BERNICLE GOOSE.

Anser leucopsis, *Bechst.*

L'Oie Bernache.

It is only during the months of autumn and winter that the British Islands are visited by the Bernicle Goose, the extreme cold of the northern latitudes, where it sojourned during the summer season, having driven it southward into climates where its food is still accessible. The portion of our island in which it is most abundant is along the whole of the western coast from north to south. In Lancashire it appears especially abundant: the North and West of Ireland is also visited by it in large flocks. On the Continent Holland, Germany, and France offer an extent of coast and inland meres and marshes highly acceptable to the Bernicle, to which localities it resorts in great numbers. It is decidedly one of the handsomest and most elegant of the Geese that sojourn in the British dominions, and when domesticated forms a graceful ornament to our aviaries. When wild it is extremely shy and wary, so much so that it cannot be approached without the utmost circumspection. Its food consists of various aquatic and terrestrial vegetables, seeds, and grain. It breeds in the regions of the arctic circle, but we have no correct information as to the description of its eggs, or its peculiar habits of nidification, in which, however, we conceive it agrees with the rest of its congeners.

The sexes offer so little difference in the colouring of their plumage that one description will serve for both.

The adult has the forehead, cheeks, and throat yellowish white; a narrow black mark passes from the bill to the eye; the top of the head, neck, and chest black; the upper surface fine blueish grey, the tip of each feather edged with brownish black and a margin of greyish white beyond; primaries greyish black; upper tail-coverts white; tail black; the whole of the under surface silvery white; flanks strongly marked with grey in waved bars; feet and bill black; irides dark brown.

The young are easily distinguished from the adults, by the light colouring of the face being more clouded with black, and by the general plumage being less pure and decided.

The Plate represents an adult about three fourths of the natural size.