

Genus IBIS.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* lengthened, slender, arched, large at its base, depressed, obtuse, and rounded at the point; the upper mandible grooved throughout its whole length. *Nostrils* near the base on the upper part of the beak, oblong, narrow, encircled by a membrane. *Face* naked, as is often also a part of the head and neck. *Legs* moderate and slender, naked above the knee. *Toes* three before and one behind; the former being webbed as far as the first joint; the hind toe long, and resting closely on the ground. *Wings* moderate, the first quill-feather shorter than the second and third, which are the longest. *Tail* short and square.

GLOSSY IBIS.

Ibis Falcinellus, *Temm.*

L'Ibis Falcinelle.

WHILE every temperate and tropical country of the globe possesses various examples of this widely spread genus, the present species is the only one, as far as is known, which passes over the border line of Africa and Asia, and takes up its residence in the Southern and temperate countries of Europe. The Glossy Ibis is tolerably abundant in all the swampy and marshy districts of its south-eastern portions, particularly Hungary, Turkey, and the Archipelago: it passes hence, but in much less abundance and at uncertain intervals, to the more central and western portions; and occurs, though very rarely, in Holland and the British Islands. Along the course of the Nile and in the adjacent provinces of Africa, this handsome bird appears to find a most congenial situation, and is as abundant there at the present day as it was in ancient times, when it was regarded as sacred, and embalmed equally with the *Ibis religiosus*, or Abouhannes of Bruce.

As is the case with the other birds of its tribe, the food of the Glossy Ibis consists of worms, slugs, lizards, freshwater mollusca, and aquatic vegetables.

The graceful proportions of this bird, the elegance of its actions, together with the resplendent lustre of its plumage, render it one of the most interesting of the Waders, and we have to regret that our knowledge of its habits and manners are so imperfect, that of its nidification and eggs we can give no certain information.

The sexes offer but little difference of colouring: the young, on the contrary, before the second or third year, at which period they attain their adult colouring, are much more obscure in their tints, and exhibit none of that metallic lustre which afterwards forms so characteristic a feature.

The adult birds have the head of a dark chestnut; the neck, breast, top of the back, the upper edge of the wing, and all the under parts of a rich reddish chestnut; the lower part of the back, the rump, quill- and tail-feathers of a dark green, with bronze and purple reflections; the naked skin round the eyes olive green, becoming more grey towards the outer margin; the irides brown; legs and feet dull olive brown.

In the young, the feathers, which are of a fine chestnut in the adults, exhibit faint indications only of this colour, being of a dull brown, and each feather on the neck is edged with a margin of greyish white; the other parts display but little of the metallic reflections.

The Plate represents an adult male about three fourths of the natural size.