

SQUATAROLA HELVETICA.

Grey Plover.

- Tringa squatarola*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 66.
—— *helvetica*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 250.
—— *varia*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 252.
Charadrius hypomelas, Pall. Reise, tom. iii. p. 699.
—— *pardela*, Pall. Zoog. Rosso-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 142.
—— *squatarola*, Naum. Vög. Deutschl., 1838, tom. ix. p. 249, tab. 178.
Vanellus melanogaster, Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. iv. p. 356.
—— *helveticus*, Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth., Orn., part. iii. p. 1077.
—— *griseus*, Jenyns, Man. Brit. Vert. Anim., p. 181.
—— *squatarola*, Sieb., Temm. et Schleg. Faun. Jap., Aves, p. 106.
Squatarola helvetica, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 554.
—— *grisea*, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. and Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 29.
—— *cinerea*, Flem. Hist. of Brit. Anim., p. 111.
—— *varia*, Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 558.
Pluvialis squatarola, Macgill. Man. of Nat. Hist., Orn., vol. ii. p. 48.

A GREATER transformation in the garb of birds does not exist than occurs in the vernal and autumnal plumage of this bird. The accompanying illustrations will show this better than I can explain it in writing. It is true that a change of the same kind and almost to the same extent occurs in the Golden Plover; but the transformations of the Grey are still more remarkable, since it is dressed in a third state of plumage during the first autumn of its existence, at which time it is speckled with black and yellow on the head, breast, back, and upper surface of the tail-feathers. In this yellow stage the young might be supposed by the casual observer to be Golden Plovers; but such is not the case; and were any positive evidence required on the subject, the presence of a small hind toe on the foot would convince the most sceptical. It is in spring that the Grey Plover, with its fine black breast, passes over the eastern parts of England *en route* for countries further north, on its return from which it again makes our island its resting-place, some few remaining here for a winter residence. To say that its summer home and its eggs have never been found by any British ornithologist, however far north he may have travelled, would be about the truth; and it is but lately that we have been informed of the discovery of the eggs by the Russian naturalist, Von Middendorff. That the individuals which visit us proceed to very high latitudes for the purpose of breeding, there can be no doubt; and we are yearly in hopes of receiving additional information on the subject. Now, what I have said of the bird's two visits annually to England is to a great extent equally descriptive of its occurrence in central Europe and, I believe, in India, China, and the temperate portion of America. To show how widely the bird is dispersed over the face of the globe, I may mention that it is found as far south as Australia, and in almost the extreme south of Africa; for we learn from Mr. J. H. Gurney that it occurs at Port Natal; and not only does it inhabit the northern portions of America, but, Mr. Salvin informs me, it has been discovered near to, if it does not overstep, the isthmus of Panama. In all these southern countries it is seen in its winter dress only; it is in the north, and the north alone, that we meet with the bird in its black-breasted costume.

As the Grey Plover, during its visits to our islands, is perhaps more numerous in Norfolk than elsewhere, I think it only just to the historian of the birds of that county to insert here what he has written respecting it. "The Grey Plovers," says Mr. Stevenson, "though, as compared with the Golden Plover, at no time very numerous, visit us regularly in autumn, and usually make their appearance on Breydon and other parts of the coast about the first week in October. Mr. Dowell, however, states that in August, 1852, he observed several frequenting the 'freshes' at Blakeney which still retained their full summer plumage; and I have occasionally seen young birds in September, as early as the 17th, which at that time exhibited, in their first plumage, a great resemblance to the Golden Plover, for which, in this stage, I have no doubt they are frequently mistaken. One of those in my own collection, killed on the 22nd of September, 1853, has all those parts of the plumage which are usually white in the adult bird more or less tinged with straw-colour. The large size of the bill, the presence of the hind toe, and the long feathers under the wing being black instead of white as in the Golden Plover, distinguish this species at any age.

"A few are seen on Breydon Broad throughout the winter, but, as Mr. Frere informs me, not often as many as twenty or thirty at a time. Mr. Dowell describes them as mostly seen in pairs, which, joined to