

manner in which a Tern catches it, seems almost inconceivable; and yet every dweller on the sea-coast sees it done every hour during the period that these birds frequent our shores. In Nature nothing is impossible; and when we are talking of habits and instincts, no such a word as impossibility should be used."—*St. John's 'Tour in Sutherland,'* vol. ii. p. 170.

"Light as a sylph, the Arctic Tern dances through the air above and around you. The Graces, one might imagine, had taught it to perform those beautiful gambols which you see it display the moment you approach the spot which it has chosen for its nest. Over many a league of ocean has it passed, regardless of the dangers and difficulties that might deter a more considerate traveller. Now over some solitary green isle, a creek, or an extensive bay it sweeps, now over the expanse of the boundless sea; at length it has reached the distant regions of the north, and amidst the floating icebergs stoops to pick up a shrimp. It betakes itself to the borders of the lonely sandbank or a low rocky island; there, side by side, the males and females alight and congratulate each other on the happy termination of their journey. Little care is required to form a cradle for their progeny: in a short time the variegated eggs are deposited; the little Terns soon burst the shell, and in a few days hobble towards the edge of the water, as if to save their fond parents trouble; feathers now sprout on their wings, and gradually invest their whole body; at length the young birds rise on wing, and follow their friends to sea. But now the brief summer of the north is ended; dark clouds obscure the sun; a snow-storm advances from the polar lands, and before it skim the buoyant Terns, rejoicing at the prospect of returning to the southern regions."—*Audubon, 'Birds of America,'* vol. iii. p. 366.

The sexes of the Arctic Tern, although very similar in colour, differ in the male being larger, and having a longer tail, than the female.

The Plate represents the bird, of the size of life, in the plumage of summer; and a young bird of the first autumn, in the state in which numerous examples are frequently to be seen, during the months of August and September, at Bognor in Sussex, the Isle of Wight, and similar places on our southern coasts.