

Red-breasted Geese were sold in the market of that town, plucked and eaten; so little was the rarity of the species known at that particular place and period.

Those Fellows of the Zoological Society of London who take an especial interest in the inhabitants of its aviaries, cannot have failed to notice a living example, in the finest state of plumage, in one of the enclosures set apart for Ducks and Geese. This fine individual, although it has now passed more than twenty years in semiconfinement, has never been "sick or sorry," but, as regularly as the seasons have run round, has cast off its feathers and effected its moult as perfectly as it would have done in its native home. It has now become as tame and familiar as any Goose can be. Many longing eyes have doubtless looked upon it, accompanied with the desire that, in the event of its death, their owner might become its possessor; but the National collection is its proper resting-place; and we only hope that when it does die it may be in a respectable dress, that those who view this interesting bird there may regard it with as much pleasure as the thousands have done who have seen it in life*.

In form, size, and general contour, the Red-breasted Goose is more nearly akin to the little Brent than any other Goose; and as we have every reason to believe that the living bird in the Zoological Gardens is a female, and its plumage is in strict accordance with the specimens of the opposite sex I have had opportunities of examining, we may naturally infer that, as is the case with the Brent Goose, no difference occurs in the colouring of the sexes, and that the habits and economy of the two species have a general resemblance.

As Mr. Yarrell truly remarked, but little is known respecting this beautiful species. "The most interesting recent notice," he says, "I have been able to find is by M. Ménétriés, in his *Catalogue Raisonné* of objects of zoology observed by the naturalists attached to the Russian expedition to the vicinity of the Caucasus and the frontiers of Persia. This gentleman mentions that, in 1828, a considerable flock of this species appeared at Leukoran, probably driven there by strong winds; they were so exhausted by fatigue that they were caught by hand; and many were preserved in captivity, to which they were easily reconciled. They always kept together, and uttered a gentle call-note when any of their party separated from the others, or when a bird of prey hovered over them; this was the only sound that was heard. Of the food placed before them they preferred green vegetables to grain, and drank often."

The flesh of the Red-breasted Goose, being quite free from any fishy taste, is said to be highly esteemed for the table.

Latham states that it "is called by the Ostiaks Tschakwoi, from its voice; and by the Samoids Tschagu."

The front figure is somewhat under that of life; the hinder one represents an immature bird procured on the Nile.

* While these pages were being printed, this beautiful and valuable bird was, unfortunately, killed by a Swan, who, in one of those moments of ire to which that bird is subject, fell upon the poor little Goose, and, the keeper being absent, beat it to death in a few minutes. As above suggested, the stuffed skin will be added to the National Collection.—June 1870.