

## PEREGRINE FALCON.

Falco Peregrinus, *Linn.*

Le Faucon pèlerin.

EQUALLY typical with the Jerfalcon and Lanner, the Peregrine, although less in size, possesses the characteristic boldness and ferocity of the genus. Being plentiful throughout the northern and middle portions of the Old World, it has at all times been abundantly employed in falconry, and still continues to be used by the few who continue a practice now almost obsolete. Whether we are to consider the Peregrine of North America and the extreme southern point of that vast continent, as well as that which is met with in New Holland, and other islands of the Pacific, as specifically identical with our European bird, is a point on which naturalists are not unanimously agreed; for ourselves, we consider that there exists the same difference, at least, between the Magellanic birds and those killed in Europe as between the Barn Owls of these two portions of the world, or as between the Goshawk of North America and that of Germany: the same observation equally applies to the New Holland species. But whether these differences, which are always appreciable by the experienced naturalists, are to be regarded as indicative of specific distinctions, or as varieties only dependent upon climate or other causes, is a subject which admits of much controversy; we ourselves are inclined to consider that these differences in birds closely allied are not at all times dependent upon extraneous causes, more especially where the differences are not in the tint of the colouring, but consists of a diversity in the shape and disposition of the markings; still, however, if it could be ascertained that birds, differing as do the Magellanic and European Peregrines, would breed with each other, and produce a fertile offspring, we should then be constrained to regard them as simple but permanent varieties.

In England this beautiful Falcon remains the whole year round: it appears to give preference to the bold rocky cliffs that border the sea, in the most inaccessible parts of which it builds its eyrie, generally laying four eggs, of a uniform dark red colour. The young, from the time of being fledged to their full maturity, which is not attained until four or five years have elapsed, undergo a series of changes, so remarkable as to have caused a list of numerous synonyms and no little degree of confusion: the persevering observations of modern naturalists have, however, cleared up the confusion, and rectified the mistaken views with which the works of the older writers abound; still one circumstance has attended this modern investigation, which shows how difficult it is to avoid error, even in the closest scrutiny; we allude to the fact of several writers having contended that the Lanner, a species perfectly distinct from the Peregrine, was in fact nothing but the young of the latter: this also is now found to be a mistake, and we trust that our Plates of the two species will still more clearly illustrate the subject. We need scarcely comment on the rapidity of flight in which this species so much excels, nor upon its destruction of various kinds of game, water fowl, particularly ducks, teal, &c.

The sexes differ considerably in size, the male being much the smallest, and in general more blue on the upper surface.

The adults have the bill lead colour, becoming black at the tip; cere, naked skin round the eyes, and the feet yellow; whole of the upper surface bluish lead colour, approaching to black on the head and cheeks, the feathers of the back and wings being barred with a deeper tint; quills brownish black, the inner webs barred with white; tail barred with bands of black and grey, the tips white; throat and breast yellowish white; under surface white with a tinge of rufous, and regularly barred with transverse lines of black.

The young of the year differ in having the whole of the upper surface brown, each feather being margined with a lighter colouring; the breast and under surface light fawn brown, with oblong longitudinal dashes of blackish brown; tail brown, with bands of a darker colour; cere and legs greenish yellow; irides the same as in the adult, deep hazel approaching to black.

The Plate represents an adult and a young bird, of the natural size.