

URIA GRYLLE.

Black Guillemot.

- Colymbus grylle*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 52.
Uria grylle, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 797
Colymbus lacteolus, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 583.
Uria lacteola, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 798.
— *balthica*, Brünn. Orn. Bor., p. 28.
— *Grilla*, Vieill. Gall. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 294.
— *scapularis*, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 250, pl. 64.
Cephus grylle, Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 562.
— *arcticus*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 988.
— *Meisneri*, Brehm, ibid., p. 989 ?
— *Færøensis*, Brehm, ibid., p. 990.
Uria (Uria) grylle, Baird, Cat. of N. Amer. Birds in Mus. Smiths. Inst., p. lv.
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It will not be necessary for me to enter into the controversy respecting the specific differences observable in the Black Guillemots from various parts of the world, inasmuch as the subject has been ably investigated in Mr. Newton's "Notes on the Birds observed in Spitzbergen," which, for the information of those who are not already acquainted with them, I may mention will be found in 'The Ibis' for 1865, p. 517, and that they comprise a diagnosis of the four or five species known. Of these, the bird here figured is doubtless the one to which Linnæus assigned the specific term *grylle*, and the only one of the form which inhabits our islands, or, rather, visits, at one season or other, the seas surrounding our shores. This extremely pretty species is more plentiful in the northern than in the southern division of Britain, particularly at the season of reproduction. Montagu speaks of its breeding in his time at Tenby, in Pembrokeshire; and Pennant, at Llandudno, in Anglesea; but we must now, I believe, go as far north as the Isle of Man if we wish to see the bird thus engaged. It is much more local than most of the rock-birds, and many of the stations that are thronged in multitudes by the Common Guillemot, Razorbill, and Puffin are never visited by the present species. In Ireland it breeds in more southern spots than in Great Britain; but it has numerous stations in and around the coasts of Scotland, and is especially abundant in the Ferroses, some parts of Iceland, and along almost the entire coast of Norway. This species also occurs in America; but Mr. Cassin, in Prof. Baird's 'Birds of North America,' p. 911, does not discriminate between it and *Uria Mandti*, which is certainly found in the high northern parts of that continent, and of which I have a specimen, killed on Beechey Island in June 1854, and presented to me by Dr. Lyall. The younger Mr. Whitely states that it is also found in Japan; but this, I think, requires confirmation, since the only specimen he collected has passed out of his hands, he knows not whither, and it is very likely to have been an example of the common species of the Pacific Ocean, *Uria columba*.

The *Uria grylle* is perhaps the most distinctly marked, and, except the *U. carbo*, is the blackest of all the Guillemots; its trivial name of black, however, is scarcely appropriate, and *pied* or *varied* would also be equally inapplicable. In summer only would the former term be at all suitable, and the others for the short space of time in winter during which a varied garb exists; but even then it is so continually changing that no two specimens are precisely alike. Mr. Gatcombe believes there is yet much to be learned concerning the time the change of plumage takes place in this and many other sea-birds. For example, on the 26th of December, 1863, he killed an old Black Guillemot which had already assumed more than half of its spring plumage, the entire neck being prettily mottled with sooty and white feathers; and a Little Auk, killed in the middle of the same month, was in the *most perfect* summer dress. Such birds are believed by some persons to be either barren females or youthful males that have not yet mated. How frequently in autumn do we observe Great Northern Divers, in their full summer costume, associating with others, evidently adult, but carrying the usual grey dress of that season. When handled in the flesh, the Black Guillemot is found to be such a short, round, and heavy mass, that one at first wonders how its small wings can sustain it during its flights from one part of the ocean to another, or enable it to perform its ascents to its lofty breeding-places amid high rocks; but a very slight examination shows that, owing to its powerful pectoral muscles, it is a bird of very strong and rapid flight.

Macgillivray, who considered the Black Guillemot one of the most beautiful of our sea-birds, states that in Britain all its breeding-places are to the north of the Tweed and Solway, and that the most southern localities with which he was acquainted are the Bass Rock and the Isle of May, at the mouth of the Firth of