

summer quarters. After the breeding-season is over and the rigours of winter have set in, the myriads of lower animals upon which it feeds disappear from the surface, and seek shelter in the depths of the ocean; the Little Auk then betakes itself to warmer seas, gradually proceeding southward until it reaches the latitude of Gibraltar, and occasionally even still further in the same direction; for Mr. Frederick Du Cane Godman found a specimen in the collection of a gentleman in Terceira, one of the Azores, which had been killed in the island four or five years before the date of his visit, 1865. The British Islands lying in the course of the bird's southern passage, they are often visited by the Little Auk during the autumn; and many instances of its occurrence therein either singly or in large and small flocks, are on record. During furious gales they sometimes wander far inland, and are either shot on our rivers or die from exhaustion. To give a list of the various instances of its having visited us would be useless; for they occur more or less numerously every year, according to circumstances, and perhaps more frequently in Scotland and in our northern counties than elsewhere; but specimens have been obtained in the midland, and even in the southern ones. R. Gray, Esq., of Southcroft, Govan, Glasgow, informed the Rev. F. O. Morris that "a large flock of these birds visited the Dunbar shore during a severe storm in November and December 1846. Many of them were in a disabled state, and were found in fields and gardens in the neighbourhood. Small flocks were also observed along the shore, and some were met with in the harbour and other smooth waters to which they could get access. I had at one time eight or nine individuals in custody."

Mr. Stevenson writes to me:—"From my notes of the occurrence of this bird during the last eighteen years, I can no longer term it only an occasional visitant, although the greater number have been driven to our shores by severe gales. Year after year one or two, and even as many as eight specimens have been brought to the Norwich bird-stuffers during the winter months; most of these have been picked up in a dead or dying state. With singular regularity the bird appears between the first week of November and the end of December; few are met with in January and February; but a chance straggler has been obtained as late as the 18th of March. When caught by heavy gales they are sometimes carried between thirty and forty miles inland; and I have known them to fall in an exhausted state in the streets of our towns and cities. They were particularly plentiful in 1846 and again in 1862. A specimen in my collection with the rich-black throat of the breeding-season, was killed at Wells on the 25th of May 1857. It is difficult to account for the appearance of the bird so late in the season; it was shot while flying over the waves close in shore, and may have been prevented from migrating by some previous injury. It is stated in the 'Zoologist' for 1846, that an example in an extremely emaciated condition was killed at Downham, in Norfolk, in the July of that year."

Audubon tells us that in America the Little Auk sometimes makes its appearance on the eastern coasts during very cold and stormy weather, but does not proceed further southward than the shores of New Jersey, where it is of very rare occurrence. "In the course of my voyages across the Atlantic, I have often observed the Little Auk in small groups rising and flying to short distances on the approach of the ship, or diving close to the bow and reappearing a little way behind. Now with expanded wings they would flutter, and run, as it were, on the surface of the deep; again they would seem to be busily engaged in procuring food, which consisted apparently of shrimps, other crustacea, and particles of sea-weed, all of which I have found in their stomachs. I have often thought how easy it would be to catch these tiny wanderers of the ocean with nets thrown expertly from the bow of a boat; for they manifest very little apprehension of danger from the proximity of one, insomuch that I have seen several killed with the oars. Those which were caught alive and placed on the deck would rest a few minutes with their bodies flat, then run about briskly or attempt to fly off, which they sometimes accomplished when they happened to go in a straight course the whole length of the ship, so as to rise easily over the bulwarks. On effecting their escape they would alight on the water and immediately disappear."—*Orn. Biog.*, vol. iv. p. 304.

"The whole of the birds in the breeding-season," says Col. Sabine, "the sexes being alike, have the under part of the neck of a uniform sooty black, terminating abruptly and in an even line against the white of the belly; the young birds as soon as feathered were marked exactly like the mature birds, but in the third week of September every specimen, whether old or young, was observed to be in change; and in the course of a few days the entire feathers of the throat and cheeks had become white." It is in this latter or winter dress that most of the specimens killed or captured in this country are clothed.

I am indebted to Mr. Alfred Newton for the loan of the very fine example, in summer plumage, from which my foremost figure was taken.

The Plate represents two birds, of the natural size—one in its summer, and the other in its winter plumage.