BRENT GOOSE.

Anser Brenta, *Flem.*

L'Oie cravant.

This well-known species is the least of the European Wild Geese, and is one of our winter visitants, at which period it resorts in great numbers to the inlets of the sea and the bays around our coast. Being driven from the icy regions of the polar circle by the approach of inclement weather, it not only visits the shores of the British Islands, but appears to radiate in every direction, spreading itself over almost all the maritime portions of Europe, Asia, and America. "Upon the Northumbriam coast," says Mr. Selby, "a very large body of these birds annually resorts to the extensive muddy and sandy flats that lie between the mainland and Holy Island, and which are covered by every flow of the tide. In this locality tolerably sized flocks usually make their appearance in the early part of October, which are increased by the repeated arrival of others till the beginning of November, at which time the equatorial movement of the species in this latitude seems to be completed. This part of the coast appears to have been a favourite resort of these birds from time immemorial, where they have always received the name of *Ware Geese*, given to them, without doubt, in consequence of their food consisting entirely of marine vegetables. This I have frequently verified by dissection; finding the gizzard filled with the leaves and stems of a species of grass that grows abundantly in the shallow pools left by the tide, and with the remains of the fronds of different *Algæ*, particularly of one which seems to be the *Laver* (*Ulva latissima*). These were mixed with a considerable quantity of sharp sand, but without any portion of animal or shelly matter, although Wilson states that they feed occasionally upon small univalve and bivalve mollusca. In this haunt they remain till the end of February, when they migrate in successive flocks, as the individuals happen to be influenced by the season, and before April the whole have disappeared. When feeding (which they do at ebb tide) or moving from one place to another, they keep up a continual hoarse cackling, or, as it is termed, *honking* noise, which can be heard at a great distance."

The Brent Goose is always extremely shy and watchful, and can only be approached by the sportsman concealing his person. This wariness has induced those who procure these birds for the market to resort to various contrivances to effect their object, for an account of which we beg to refer our readers to Colonel Hawker's 'Instructions to young Sportsmen,' an amusing treatise, where a full description is given of this kind of sporting.

They breed and rear their young in the security of high northern latitudes; the nest being formed of various vegetable materials, and the eggs, which are white, being ten or twelve in number.

The male has the head, neck, and upper part of the breast black; on each side of the neck a patch of white; back, scapulars, and wing-coverts brown, each feather being margined with paler brown; under surface dark grey, each feather margined with paler grey; vent and upper and under tail-coverts white; lower part of the back, the rump, quills, and tail black; bill black; irides brown; legs and feet brownish black.

The female resembles the male in colour, but is not quite so large.

Our Plate represents an adult male rather less than the natural size.