

WHIMBREL.

Numenius Phæopus, *Lath.*

Le Courlis corlieu.

ALTHOUGH North America presents us with a species closely allied to the Whimbrel, and with which it has been confounded by some writers, we believe we are safe in affirming that the British species is limited in the range of its habitat exclusively to the Old World, over which it appears to be very widely dispersed: we have received it in abundance from the Himalaya, and several other parts of India, as well as from Northern Africa. In the temperate latitudes of Europe, and doubtless in those of Asia, it is strictly a winter visitant, retiring on the approach of spring to the regions within the arctic circle, where it incubates and passes the summer, and where the land, almost destitute of inhabitants and abounding in extensive flats and morasses, appears to be peculiarly suited for the summer sojourn of vast numbers of the *Scolopacidae* and other Grallatorial birds.

The inferiority of its size will always distinguish the present species from the Curlew, which in other respects it closely resembles.

In the British Islands it is tolerably common throughout the winter, inhabiting all the low flat parts of our coasts, and especially the mouths of our larger rivers, and feeding upon various molluscos and other marine animals, which it takes when the tide is at the ebb, and retires to the neighbouring saline marshes when the water covers the shore. It is generally seen in small flocks, which on being approached take wing and fly off with great vigour and rapidity. Dr. Fleming states that it has been known to breed in Shetland, constructing its nest on the exposed heath and moorlands. Its eggs, four in number, are of an olive brown colour, blotched and spotted with darker reddish brown; but as far as our own researches go we have never been able to meet with an example of its eggs, or an instance of the young being obtained.

The sexes are alike in plumage, and differ but little in size or in the winter or summer livery.

The bill is black with the base of the under mandible flesh colour; top of the head brown with a longitudinal stripe of greyish white down the centre; throat, rump, and abdomen white; cheeks, stripe over the eye, and chest greyish white with a longitudinal dash of dusky brown on each feather; back and wings mottled with deep brown and greyish white; tail thickly barred with brown and white; legs brownish black.

We have figured an adult of the natural size.