## HALIAËTUS ALBICILLA.

Sea-Eagle.

Aquila albicilla, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 427.

— ossifraga, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 437.

Vultur albicilla, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 123.

Falco ossifragus, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 124.

— albicilla, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 253.

— melanotus, Id. ib. id., p. 254.

— albicaudus, Id. ib. id., p. 258.

— pygargus, Daud. Traité d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 62.

Haliaëtus albicilla, Cuv. Règne Anim., ed. i. p. 315.

Or the two great Eagles which inhabit the British Islands, the Haliaëtus albicilla is now by far the most numerous, whatever may have been the case in former times. Unlike the Aquila chrysaëtos, which affects forests and inland mountain districts, the Sea-Eagle resorts to the rocky shores of "sea-girt Albion," from which it rarely departs, except to take possession of an island in some Highland loch, where it may obtain an abundant supply of food, and rear its young without fear of molestation. At the present time it is mostly to be met with on the north-western shores of Scotland and Ireland; examples are, however, occasionally shot in nearly every English county, from Cornwall to the Scottish border; but these are mostly immature birds, and very few, I believe, have ever been killed with the pure white tail and yellow bill characteristic of the adult. Eastward of Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Western Siberia are countries in which it takes up its abode. It evidently affects more northern climes than the Golden Eagle; for we have no evidence that it ever crosses the Mediterranean, or proceeds far in the direction of the tropics.

The habits of this Eagle clearly indicate that it is especially adapted for feeding upon fish, both living and dead; but although this may be the staple, its diet would seem to be somewhat varied, for it will readily eat carrion of all kinds, and will doubtless occasionally fall upon a lamb or a mountain-hare, goose, cormorant, guillemot, or any other rock-breeding birds. The following very characteristic note on this part of the bird's economy has been obligingly forwarded to me by H. Osborne, Jun., Esq., of Wick:—

"An observer, who carefully watched this depredator while beating the margin of a loch, not far from the edge of the rock, saw him slip over the precipice and shoot along about halfway between the top of the cliff and the sea. Hardly had he made his appearance when a rush of birds seawards took place. Everything that could fly left the rocks; and the terror and confusion that ensued was remarkable. This continued during the whole course of his flight; and his appearance was the signal for a hurrying of the scared masses out of the reach of danger. So numerous and so very much frightened were the birds, that the progress of the Eagle could be traced, long after he himself was invisible, by the strings of sea-fowl, of various kinds, that persistently continued to seek safety in flight. It was long before gull and guillemot got over their fright, and matters assumed 'the even tenor of their way.'"

Mr. Stevenson, of Norwich, who has carefully noted the occurrence of this species in Norfolk, says, "Specimens, in immature plumage, occur on this coast almost every autumn or winter; but the adult bird, with a white tail has never been taken in this county. Two females and one male were shot in different parts during the winter of 1855–56; and in the following winter of 1856–57, between November and January, three more were obtained on the coast. Two of the latter were killed at Winterton, near Yarmouth, a favourite locality, and nearly at the same spot. Since that date others have been seen, and in some instances killed, at Horning in 1859, Holkham in 1860, and at Westwick in 1862. I have not heard of any during the mild winter of 1862–63." That it occurs as far west as Cornwall is certain, since Mr. Rodd states, in his 'List of Cornish Birds,' that it is sometimes seen on the sea-coast of that county.

The principal localities in Scotland wherein Mr. Wolley obtained eggs of this species, as recorded in the 'Ootheca Wolleyana,' are Argyll, Sutherland, and Caithness: the bird also breeds in the Orkneys, Shetland, and Western Islands. Mr. Thompson states that, in Ireland, it frequents all situations which are similar to those it inhabits in Scotland; it also occurs in Iceland, is very common in Greenland, and, I believe, in Labrador.

"The Sea-Eagle is now on the wing; and as he gradually mounts in wide curves, sailing at intervals, you cannot fail to gaze on him with delight. With his feet concealed among the feathers of the abdomen, his head drawn close to his shoulders, and his magnificent wings spread out to their full extent, and even seeming to curve upwards at the points, he sweeps along the sides of the hills, advancing with apparently