

## Genus CICONIA.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* long, straight, strong and pointed. *Nostrils* pierced longitudinally in the horny substance. *Eyes* surrounded by a naked skin. *Legs* long. *Feet* four-toed, three toes before, united by a membrane to the first joint. *Wings* moderately large, the first quill shorter than the second, and the second shorter than the third, fourth, or fifth, which are the longest.

## WHITE STORK.

*Ciconia alba*, *Bellon*.

La Cigogne blanche.

FROM its familiarity, and the services which it renders to man in the destruction of reptiles and the removal of offal, the Stork has ever insured for itself an especial protection, and an exemption from the persecution which is the lot of the less favoured of the feathered tribes. Its periodical return to its accustomed summer quarters,—to its nest, the home of many generations,—has ever been regarded with feelings of pleasure ; and its intrusion within the precincts of man has not only been permitted but sanctioned with welcome. The Stork is a bird of passage, but its range is not extensive. Egypt and the northern line of Africa appear to afford it a winter retreat : with the return of summer it revisits Europe, but seldom ventures far northwards, and only occurs accidentally in the British Isles. Its scarcity in this country may perhaps be attributed rather to the drainage of our marshes, and the comparative difficulty of procuring food, than to anything uncongenial in the climate. Holland is its favourite place of residence, to which we may add the low tracts of Germany, Prussia, France, and Italy. Spain appears to be one of its winter retreats, numbers frequenting Seville at that season, “when,” says Dillon, “almost every tower is peopled with them, and they return annually to the same nests.” Instead of being shy and distrustful, the Stork is confiding and bold, as if aware of its privileges ; hence it may be seen on the house-tops in towns and villages, whence it wings its way to the neighbouring fields and swamps in search of food, and returns again to roost. Steeples, tall chimneys, elevated buildings, and also decayed trees, are the localities chosen for the site of its nest, a cumbrous mass of sticks and coarse materials. The eggs are generally three in number, of a pale yellowish white.

The food of the Stork consists of the various aquatic reptiles and insects which swarm in its favourite localities : its appetite is, however, somewhat indiscriminate,—snakes, mice, moles, worms, and offal being greedily devoured. With the setting in of the winter months, when the resources upon which it relies are no longer available,—when the morasses and swamps are frozen, and the ground is covered with snow,—the Storks assemble in vast multitudes, and prepare for a southward flight. Immense flocks, during the performance of this journey, are often seen in the air, passing over the country, of which instances are recorded by many writers. Like other birds of passage, it most probably begins the journey at the hour of midnight.

The males and females are alike in their plumage, having every part of a pure white, except the scapularies and wings, which are black ; the skin round the eye is also black ; the beak and feet are reddish orange.

The young have the black more inclining to dull brown.

Our figure represents an adult bird, half its natural size.