

BLACK-TAILED GANNET.

Sula melanura, Temm.

WE are indebted to the kindness of M. Temminck for the loan of the fine specimen of this bird from which the accompanying figure was taken, and which he informed us was killed in Iceland. In every respect, except in having a black tail, it resembles the Solan Gannet, *Sula Bassana*, which bird when fully adult has a white tail. Whether this difference be an accidental variation, or if not, whether the difference is of sufficient importance to justify a specific distinction, we are unable satisfactorily to decide. M. Temminck regards it, we believe, as a true species, and as such we publish it, leaving the question still open for further investigation: at all events it will not be destitute of interest to the scientific naturalist. It may perhaps be said that as the Gannets change from almost black to white in passing from youth to maturity, this bird exhibits an intermediate state of plumage, the original black colouring still remaining on the tail: there can be no doubt, however, that the bird was fully adult, and we may remark that the first change that occurs in the plumage of the young shows a disposition in all parts to approach towards the colouring of the adults; it is therefore unlikely that the tail should be even of a deeper black than that of the young Gannet, while the rest of the plumage is that of complete maturity.

The figure is about three fourths of the natural size.