

## IVORY GULL.

*Larus eburneus, Linn.*

La Mouette blanche, ou Séneateur.

FROM the circumstance of two or three examples of this beautiful Gull having been captured at different times within the precincts of the British Islands, all modern writers have included it in the Fauna of this country. The snowy whiteness of its plumage renders it one of the most delicate and interesting species of its genus. Dwelling almost solely within the regions of the arctic circle, the few stragglers which now and then pass the boundary line, and visit the more temperate portions of the European continent, are, if taken by the ornithologist during these peregrinations, considered a prize of no little rarity and value. The first authenticated instance of its being captured in the British Islands was communicated to the Wernerian Society by L. Edmonston, Esq., and a notice of the occurrence published in the fourth volume of the Memoirs of that Society. This individual, which was killed in Balta Sound, Shetland, in December 1822, and one since, in an immature state, in the Frith of Clyde, are the only recorded instances of its having been found near our coasts. In a note in the Manuel of M. Temminck, we find this author also expatiating on its extreme rarity in our latitudes, two individuals only having at that period come under his notice.

From the accounts given of this Gull in the works of Dr. Richardson, Capt. Sabine, and most arctic voyagers, we learn that in those regions it is a species of no rarity; and from its being equally common in Greenland and Spitzbergen, we may naturally conclude that it ranges over the whole of the arctic circle. In these solitary wilds it is constantly accompanied by the Fulmar Petrel; and like the generality of its tribe, which are constantly observed in the neighbourhood of shipping, it is always to be seen following the whalers and feeding upon the refuse thrown overboard, which, with blubber, small fish, and crustacea, forms the principal portion of its diet.

It is said to breed in rocks overhanging the sea, but the number and colour of its eggs we have yet to discover.

The sexes, when fully adult, are alike in colouring; the young, on the contrary, (as is the case with most species of the genus,) are so very dissimilar that they have been mistaken, and described as a distinct species. The plumage of the first autumn is an almost uniform blackish grey, which gradually gives place to a mottled livery of black and white, the ends of the primaries and tail retaining the dark marking the longest, and until the end of the second year. It is said that the immaculate white plumage is that of summer, and that the head and neck are streaked with grey in winter.

The base of the bill is deep lead colour, the remainder being fine ochre yellow; the irides are brown; the feet black; and, as the name implies, the whole of the plumage is pure white.

The Plate represents an adult male rather more than three fourths of the natural size.