

## RUFIOUS-BACKED EGRET.

*Ardea russata*, *Wagl.*

Le Héron roussâtre.

It is not, we believe, generally known that this little Egret has been more than once captured within the precincts of the British Isles : the first instance of its occurrence was recorded by Montagu, in the ninth volume of the Linnean Transactions, and it was afterwards more fully described in his Ornithological Dictionary under the name of Little White Heron ; and this identical specimen now forms a part of the English collection at the British Museum. It was shot in the autumn of 1805 near Kingsbridge in Devonshire, and upon dissection proved to be a female, in all probability a bird of the year, as it is destitute of the fine rufous-coloured tint with which the adults are adorned.

In Europe this species is almost entirely confined to the most southern and eastern parts, and even there it is a rare bird ; at the same time there are few species of the genus which enjoy so extensive a range, being dispersed over the greater part of Africa and Asia, and being particularly plentiful in the Himalaya and Nepaul.

Of its habits and manners we have no certain account ; but that small fish, frogs, and insects constitute its principal subsistence there can be no doubt. The specimen killed in England was observed in the same field several days among some cows and feeding upon insects.

The adult has the bill, irides, all the head and neck, and the long plumes on the back rich reddish orange ; the remainder of the plumage pure white ; the legs greenish olive ; and the nails black.

We have figured an adult of the natural size.