in the thickest places; sometimes, when unmolested, it settles on the ground, but always on being disturbed takes shelter in a neighbouring tree.

An ornithological friend informed us that this species of Owl is incapable of moving its eyes in their sockets, (and he suspects it also to be the case with the whole genus.) If so, may not the extraordinary facility of turning the head as if it were fixed upon a pivot have been provided by nature as an adequate substitute for the defect? Certain it is that its eyes are much larger than those of any other of the British species, and the pupil incapable of sufficient contraction to enable it to see distinctly by day-light, at which time it is rarely seen on wing, except forced from its haunts; and when such is the case, it is no uncommon thing for boys to hunt it down with sticks and stones.

The depredations of this species are truly

surprising---they destroy leverets and the young of most kinds of game. They have been known to enter pigeon-houses and to commit dreadful ravages among that tribe of birds. They likewise destroy vast numbers of Moles, and skin them with great dexterity.

On examining a nest of these Owls (says Bingley) "that had in it two young ones, several pieces of young Rabbits, Leverets, and other small animals were found. The hen and one of the young ones were taken away; the other was left to entice the cock, which was absent when the nest was discovered. On the following morning there were found in the nest no fewer than three young Rabbits, that had been brought to this young one by the cock during the night."

This bird is easily distinguished from the other species of Owls by its hootings. At the time the bird makes this singular noise, its throat (says Pennant,) is inflated to the size of a Hen's egg; it likewise frequently utters a harsh screaming note.

Speaking of this species, Montagu observes that he is glad to find that Dr. Latham has

altered his opinion respecting the *brown* variety, being a distinct species. What seems, says the above gentleman, "to have puzzled our scientific friend in the former part of his works was the drawing of an Owl, sent to him by Mr. Pennant, which had yellow irides, and was called Tawny Owl. No such bird, however, exists in England, and we must therefore conceive the figure had been taken from a preserved specimen in some collection, and might have really been the Tawny Owl of this country, but unfortunately it is too frequently the case that persons employed to stuff birds put in any eyes that may be handy, or perhaps that they think most attractive, without regard to science; such we have frequently met with, and such no doubt deceived Mr. Pennant in the bird, the drawing of which he sent to Doctor Latham."

Since the above was put to press, we have received a letter from the Rev. Henry North, in answer to a letter the Rev. Dr. Sutton addressed to that gentleman, (knowing that he had in his possession living specimens of the White and Tawny Owls,) in order to ascertain the fact relative to the eyes of those

species. We take the opportunity of acknowledging our obligation to those gentlemen.

"DEAR SIR--I am much ashamed that I have not answered your letter sooner, but the question which Mr. Hunt has put to me respecting the eyes of the Owls, is one which I have found some difficulty in answering. The eye of that bird is so extremely black, and being placed deep in the socket, without any white surrounding it, it requires, as you say, frequent and attentive examination to ascertain the fact. I have paid some attention to it, and without any experiment it appeared to me perfectly immovable; and directed to any object only by the motion of the head and neck. I mentioned the circumstance to Dr. ——, who proposed the following experiment, which he said would not be likely to produce pain to the bird, and which would show more satisfactorily if any motion did take place. He formed a white substance, about the consistency of paste, a very small drop of which he fixed upon the eye, holding at the same time the eye-lid, and the nictitating membrane, so as to prevent its passing over the eye. In this state the eye

was fixed, and the speck of white also, even when motions were made to draw the attention of the bird to various directions ; immediately on the bird being set at liberty, the nictitating membrane performed its office, and wiped the drop away. As far as this experiment has been able to prove the fact, we feel satisfied that with respect both to the *Tawny* and *White Owl* the eyes are motionless."

## STRIX PASSERINA.

## LITTLE OWL.

Quill feathers with five rows of white spots.

**Strix Passerina**--Lin. Gmelin.

**La Cheveche**, or **Petite Chouette**--Buffon.

**Little Owl**--Pen. Lath. Bew. Mont Shaw.

This elegant species of Owl measures from eight to nine inches in length; and in size it is little superior to that of a Blackbird.

The female builds its nest (which is constructed in the rudest manner) in the most retired places. It lays five eggs, spotted with white and yellow. In Carniola it is said to build its nest in chimnies, and Edwards records two instances of this species having been taken in this country by coming down chimnies.

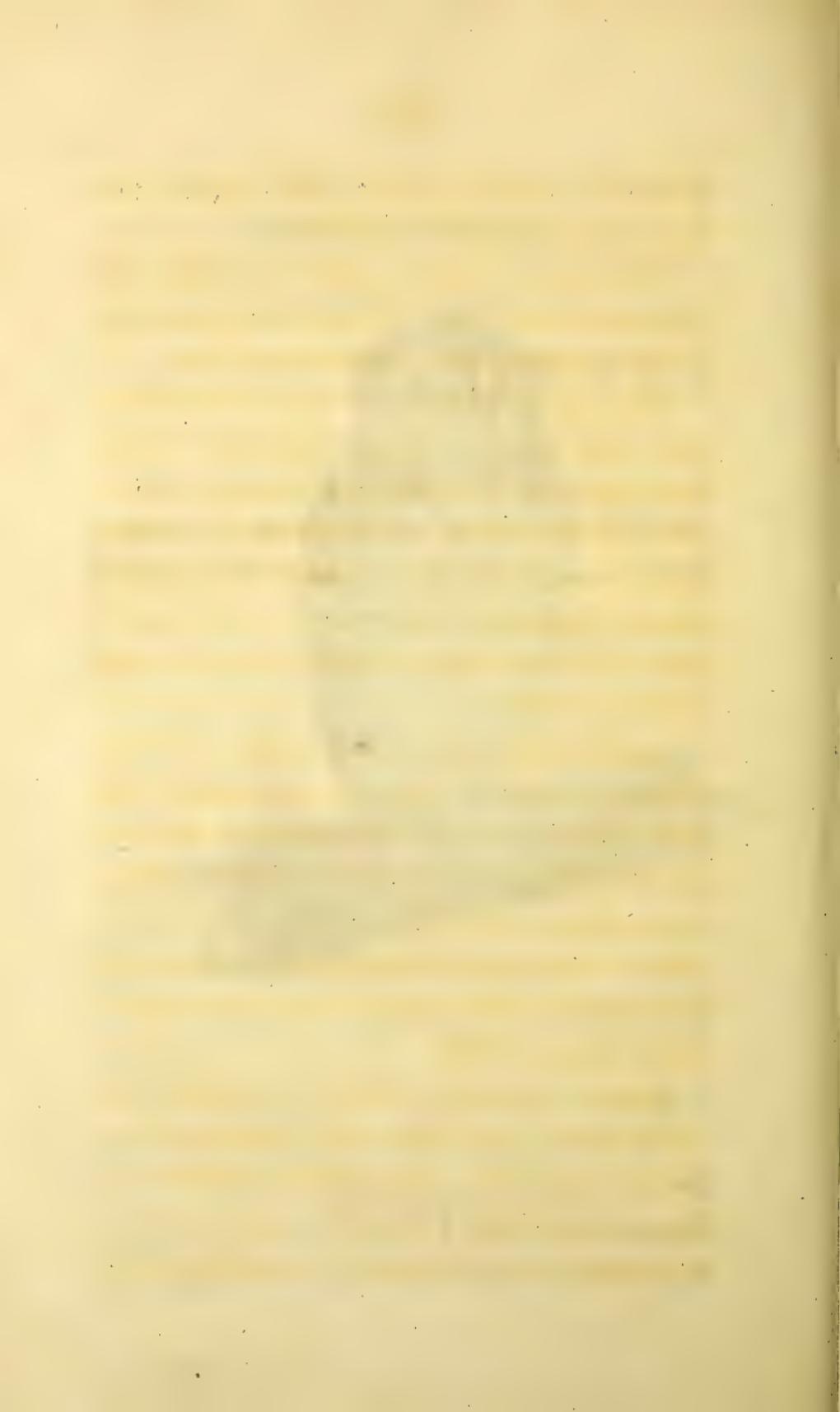
We recollect a nest of these birds being taken at no great distance from Norwich.

The Little Owl appears to vary in the colour of its plumage, and in some accounts the eyes are said to be black, but in those



*S. Passerina.*

I. Hark April 1. 1816.



instances we suspect the descriptions were taken from preserved specimens.

The drawing for the plate accompanying this article was made from a living specimen in the possession of J. D. Downes, Esq.

This species is found in many parts of Europe, but is very rare in England. It has been taken in Yorkshire, Flintshire, and in the neighbourhood of London. It seldom haunts woods; its ordinary abode being among solitary buildings, caverns, and old deserted ruins; and according to Buffon it never lodges in hollow trees.

Spallanzani, who reared several of these birds, in order to become acquainted with their instincts and habits, assures us that they are of a very wild disposition, and the young, when taken even in the earliest state, soon exhibit a ferocious character, and differs totally in temper and manners from the Scops or Little Horned Owl.

Sonnini appears to differ in opinion with Spallanzani; speaking of this species of Owl, he says that "the Little Owl is still less shy. Several shots that I fired, in order to procure a couple, did not frighten them sufficiently to

make them fly to any distance ; they contented themselves with merely removing from one tree to another. In general they are seen in pairs, at least at this season of the year (Dec.); and from comparing them together, I could not discover any perceptible difference between the male and female, either in size or colour."---(Sonnini's Egypt.)

The Little Owl sees much better in the day-time than most of the other nocturnal birds, having been observed to chace Swallows and other small birds, though with very little success. It is more fortunate in its search for Mice, which it swallows not entire, but tears them in pieces with its bill and claws ; and Buffon says that it even plucks the birds neatly before it eats them ; differing in this respect from all the other Owls.

Pennant informs us that in " Attica this bird is said to be migratory, appearing there in great numbers the beginning of April, and retire at the same time as the Storks."

The Italians make use of this Owl to decoy the smaller birds to the limed twigs.

## ACCIPITRES.

## GENUS 4TH.

## LANIUS. SHRIKE.

Linnæus distinguishes this Genus by the following characters :---

*Bill*, straightish, with a tooth on each mandible, near the end, naked at the base.---  
*Tongue*, jagged at the end.

The Butcher-bird, or Shrike Genus, seems to have puzzled many of the best naturalists as to the place it should hold in the system of Ornithology. Even the great Linnæus had changed his opinion more than once before he concluded finally to leave it in the Accipitrine Order.

Pennant, Latham, and others have ranged the birds of this genus in the order of *Pies*, and stated their reasons at length for so doing.

The whole race are easily distinguished, even at a distance, by the peculiar circumstance of associating together in families after the young are capable of flight. In this re-

spect they differ remarkably from all the predatory birds hitherto described, who generally banish from the nest their young, even while they are yet incapable of providing for themselves. The female Shrike on the contrary provides for her young with the most affectionate care. She at first feeds them with insects, and afterwards accustoms them to small pieces of flesh, which the male supplies with wonderful attention. When the offspring grows up, the parental regards do not cease: The old associate with the young during the autumn and winter without assembling in larger flocks. They make the safety of the family a common interest; they live together in peace, and chace their prey in concert. It is only the powerful stimulus of love that breaks this bond of family attachment, and separates the young from their parents to rear families of their own.

The flight of the Shrike (particularly that of the Cinereous species) is similar to that of the Magpie, being marked by successive dartings and undulations, which arise from its wings when extended being round and presenting but a small surface. This diffi-

culty of flight obliges the bird to endeavour to raise itself in the air over its prey, so that it may pounce upon and strike it to the earth, where it instantly seizes it by the throat and strangles it.

Thrushes, Blackbirds, and other small birds, are its common prey. When his prey is dead, he fixes it on some thorn; and when thus spitted, tears it to pieces with his beak. From this circumstance it has received the name of Butcher-bird. They likewise feed on insects.

Though these birds are small, and of a delicate make, it is astonishing with what intrepidity they attack the Magpie, the Crow, &c. They not only act on the defensive, but sometimes even commence the action, and are in general successful in the encounter, especially when the parents unite to drive birds of prey to a distance from their nest. For if these chance to fly near their retreats, the Shrikes rush upon them with loud cries, inflict terrible wounds, and force them to retire with little inclination to repeat the visit.

In France they are more frequent than with us, and Buffon observes, that "nothing

in nature can give a better idea of the privileges annexed to courage than to see these little birds, scarcely equal in size to the Lark, flying with security amongst the Sparrow Hawks, the Falcons, and other tyrants of the air, and hunting in their domains without apprehending danger.

Bingley says that “they are inhabitants of every quarter of the world, and are found in all climates, except within the Arctic Circle.

The genus contains upwards of fifty species, three only of which are to be found in the British Isles.





*Lanius, excubitor.*

Illust. Jan. 1. 1816.

## LANIUS EXCUBITOR.

## GREAT CINEREOUS SHRIKE.

*Tail*, wedged, white at the sides. *Back*, hoary. *Wings*, black, with a white spot.

Lanius Excubitor---Lin. Gme.

La Pie-Griesche Grise---Buffon.

Great Cinereous Shrike---Pen. Lath. Don.

Bew.

Great Shrike---Bingley.

Cinereous Shrike---Montagu.

Grey Shrike---Shaw.

## PROVINCIAL.

MURDERING PIE. GREAT BUTCHER-BIRD. MATTAGES. WIERANGLE. SKREEK OR SKRIKE. MOUNTAIN. MAGPIE. FRENCH-PIE. WHITE-WHISKY-JOHN. NINE-KILLER.

This bird measures ten inches in length and fourteen inches in the expansion of its wings.

The female is distinguished from the male

by a few shades of brown on the under part of the body. There are also some other differences, but they are so slight and so little remarkable, that they are scarcely to be perceived. She makes her nest in the recesses of solitary forests, and sometimes also in tufted and spiny hedges. In this country she is said to prefer mountainous situations. Sonnini says that she employs for this purpose hay, carefully chosen, and very fine small fibrous roots, moss, &c. of which she forms a semi-spherical building, about an inch and a half in thickness. The interior of the nest is furnished with a profusion of feathers and down. On this soft bed the female deposits from three to five white eggs, spotted with a dirty brown, which assumes a blackish tinge towards the larger end. Other authors have described the number of eggs to be six, and their colour to be a dull olive green, spotted at the larger end with black. Although this bird breeds in France, and other parts of the European Continent, and without doubt in this country also, into which it is said to migrate in the spring, and to depart in the autumnal season, yet it is so scarce that Monta-

gu says that he could never ascertain the fact.

With respect to its migration, we are of opinion that it continues with us much longer than is generally supposed, having received a specimen killed in the month of November, the portrait of which accompanies this article. And the above respectable author likewise assures us, in his Ornithological Dictionary, that "the only two which came under his inspection, (both of which were males,) were killed, one on the fifteenth and the other on the twenty-second of November, in Wiltshire." And in the Supplement to the same work informs us that he received another male specimen in the month of Feb. 1807. This "and two or three others of the same sex, obtained also in the winter months, indicate, he observes, that it only accidentally comes to us in its autumnal migration from the North of Europe to a more Southern climate; being sometimes forced to vary its longitudinal course, and thus driven on the Eastern parts of Great Britain."

In spring and summer it is said to imitate the notes of other birds, by way of decoying

them within its reach, that it may destroy them; excepting this, his natural note is the same throughout all seasons. When kept in a cage he is always mute.

It may be seen perched upon the extremities of the highest and most isolated branches of trees and bushes; which position appears necessary to the bird, in order that it may rise into the air, or precipitate itself without obstacle upon its prey. The mode of seizing its prey by the throat as before stated to be peculiar to this genus, has obtained in Germany (to this species in particular) a name signifying "*The Suffocating Angel;*" while from its singular propensity of spitting them on thorns, the English settlers in America have given it the name of *Nine-killer*, from a superstitious supposition that it invariably sticks up *nine* Grasshoppers or other insects in succession.

The muscles that move the beak of this bird are thick and strong, which makes the head very large. This apparatus is quite requisite in a species whose method of killing its prey is so singular, and whose manner of devouring it is not less extraordinary.

Sonnini says that "the appetite which this bird possesses for insects, leads him to use precautions that he may not be disappointed of his favourite food ; and this foresight supposes combinations which denote a great sagacity of instinct. The insects appear only at stated periods, and some species, particularly the larger ones, only appearing during a very short time, the Butcher-bird would often be exposed to the pains of hunger if it did not form a sort of magazine, where it finds, upon necessity, resources which secure it from inevitable distress, but for these means. It is not in the holes of trees nor in the earth that it deposits these provisions, which are of such a nature that they would soon corrupt if kept in a close place. It is in the open air that the Butcher-bird arranges them here and there; it sticks its superfluous prey upon the thorns of bushes, and it knows where to find it when in want of it."

We should rather suppose that this instinctive stratagem was given to the bird by an *all-wise Providence* for its preservation, by decoying the smaller birds, which feed on insects, into a situation from whence it may

dart upon and seize them. That the insects are placed there as food to tempt other birds (and not as Mons. S. supposes, to keep them from putrefaction,) appears from their being frequently left untouched for a considerable length of time. And so tenacious is the bird of this its natural habit, that, when confined in a cage, it preserves the same propensity, sticking its food against the wires.

In Russia this bird is sometimes trained for the purpose of catching small birds, and in some countries it is said to kill Rats and Mice. It is found in Europe and through the whole extent of North America.





I. Hunt.

*L. collurio.*  
Red-backed Shrike.

**LANIUS COLLURIO.**  
**RED-BACKED SHRIKE.**

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Tail, somewhat wedged; back, grey; four middle tail-feathers, uniform; bill, lead colour.

**Lanius Collurio, Lin. Gme.**

**L'Ecorcheur, Buffon.**

**Red-Backed Shrike, Pen. Lath. Mont.  
Bew. Shaw.**

**PROVINCIAL.**

**LESSER BUTCHER-BIRD, FLUSHER,  
JACK-BAKER, SHRITE, SHREEK OR  
SKREEK.**

This is a very elegant bird and in our own country far more numerous than the preceding species. It measures rather more than seven inches in length, and about eleven inches in the expansion of its wings.

The female differs so materially in plumage from the male, that we have thought it necessary to give her a distinct plate.

This bird chiefly haunts inclosed, moist, situations, and makes its nest in some thick hedge; which nest is composed of moss and fibrous roots put together with wool, and lined with hair. It lays five or six eggs, of a blueish-coloured white, with cinereous-brown spots, most numerous at the larger end, sometimes the eggs are white, with dusky spots; at other times they are of a white colour, encircled at the larger end with a ring of brownish red.

When sitting on the nest, the female soon discovers herself at the approach of any person, by her loud and violent outcries. It feeds its young (which resemble the female parent in plumage) with insects, particularly the Cock Chafer and Grasshoppers, and also with the young of other birds.

It has the same propensities as the former species.

The red-backed Shrike is not only pretty generally diffused throughout Europe, but from the observations of Mons. Levaillant, appears to be equally common in Africa.

In Britain it is a migratory species, appearing in May and retiring in Sept. and Oct.

Sonnini relates that in Egypt they are caught in great numbers in nets, and exposed for sale alive, as the institutes of Mahomet forbid all animals from being eaten until they have been bled. As these birds severely bite the fingers when handled, the bird-catchers tie their mandibles together with one of their feathers.

It is not so frequent in Norfolk as in many other counties, and in some parts of the Kingdom it is entirely unknown.

**LANIUS COLLURIO, (Var.)****WOOD-CHAT SHRIKE.**

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**Body, above, variegated with reddish-white and black; beneath, reddish-white.**

**Lanius Collurio, (Variety 3) Gme.**

**La Pie-griesche rousse, Buffon. Lev-aillant.**

**Wood-Chat, Pen. Lath. Bew. Mont.**

**Wood-Shrike, Montagu's Supp.**

**Wood-chat Shrike, Shaw.**

We have retained the Linnæan specific term *Collurio*, although from the quotations given below, we doubt not but our readers will agree with us in considering it as a distinct species.

The Wood-chat is said by some, to be not very uncommon in some parts of Europe, but we very much doubt the accuracy of the assertion, as Dr. Latham, in the second supplement to his very excellent work, on Ornithology, acknowledges never



*Lanius collurio. (var.)* — Wood-chat Shrike.



to have seen more than *one* specimen, and that, in the late Leverian Museum. Had they been of frequent occurrence on the European Continent this could scarcely have happened ; and particularly, when we remember the immense variety of specimens of almost every kind, and from every quarter of the Globe, that passed through the hands of that distinguished Naturalist.

In our own Country (at least) it appears to be so extremely rare, as not to have been seen in a living or recent state by the generality of British Ornithologists.

By some Authors it has been considered as no other than a variety of the last mentioned species, though Dr. Shaw insists that the observations of Mons. Sonnini, together with those of Mons. Levaillant, leave no doubt of its constituting a distinct species.

It is described as of the size of the Red-backed Shrike, and its general habits nearly the same. Buffon observes that the "Great Cinereous Shrike is a permanent settler in France, while the Wood-

chat quits that country in autumn, and returns not till Spring." The same author tells us that "the family, which does not disperse after the young are fledged, departs alone in the beginning of September. They flutter from tree to tree, and support not a continued flight, even in their migrations. They reside during summer in the plains, and nestle on the bushy trees; in that season the Great Cinereous Shrike inhabits the forests, and seldom emerges from its retreats till after the departure of the Wood-chat."

Wood, in his edition of Buffon's works, gives the following extract from Levailant.—"The male of this species is rather smaller than the female. She is also easily distinguished by not having the head and under part of the neck, of that deep red-colour, which belongs exclusively to the male."

Shaw informs us that "Levaillant found this bird in the interior of Africa, and says, that it is by no means uncommon, and does not in the least differ from the same species found in Europe." This

among other instances which might be noticed, is a convincing proof, that birds migrate into warmer countries to pass the winter.

“The young birds (says Levaillant) differ considerably in plumage, and have been mistaken by authors for a variety of the Red-backed species.”

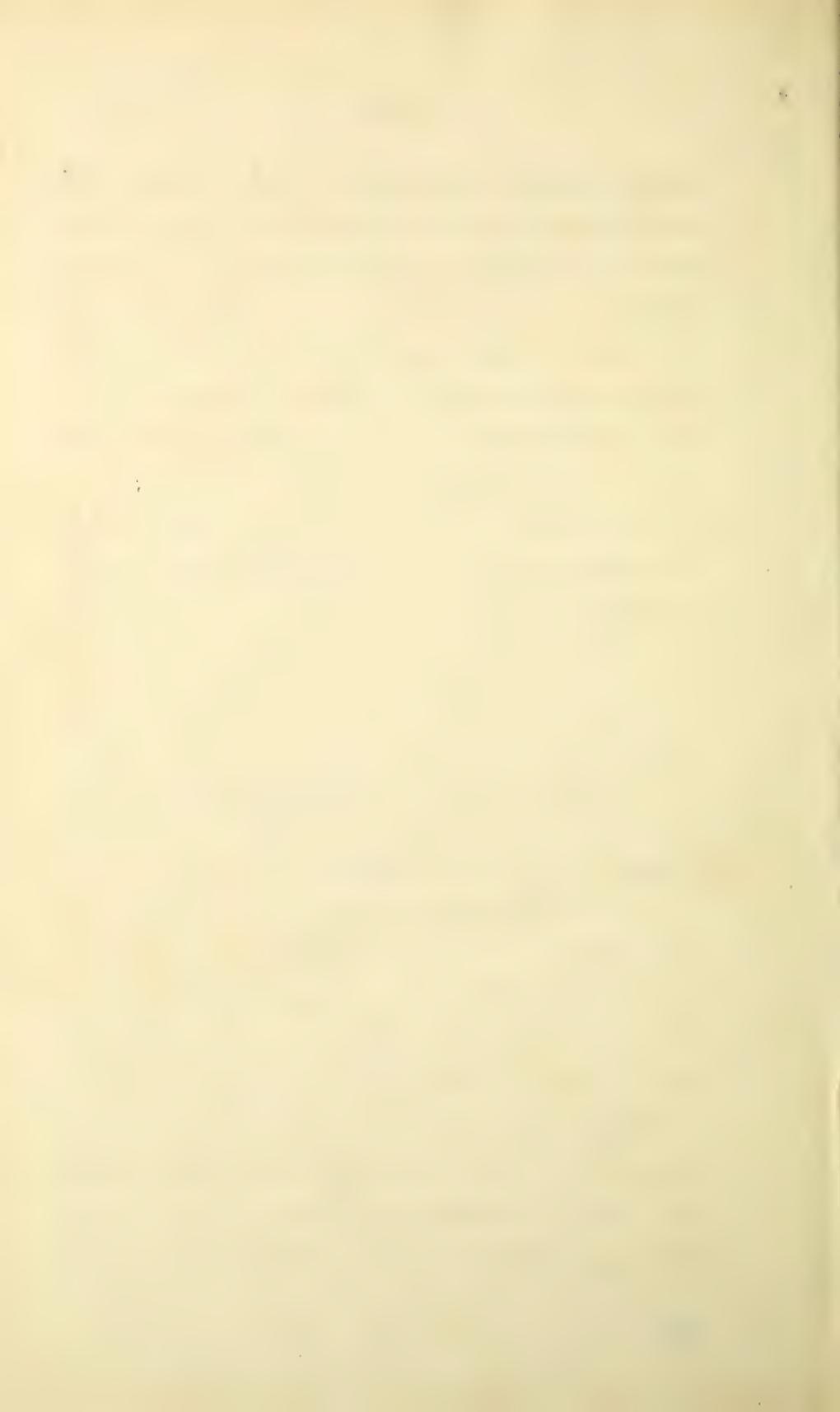
The portrait accompanying this article, was taken from a specimen in the London Museum.

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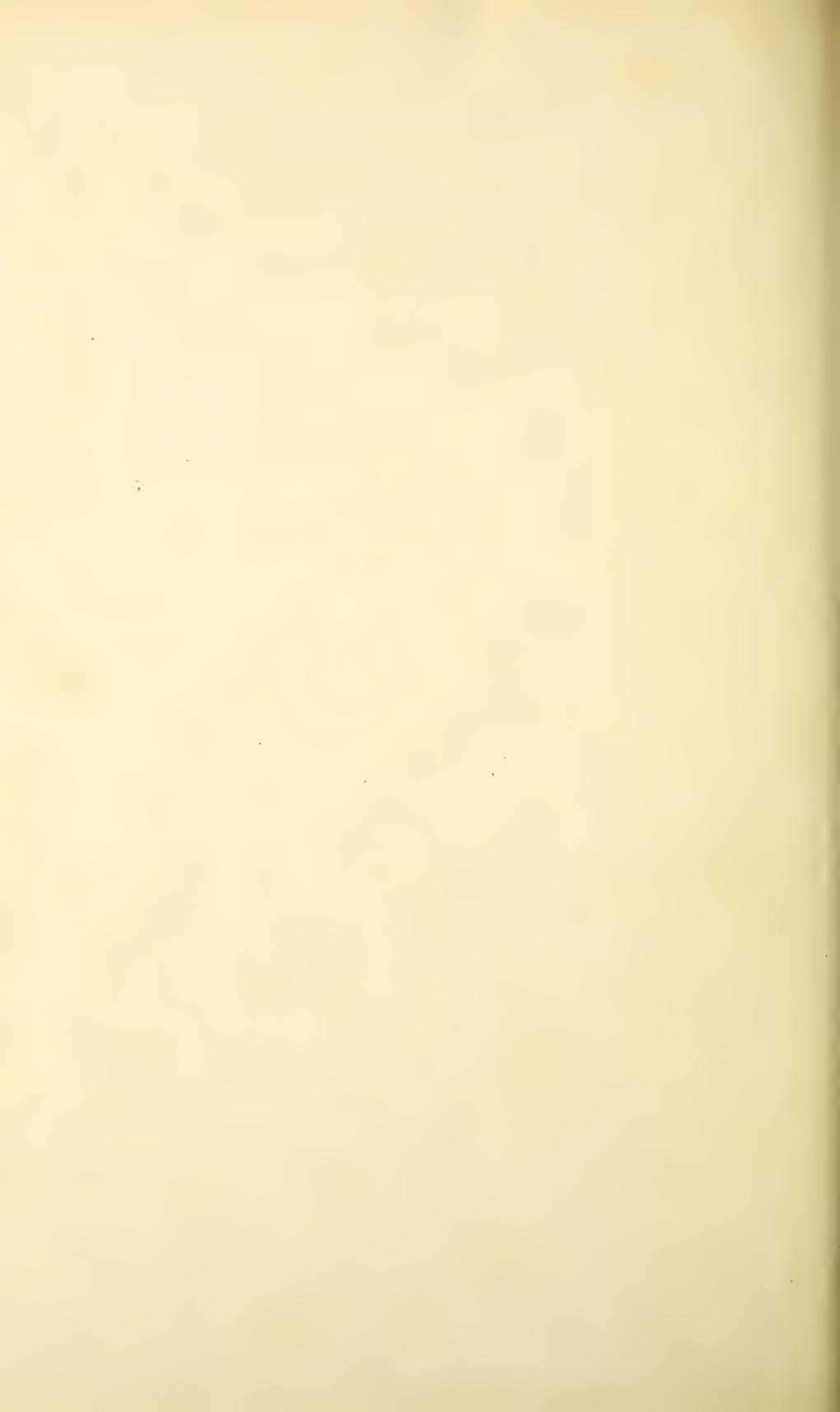
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