

PHALACROCORAX CARBO.

Cormorant.

- Pelecanus carbo*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 51.
——— *phalacrocorax*, Brünn. Orn. Bor., p. 31.
Carbo cormoranus, Meyer, Taschenb. Deutschl. Vög., tom. ii. p. 576.
——— *glacialis*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 817.
Halieus carbo, Illig. Prodr., p. 279.
——— *cormoranus*, Naum. Vög. Deutschl., 1842, tom. i. p. 52.
Graculus carbo, Gray & Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 667.

THERE is perhaps no group of birds so generally dispersed over the rocky sea-shores of the globe as the Cormorants; for one or other species may be seen everywhere. The extreme southern parts of Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Patagonia abound with them; and they are equally numerous in America, Europe, Japan, and other parts of the north. They are also found in most intermediate countries. Generally speaking, each country is tenanted by its own peculiar kind; but in some few cases certain species may be regarded as almost cosmopolitan, being found in many different localities, of which the present bird is an instance; for, besides Europe, the Common Cormorant is also found over a great part of North America, India, China, and Africa; and I now believe that the bird inhabiting Australia, which has been named *Phalacrocorax Novæ Hollandiæ*, can scarcely be separated from it. That it frequents all the rocky sides of the coasts of England, Ireland, and Scotland is certain. In winter it ascends the inlets of the sea, and sometimes resorts to the lakes of the interior in summer, when it may be often seen fishing their waters; and great indeed must be the destruction it effects among our freshwater fishes during such visits. On this head Mr. Robert Gray states, in his 'Birds of the West of Scotland':— "There is a large breeding colony every year on Loch Moan, in Ayrshire, a place but little visited, and distinguished for nothing but these Cormorants and the sterile scenery by which it is surrounded. In the breeding-season of 1867 the place was visited by a fishing-party, who, finding nothing in the loch (every fish having been devoured by the birds), launched a boat they had brought across the hills, and proceeded to the island, where they built a pyramid of Cormorants' eggs, which they had no difficulty in gathering, to the height of two or three feet, and smashed the entire lot with large stones. One of the party informed me, though the eggs were not counted, more than a thousand were destroyed, and that a similar colony existed a few years ago on the lochs of Mochrum and Dumwall, in Wigtonshire." I commend this passage to the notice of those who are framing laws for the protection of our native birds.

From time immemorial, Cormorants have been more or less subject to domestication, at least so far as to conduce to the pleasures of sport. On this head I take the liberty of transcribing the following passage from the pen of Mr. F. H. Salvin, published in 'Land and Water':—

"Since the publication of my work entitled 'Falconry, its Claims, History, and Practice,' to which I added a few chapters upon Cormorant-fishing, I have picked up a good deal of its early history; and having improved in the management of these birds, I now venture to offer an article or two upon the subject, hoping they may be acceptable to the readers of 'Land and Water.' Before I commence, I must express the hope that the most ardent lovers of the rod will be liberal and not begrudge a little Cormorant-fishing during the summer, when it is too bright and hot for them to pursue their 'gentle art.' Of course the owner of Cormorants should likewise be the possessor of streams; for then he can fish them as he likes, and thus he can keep his birds in good practice, and be ready to accept any invitation to fish distant streams, &c. Here I may remark that it is a delightful summer amusement, which has its advantages. For instance, 'meets' may be got up, and will be found an excellent means of assembling large parties of friends for a picnic or a 'swell luncheon.' It comes in so nicely; for at that time of the year most other rural sports are at a standstill; and to the admirers of scenery it must have additional charms, as the prettiest parts of the country are always to be found by our brooks and rivers. Many and many are the 'meets' I have enjoyed and have to thank my kind friends for.

"The Cormorant is too well known to require its natural history; and so I will proceed to the ancient history of this curious and ingenious method of fishing. Its origin is Chinese; and I think the first Jesuit missionaries were the earliest to mention it in their writings. In the reign of James I., Ogleby was sent on an embassy to China, and in the two large volumes he afterwards published he gives a description of the Chinese method of using these birds for taking fish; and no doubt it is a much older invention, as I have seen it represented