

goodwill and forbearance which they exhibit, rendering them most agreeable companions. When alarmed, they fly off in a body, uttering occasionally a shrill cry, move with great rapidity, now all inclining to one side, now to the other, and performing various evolutions. In sunshine they may be perceived at a very great distance by the glancing of their white under parts. At first they are not shy, and may easily be approached; but after being molested they become rather vigilant. At high water they repose on the sands or in their neighbourhood, sometimes by themselves, but often in company with Dunlins and Ringed Plovers. Like those birds, they also feed by moonlight. Individuals are sometimes seen on various parts of our coast in summer, but it does not appear that this species breeds in any part of Britain."

Mr. Harting informs me that the latest period in spring at which he has observed the Sanderling was the 30th of May, on which day he once shot three at Wharton, on the Lancashire coast. They were exceedingly wild, in twos and threes, as if pairing; and it was some time before he could get near them: they were in nearly full summer plumage. On examining the contents of the stomach, he found their food had consisted of small univalves, sandhoppers, and marine insects, mingled with the remains of which were minute particles of gravel.

Audubon, writing of the bird as seen by him in North America, says, "Although the Sanderling extends its rambles along our Atlantic shores from the eastern extremities of Maine to the southernmost Key of the Floridas, it is only an autumnal and winter visitor. It arrives in the more eastern districts about the first of August, on the shores of New York and New Jersey rarely before the 10th of August, and seldom reaches the extensive sandbanks of East Florida previous to the month of November. Along the whole of this extended coast it is more or less abundant, sometimes appearing in bands composed of a few individuals, and at others in large flocks, but generally mingling with other species of small shore-birds.

"The Sanderling obtains its food principally by probing the moist sands of the sea-shores, with its bill held in an oblique direction. At every step it inserts this instrument with surprising quickness, to a greater or less depth according to the softness of the sand, sometimes introducing it a quarter of an inch, at others to the base. The holes thus made may be seen on the borders of beaches when the tide is fast receding, in rows of twenty, thirty, or more: in certain spots they are less numerous; for it appears that when a place grows unproductive of the food for which they are searching, they very soon take to their wings and remove to another, now and then in so hurried a manner that it might be supposed they had been frightened. The contents of the stomachs of those I shot while thus occupied were slender sea-worms, about an inch in length, together with minute shell-fish and gravel. At other times, when they were seen following the receding waves, and wading up to the belly in the running waters, I found in them small shrimps and other crustacea.

"In their flight, which is rapid, and straighter than that of other small species, the Sanderlings do not perform so many evolutions as Sandpipers generally display. They generally alight about a hundred yards from the place whence they started, and run for a yard or so with their wings partially extended. They move on the mud with great activity, so as to keep up with a man walking at a moderate pace."

The total absence of a hind toe forms a conspicuous feature in the structure of the Sanderling—the more so as, I believe, this member is not wanting in any other known Sandpiper: the why and the wherefore of this peculiarity in the structure of its foot has not been ascertained; but we may rest assured that its habits differ in some minute particular from those of the Stints. The foot of the Golden Plover is tridactyle, while the Grey Plover possesses a small hind toe; here, therefore, a similar difference occurs in the members of another group of birds, but in an opposite direction, the Grey Plover's foot being the only species in which that member exists.

Sufficient has been said respecting the seasonal change of plumage to which the Sanderling is subject; but I may mention that the young of the year have the upper surface darker than the old birds, and that a lunate patch of mottled feathers occupies the sides of the chest.

The Plate represents the bird in three states of plumage—that of summer, of autumn, and of winter,—the figures being of the natural size.