## AQUILA CHRYSAËTOS, Briss.

Golden Eagle.

Falco chrysaëtos, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 125.

— fulvus, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 125.

Aquila chrysaëtos, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 431.

— Barthelemyi, Jaub.

As civilization advances, this noble bird, the lord of our ancient forests, will either become extirpated or driven to seek an asylum in parts of the country where nature still preserves a savage aspect. High cultivation and its presence are incompatible; the lamb and the Eagle can never dwell together in peace; neither can the fawn or the roebuck live without molestation within the range of its haunts. The Highland shepherd and the keeper therefore do their utmost to destroy it; and the time is probably not far distant when it will no longer have a place in the avifauna of the British Islands: hence a bird so frequently referred to in the Sacred Writings, which has ever been the theme of the poets, which some of the most powerful nations of the earth have employed as an emblem of their majesty and greatness, the flight-feathers of which are worn for the like reason in the bonnet of the Highland chieftain, and whose tail-feathers are employed by the sanguinary Indian to bedeck his head when dressed in battle array, will be entirely lost to us—a loss which would, I am sure, be a source of regret to every one who has a taste for nature; and I therefore hope that our great landed proprietors will exert their influence to preserve the remnant of our Golden Eagles. To effect this, however, without some combined efforts, will, I fear, be impracticable; but as a love for and interest in the welfare of our indigenous animals is now animating the breasts of many among us, I trust that it will, for the future, rather be the object of protection than, as at present, of foolish destruction; if it be, I feel assured that none other than the best results will follow. The Blue Hare, now so numerous, will furnish it with an abundance of food, and thus the numbers of an animal which of late years has increased to such an extent as to have become a pest, will be diminished, and the balance of animal life, which the wanton destruction of our birds of prey has disturbed, will again be in part restored. That the Eagle, the Kestrel, and the Owl are essentially necessary to the equalization of the numbers of our indigenous mammals is certain; and this I shall have constantly to speak of in the course of the present work.

To show the amount of destruction dealt out to this noble bird and the Sea Eagle, the Sutherlandshire Expedition of Naturalists state that the number of Eagles paid for between March 1831 and March 1834 was 171, besides 53 nestlings or eggs; and a gamekeeper in the south-west of that county trapped 15 Eagles in three months of 1847, and almost as many in the winter of 1850–51.

In times past the Golden Eagle was the regular denizen of all the hilly and mountainous districts of England, particularly those of Derbyshire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, many parts of Wales, the whole of Scotland and Ireland, including their islands; it is now only found in Argyll, Sutherland, and Ross shires in Scotland, the islands of Orkney and Skye, and the counties of Donegal, Kerry, and Mayo in Ireland. Up to the last year (1862), two eyries at least were to be seen on the Black Mount, the property of the late Marquis of Breadalbane, who made it a sine qua non that his foresters should at any time show him an Eagle; were this laudable conduct imitated by other enlightened proprietors, we should not have occasion to lament the gradual disappearance of this noble bird. It is one of these eyries that is represented in the fine drawing made by Mr. Wolf, from which the accompanying Plate was taken. Its more frequent haunts are in such districts as those mentioned; but the bird is often to be met with in rocky situations in the neighbourhood of the sea, wherever it is likely to obtain an abundance of food. Although I have stated that the Golden Eagle is now confined to a limited area, it must not be understood that examples are not occasionally found in many or, indeed, in nearly every English county; these chance visitors are, however, in almost all instances, birds of the year, or not more than two years old; they are probably the offspring of parents resident in Scotland: but they may be migrants from Norway, Sweden, or other distant countries; for it is well known that the young of both our great Eagles, in obedience to a law which appears to influence the whole of the Falconidæ, wander further from their native home than the adults: were these birds allowed to remain unmolested instead of being ruthlessly shot, they would doubtless retire northward at the proper season, and form eyries for themselves.

What are the other countries inhabited by this fine bird? is a question which will naturally be asked by many of my readers; to which I would answer, that it is found throughout the whole of Europe, but is more numerous among the Alps, the Pyrenees, and other mountainous parts of the Continent, from Italy to Norway, than in the lowlands of Holland and many parts of Germany, which latter countries are, however,