326. Cygnus immutabilis.

Polish Swan.

Ornithologists are at variance as to the propriety of considering this bird a distinct species from *C. olor*, the difference between them being but trifling. The Polish Swan is a somewhat larger bird, with a smaller frontal knob, while the naked space between the bill and the eye is larger; and the feet are grey instead of olive-black. Mr. Bartlett has weighed several Polish Swans living at the Zoological Gardens, which turned the scale at twenty-seven pounds; and he assures me they would be two pounds heavier after moulting. He considers there are tangible differences between the two birds; and I must confess I do also since I have been able to make some observations on a fine example recently shot, as detailed in the following note sent to me by Viscount Holmesdale:—

"Househill, Nairn, N.B., Sept. 28th, 1872.

"Dear Mr. Gould,—I send you a bird which I believe to be a Polish Swan. First a pair and then three others came to a wild loch by the sea here in the northerly gales we have had lately. The keeper took them to be common Whoopers; and we went out yesterday and stalked them. Whoopers they certainly are not; but they answer exactly to the description of the Polish Swan in Yarrell. ash-grey legs and feet small; tubercle at base of bill, and the black of the nostrils well divided from the base. If this is so, it may be of interest to you; and Colonel Baillie hopes you will accept the bird. If, after all, we are wrong as to the species, it may be of interest from the culinary point of view.

"Yours very faithfully,

"Holmesdale."

The very fine specimen above alluded to is now mounted in the British Museum; and I have a note on it dissection from Professor Owen, who states "the Swan was a young male, testes very small, flesh tender and good eating."

If the young of this bird is always white from its downy state upwards, it is a remarkable characteristic, and one that will tend to confirm the propriety of considering it a species.

The weight of this individual was $24\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.

| | | | | | | | | | | ft. | in. |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|----------------|
| Across the wings, from tip to tip | ٠ | | | ٠ | | • | • | | ٠ | 7 | 6 |
| Total length, from tip of bill to end of tail | | | 0 | , | ٠ | | | , | • | 4 | 9 |
| Tip of bill to corner of the eye | • | | | | | | | | | 0 | $5\frac{1}{4}$ |
| Tip of bill to base | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 4 |