

most north-westerly land in Europe. This island of Suleskeir has been apparently confused with another rock of a similar name (the Suliskerry of British authors), as no reference has been made to it as a breeding-place of the Gannet in any of the numerous works on British ornithology. Mr. Elwes (*Ibis*, 1869) states that though now uninhabited, it is still visited annually by a boat from Ness, which goes in September for the sake of the down and feathers of the young Gannets, several thousands of which are usually killed. There are therefore five different breeding-stations for the Gannet in Scotland, viz. Ailsa Craig, St. Kilda, Suleskeir (marked in most maps as North Barra), Stack of Suleskerry, about forty miles west of Stromness in Orkney, and the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth. From these localities, as has been shown, the birds make long excursions in search of prey. The flight performed by the St.-Kilda Gannets, indeed, cannot be much short of 200 miles in one day, without taking into account the distance gone over while they were engaged in fishing. I have observed them regularly returning across the Minch from the shores of Skye, and passing through the sound of Harris on their way home about an hour before sunset; and in the height of the breeding-season I have also seen Gannets from Suleskeir winging their way back to their distant nursery as we passed Cape Wrath."

The following interesting note by Mr. Robert Gray is extracted from the 'Intellectual Observer.'

"The Solan Goose (*Sula galba*) is not so numerous upon Ailsa as the Puffin; but as the number of this species on the Bass Rock has been computed by qualified judges to be from ten to twenty thousand, it is not too much to say that there are at least as many on the Craig; when two or three thousand are seen fishing together there could not be a more extraordinary ornithological spectacle. Early in February many thousands have been observed in one flock off the village of Ballantrae, assembling over a shoal of fishes and precipitating themselves from a height with a loud splash into the sea in pursuit of their prey; while on the east coast I have seen them in prodigious numbers plunging for herrings in Belhaven Bay within sight of the Bass Rock, their favourite nesting-place. Small straggling parties are often seen at some distance from land diving for mackerel and other fish, on which occasions they sometimes mistake their object and forfeit their lives. In several instances they have been observed returning to Ailsa Craig with a gurnard sticking in their throat, the fish in each case having been caught in the usual manner and hastily swallowed head foremost; but a glimpse of the interior had probably been too much for even a fish's nerves, and had set its *hair on end*. I have examined several dead birds found at the foot of the cliffs, with their last mouthful so firmly wedged as to oblige the use of a knife to cut the spines before the fish could be taken out. But as it is on soft-finned fishes the bird chiefly feeds, accidents of this kind are not frequent. When a shoal is discovered they soon congregate and commence their formidable attack. Select a single bird, if that be possible; he soars but a minute; then with closed wings he poises his body and goes down like a stone, making the spray break over the spot where he entered. After a few moments' submersion he reappears with a cork-like buoyancy, throwing back his head and gobbling down his prey so hastily and with such voracity as almost to justify a suspicion that neither the bird nor the fish can benefit much by the transaction."

When Pigeon-shooting at the sea-caves south of Ballantrae, one of the boatmen informed me of his having assisted many years ago in the removal of one hundred and twenty-eight dead geese from a train of herring-nets which had been lying at a depth of one hundred and eighty feet. The accumulation of birds in the nets, though sunk with heavy weights, had brought the whole train to the surface by the buoyancy of their bodies, and attracted the notice of the people on shore; and as the nets contained a quantity of herrings, it was conjectured that the geese had been drawn to the spot by their glittering sides.

"In speaking of the destruction among fish committed by these birds during their residence on our coast, a writer in the 'Quarterly Review' makes the following calculation:—'The Solan Goose can swallow and digest at least six full-sized herrings per day. It has been calculated that in the island of St. Kilda, assuming it to be inhabited by 200,000 of these birds, feeding for seven months in the year, and with an allowance of five herrings each per day, the number of fish for the summer subsistence of a single species of birds cannot be under 214,000,000.' Compared with the enormous consumption of fish by birds and by each other, the draughts made upon the population of the sea by man with all his ingenious fishing-devices, seem to dwindle into absolute insignificance!"—R. GRAY, *Birds of the West of Scotland*, p. 463.

The principal figure in the accompanying Plate is about two thirds of the natural size.