

Forth; and Mr. Selby, writing in 1833, says it is a numerous species in the northern parts of Scotland and its isles, but becomes of rarer occurrence as we approach the English coast, where, indeed, it is but occasionally met with; "and," he adds, "although Montagu has mentioned it as resorting to the Farn Islands, I can safely assert that this has not been the case for the last twenty-five or thirty years." Sir William Jardine gives the coasts of the north of Scotland as being near to its southern range in Britain; but he mentions having met with the species in the Isle of Man, and that it occasionally occurs on the southern coast of England. "It is interesting, therefore," says Thompson, "to find that this bird is not only equally common in the south and in the north of Ireland, but that it nidifies as frequently on the rocky coast of the former as on those of the latter portion of the island."

Macgillivray has given us such a graphic description of the situations frequented by this bird, and of its habits, that it would be an act of injustice to this elegant writer not to transcribe it:—

"Suppose yourself floating on the heavy swell of the Atlantic, along the base of a cliff decorated with luxuriant tufts of *Rhodiola rosea*, *Silene maritima*, and *Statice armeria*, and inhabited by Guillemots, Auks, and Starlings. Here and there are narrow cracks, perpendicular and inclined. In most of them, after a shot has been fired, you will see one, two, or more black Guillemots looking down upon you, half afraid to remain, and loth to leave their eggs or young. Another shot is fired, and you see them bounce away on rapidly moving wings. There, on a shelf, a dozen of them have alighted in a row; their black plumage, enlivened by the two white wing-spots, and their singular-looking red feet, contrast with the brown rock. You may approach and shoot half of them if you will, for they are by no means shy. Such are their usual breeding-places; for they never, like the other Auks and Guillemots, deposit their eggs on the exposed ledges of the cliffs. They differ from them also in laying two eggs. I have never, however, obtained them from such places, although I know those who, clinging to the face of the rifted crag, have done so, foolishly, I thought, and at the peril of life; but I have many times taken them from under the large blocks of stone near high-water mark. Nests they have none, unless a little gravel or some pebbles may be so called. The eggs are about the same size and shape as those of a domestic fowl, being regularly ovate, from two inches and a quarter to two inches and a half in length, and from an inch and six to an inch and seven twelfths in breadth, sometimes smooth, often rough, with little flattened prominences, and of a greyish white, yellowish white, bluish white, or sometimes pale greenish blue, and marked with blotches, spots, and dots of dark brown, varying in tint from brownish black to umber, together with faint purplish-grey spots, the markings larger and more numerous near the larger end. The eggs are deposited in the beginning of June, and early in August the young are abroad.

"Their food consists of small fishes and crustacea, in search of which they frequent the sounds and bays less than the open sea. On all the coasts of Scotland, the fry of the Coalfish is a very common article of food with them, as with many other sea-birds. About most of their breeding-places I have not observed them to proceed daily to any great distance; but, on leaving the rocks with their young, they disperse over the ocean until the next spring. Yet they do not migrate far southward, most of them remaining all the winter in the north.

"This species sits lightly on the water, on which it paddles about in a very lively manner. It dives with rapidity, like a shot as it were; and under water it actually flies, as I have often seen. If shot at on the water, it will often dive—but also frequently rise on wing, and in so doing strikes the water with its wings and feet for some distance. Its flight is quick, direct, and performed by a perpetual rapid beating of the wings. In proceeding to a distance, they often fly in small strings, low over the water, now inclining a little to one side, then to the other. When their nests or roosting-places are high on the rocks, they gradually curve upward as they approach them, and alight abruptly. On the ground they move about but little, although, on occasion, they walk moderately well and prettily, with short steps, and nearly erect. They repose either standing or lying flat on the rock.

"The eggs, when hard-boiled, are remarkably good; but the flesh of the bird, being dark-coloured and rank, is not agreeable, though better than that of the Auk or other Guillemots."

The late Mr. Salmon states that the principal breeding-place in the Orkneys is a small holm, lying to the eastward of Papa Westra, where it is very numerous, and will scarcely move off the rocks when approached. He invariably found two eggs together, deposited upon the bare ground, principally under the large fragments of rocks scattered about upon the island, without any appearance of nest. The young are at first covered with a greyish black down, through which mottled feathers of black and white soon protrude. Both adults and young exhibit a considerable amount of white during the winter, and in this state form the "Marbled Guillemot" of older authors.

The Plate represents the bird in summer and in winter plumage, of the size of life. I trust my readers will excuse the incongruity of placing birds in the dress of opposite seasons on the same plate.