

winters in which the London markets are not well supplied with it. A fine-conditioned gander weighs from five to six pounds, and measures about 4 feet 3 inches from tip to tip of the wings when spread, so that it is a smaller bird than the Bean- and Grey-Lag Geese. The sexes are so nearly alike in colouring that they are scarcely distinguishable; both have the black interrupted bars on the breast, a character which differs considerably in extent in different individuals.

Macgillivray gives so meagre an account of this species that it would seem to be far less plentiful in Scotland than in England; yet Sir William Jardine has met with it in Dumfriesshire and in the Edinburgh market, and St. John says that "it arrives in Morayshire from its breeding-quarters in the arctic and northern regions about the middle of October in small companies of from six to twelve, and, if left tolerably undisturbed, frequents regularly the same swamp or piece of marsh till the end of April, feeding on aquatic plants, and in the spring frequently grazing on the young clover or green wheat. It is more easy of approach than any other wild goose;" and he "has often seen it feeding in small hollows and spots easily got at, where the Bean-Goose would never trust itself. Its cry is very loud and peculiar, sometimes wonderfully resembling the loud laugh of a human being, whence its trivial name of "Laughing Goose." Sir John Richardson mentions that the Indians of the American fur-countries imitate this sound by patting the mouth with their hand, while they repeat the syllable *wah*." Mr. Thompson informs us that it "is a regular winter visitant to Ireland, where, as in Great Britain, it is, next to the Bean-Goose, the species most frequently met with, and is brought during the season of every year to the Dublin market."

Mr. Selby remarks that "this species varies from the Bean-Goose in preferring low and marshy districts rather than the upland and drier haunts affected by that bird, and in such localities subsists on aquatic grasses, being very seldom seen to frequent corn- or stubble-fields." A specimen sent to him which had been killed near Alnwick, in Northumberland, "had its stomach gorged with the tender shoots and leaves of the common clover (*Trifolium pratense*), upon which it had been feeding on the termination of a severe snow-storm." The bird also feeds on the leaves of turnips, beetles, other insects, and their larvæ. Its flight is described as vigorous, and its gait on the ground as characterized by grace, rapidity, and ease. When a flock proceeds to any distance, the birds of which it is composed keep in single file.

The White-fronted Goose is not known to breed in a wild state in any part of our islands; and a pair in the Gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park brought forth their brood from one of the islands to which they were restricted, and showed great anxiety for their safety. The egg is pale buffy white, about 2 inches and 10 lines in length by 1 inch and 11 lines in breadth.

Speaking of this bird, as seen in Norfolk, Mr. Stevenson says:—

"This species, which is never observed in very large flocks, can scarcely be called a regular winter visitant, being rarely seen in our markets, except in severe weather. As an exception, however, to this rule, in the mild winter of 1851-2, a very unusual number of wild geese were shot in different parts of the county; and on the 20th of December, the Norwich market exhibited the unusual appearance, amongst other fowl, of two couple and a half of White-fronted, with Bean and Bernicle-Geese, from Hickling and other localities; and another White-fronted, from Blakeney, was sent up to Norwich the same day. All these birds were in perfect plumage—the White-fronted Geese, from the markings on the breast, being evidently adult; but their poor condition seemed to indicate 'hard times,' although, as already remarked, the weather was then unusually mild with us, and continued so up to the following February. From Mr. Dowell's notes for the same year (1851) I find that on the 18th of December he saw a flock of some twenty White-fronted Geese at Holkham, and on the same day he received a fine specimen which had been killed at Blakeney. This goose is considered by Lord Leicester rare at Holkham, except in hard weather, when it commonly appears in flocks of from five to ten, and, being less shy, is easier of approach than others; but singularly enough, during the severe winter of 1870-71 this species, as Lord Leicester informs me, was not seen at all at Holkham; and a single adult bird which I purchased in the Norwich market, on the 18th of February, was the only example that came under my notice during that inclement season.

"The few recorded in my own note-books, since 1854, have been all killed during sharp frosts, between December and February—which agrees with Hunt's description of this species, that 'they visit the fenny parts of this county in small flocks, in severe winters.' In West Norfolk, according to Mr. Lubbock, a good many White-fronted Geese are sometimes observed with the Bean-, or, as now distinguished, more probably with the Pink-footed. Blakeney and Holkham have been already mentioned as localities where it is occasionally remarked; and the brackish waters of Salthouse would seem to have attractions, as a fine old bird in my own collection was killed there on the 22nd of December 1866, and Mr. Dowell had one sent him from the same place so early as the month of October, 1850. The Messrs. Paget describe them as 'occasionally seen on Breydon;' and Hickling Broad appears to be a favourite resort in sharp weather.

"The majority of specimens procured are in immature plumage, the bars on the breast being either wanting or only partially assumed."

For further particulars as to the localities in Norfolk in which this bird has been procured, I must refer the reader to my friend Stevenson's third volume on the birds of that county.

The front figure is about half the natural size; the young birds somewhat less than life.