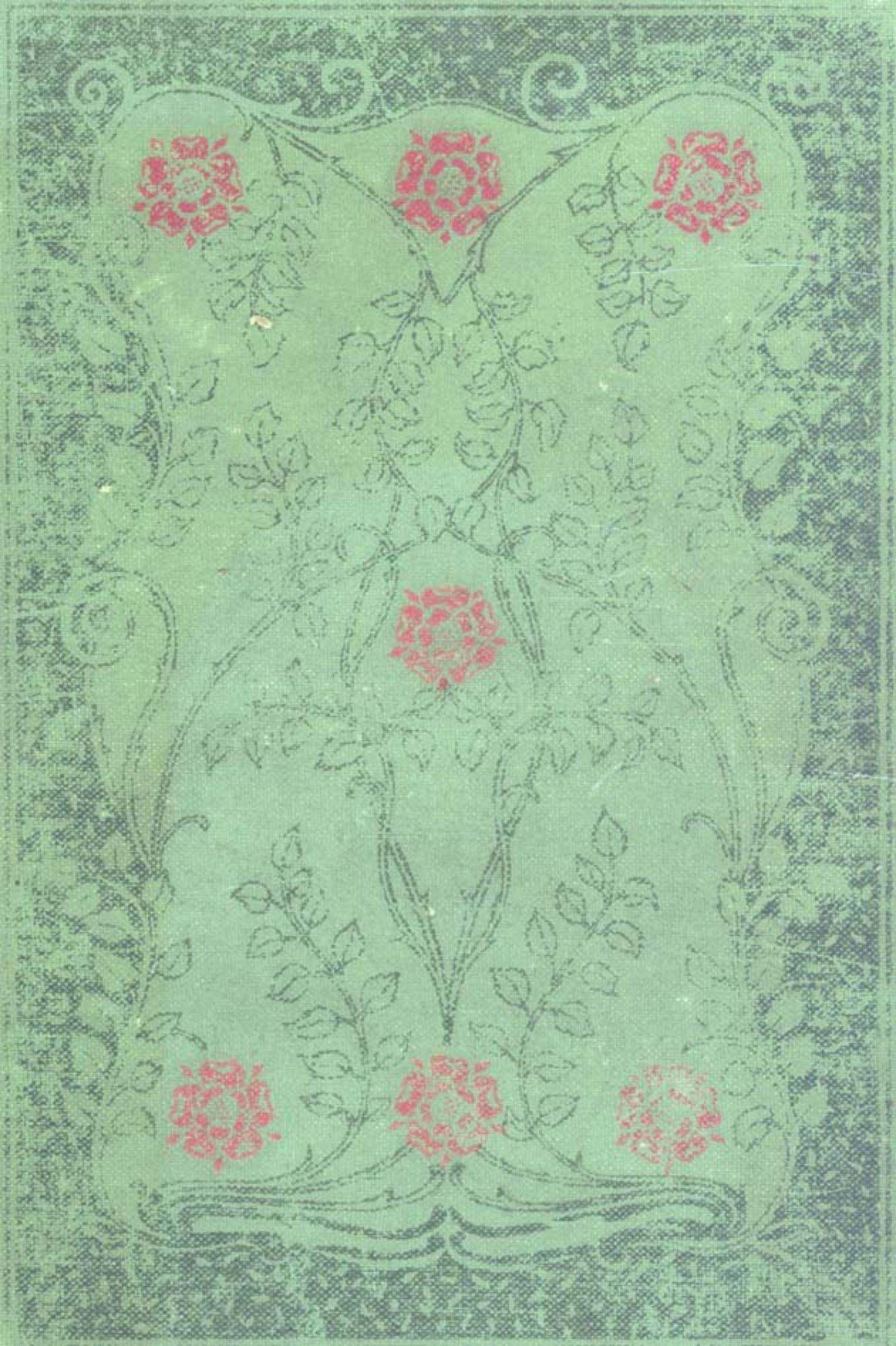

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THE NATURAL HISTORY OF WATER BIRDS

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for the District of Ohio.

HISTORY OF WATER BIRDS.

THE RED FLAMINGO.

The Flamingo is an ungraceful bird. See! what a long, crooked neck, heavy bill, and long legs! But the feathers are of a beautiful red color, and this prevents the Flamingo from being entirely ugly. The Flamingoes breed in the West India Islands, and then visit the coasts of the United States. When seen at a distance such is the brilliancy of their dress, that they seem like a troop of soldiers, being arranged alongside of each other, in lines, while they search for food near the sea.

GREAT NIGHT HERON OF AMERICA.

The Night Heron is one of the largest of the water-birds. It sometimes grows to be two feet in length. Its legs are long, and its bill is sharp. The back is of a dusky green color, and the rest of the bird is white, giving the heron a strange appearance. The heron is found in nearly every part of the United States, where there are groves of swamp oaks or gloomy marshes, near ponds or streams. It builds its nest in the highest trees, and will not forsake the place unless it is constantly disturbed. There are heronries in some swamps in the southern states hundreds of years old. The crow is the constant

RED FLAMINGO.

GREAT NIGHT HERON OF AMERICA.

THE RED SPOONBILL.

By looking at a picture of the Spoonbill the little reader will know why the bird is so named. When full grown, the bill is six inches in length, and two inches in width at the end. The bird itself grows to the length of two feet six inches. The American Spoonbill is chiefly found in the warm regions of the continent, and is very common in the West India Islands. The plumage is brilliant, the upper parts being red and the under portions white. The Red Spoonbill is a water-bird, and is generally found on the sea coast, where it wades about searching for shell-fish, ma-

RED SPOONBILL.

rine insects, and small crabs. It can swim and dive with great ease. The nests are made in trees or bushes near the sea coast. The eggs are about the size of those of the hen, and spotted. The flesh of the Spoonbill is said to resemble that of the tame goose in taste, and the young are esteemed as good food. The Spoonbill of Europe has plumage of a white color, and appears to reside in much cooler climates than the American, being abundant in Holland, and sometimes visiting the southern shores of England. They are birds of passage.

THE WOOD IBIS.

The Wood Ibis is a wading bird of great size, being sometimes found three feet in length. The bill of the full grown Ibis is about nine inches in length. The whole body, neck and lower parts are of a white color, while the legs and thighs are dusky green. They are solitary and indolent birds, seldom going in flocks, and usually frequenting the banks of the principal rivers, marshes and savannahs, as well as the deserted rice plantations upon the sea-coast of the southern states. Here, alone, the Ibis stands, listless, on the topmost limb of some decayed cypress. His neck

WOOD IBIS

is drawn in upon his shoulders, and his great bill resting like a scythe upon his breast. He has a sad aspect. In this position, he spends the greater portion of his time only moving when awakened by the calls of hunger. They feed on snakes, young alligators, fish, frogs and other reptiles. They may be easily approached and shot, and are by many persons, considered excellent food.

THE PELICAN.

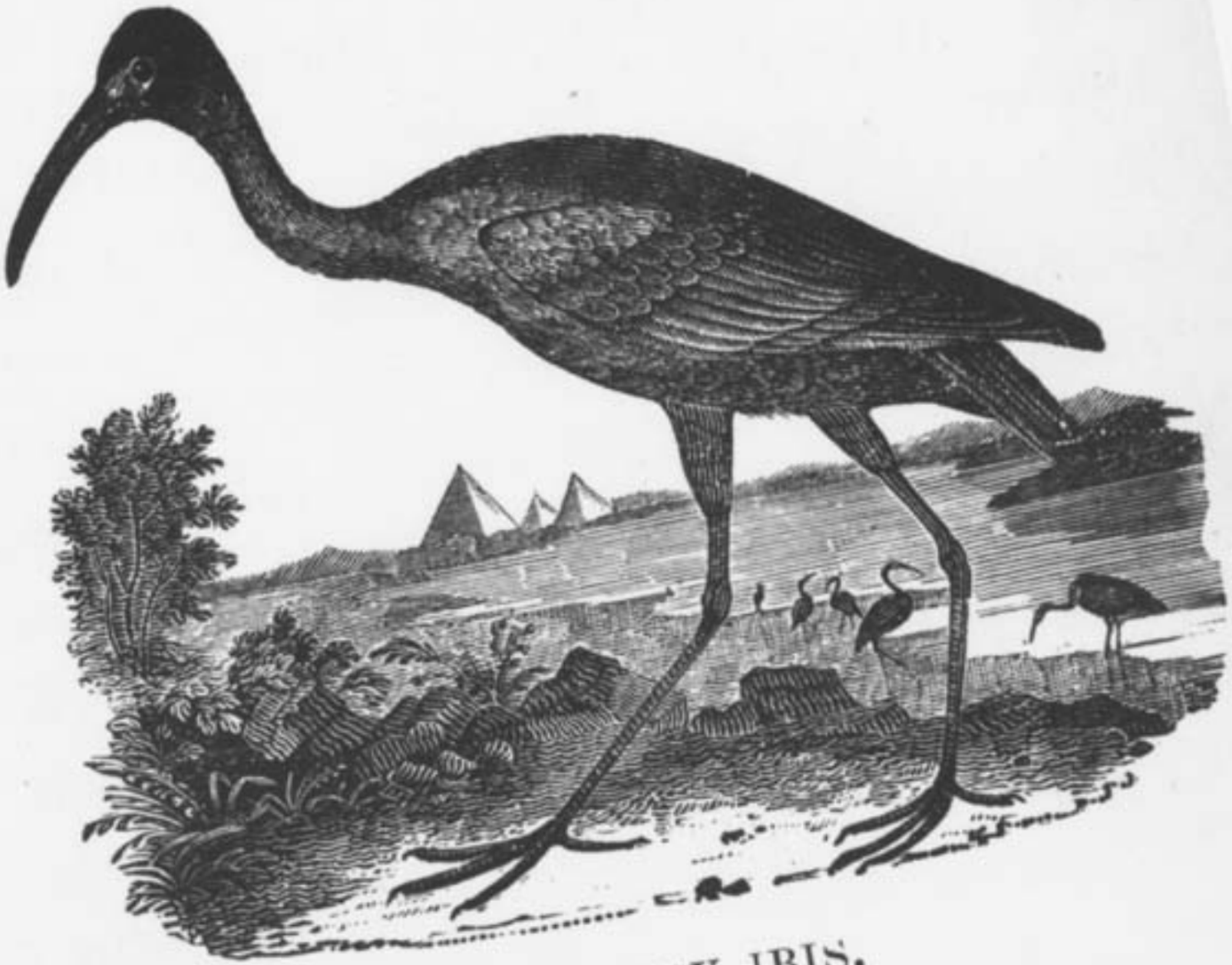
The Pelican is the largest of web-footed water-fowls. It is found in nearly all climates, but the flocks are most numerous in the warm regions of the world. Along the shores of the rivers of Africa, a vast number of these birds may be seen. They fly low and heavily, sometimes abreast, and at others in an oblique line. They are often seen to pass close over a building or within a few yards of a party of men, without showing any signs of fear. For the purpose of surprising their prey, the Pelicans haunt eddies near falls, and devour great quantities of crabs and other

PELICAN.

fish. They can only swallow when opening the mouth sideways like the shark. When gorged with food, they doze on the water, or on some sand-shoal projecting into it, where they remain a great part of their time, digesting their overgorged meal. At such times they may be captured, as they find it difficult to start when the pouch is full of fish. The Pelican is very much attached to its offspring, and labors hard to give them a full supply of food. The length of the Pelican is about six feet. The general color of the plumage is white.

THE GLOSSY IBIS.

The Glossy Ibis, or Liver, is found in almost every part of the world. In Egypt, where they are numerous at certain periods, these birds are considered very valuable, as they destroy many dangerous and destructive reptiles. In ancient times, the Egyptians forbade their destruction under penalty of death. The birds were kept in temples, and when they died, were embalmed and inurned, and placed with the mummies in the sacred tombs. Thus accustomed to favor, these birds advanced without fear into the midst of cities. At present, however, they are shot by the



GLOSSY IBIS.

Arabs, and the markets of the sea-coast are abundantly supplied with the game. The Ibises dwell together in flocks, in marshy grounds, exploring for their food in extended lines, and advancing like regular troops. For hours they are observed to bore in the same spot with their long bills, when their prey is abundant. They are slow and solemn in their movements, and seem to measure every step. When alarmed, they rise high, and utter loud cries. The Glossy Ibis has plumage of a dark, glossy brown color, varied with dusky green.

THE MARBLED GODWIT.

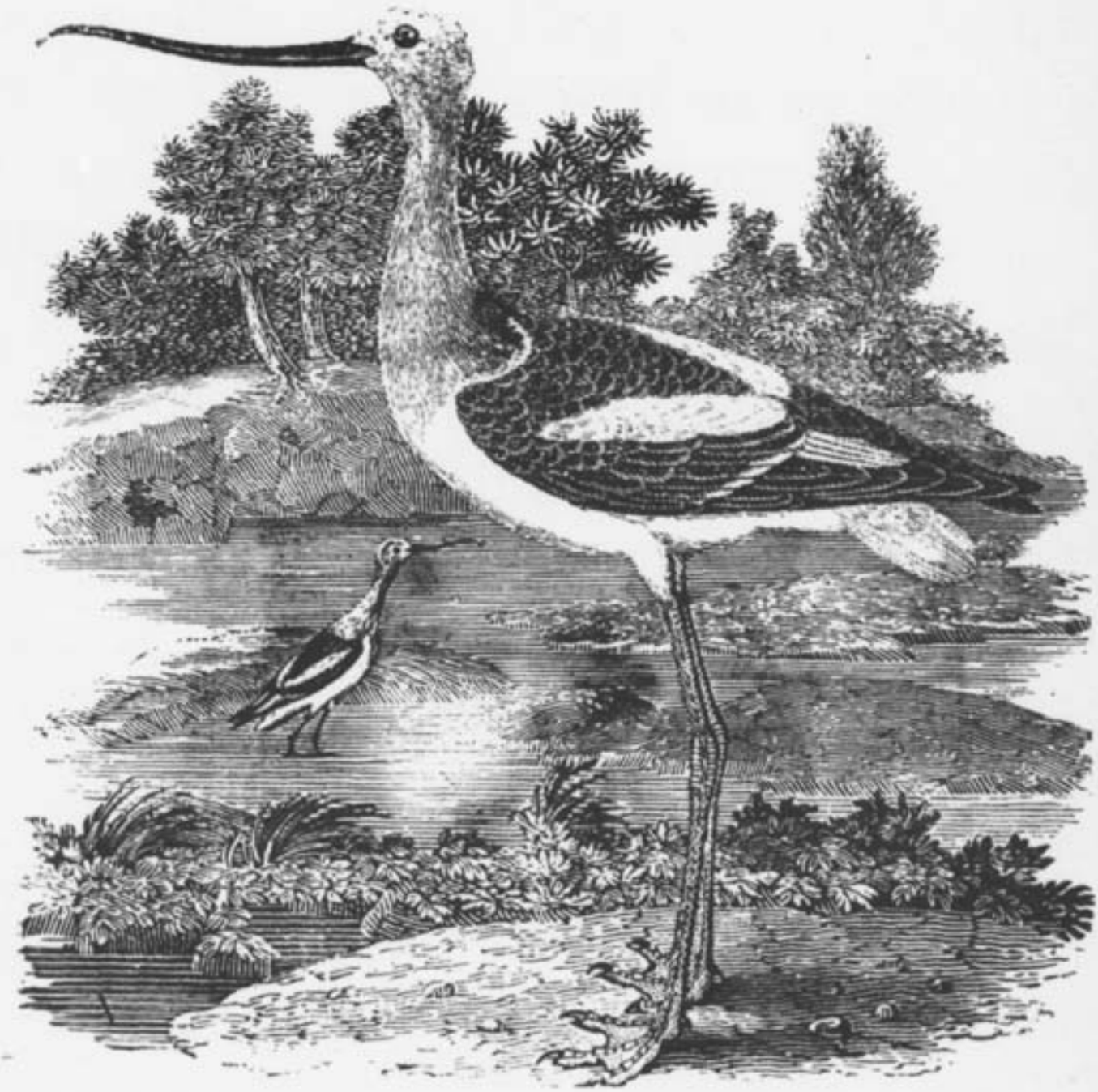
The Marbled Godwits are large birds, with long bills and legs, dwelling chiefly in marshes, and frequenting the muddy banks of rivers not far from the sea. They are called marbled on account of their barred and spotted backs. Their sight is weak, and they generally move about at night, or at twilight. They thrust their bills into mud or wet sand in search of food. Being shy and timid, they live in flocks hiding by day among the grass and reeds. When they go in search of food, their hoarse and shrill voice is heard from the depths of the marsh, and has, from

MARBLED GODWIT.

its harshness, been compared to the cry of a goat. When discovered, the Godwits run out rapidly without taking the wing. They breed among the reeds and grass. Like some other birds, they migrate at night, particularly when it is moonlight, and may at such times, be heard, and sometimes seen, passing along, high in the air. The sportsmen make sad havoc among the Godwits. A flock becomes confused when one of the number falls, and makes repeated circles around the wounded bird, before they take to flight. The flocks are, however, difficult to approach.

THE AMERICAN AVOSET.

The Avoset may be seen about the coasts and rivers of the Middle States during the summer. They have a very awkward appearance. The bill is long, slim and weak, as are the legs. The plumage is rather thick and close, and well provided with down. The Avosets live in pairs or small flocks, in marshes where they are constantly obliged to wade. They run with rapidity in or out of the water, but do not often swim, though their feet are webbed. Their flight is swift and long, and they are naturally, shy and timid, yet noisy. They feed on small fish, insects



AMERICAN AVOSET.

and spawn which they often seize by beating the water as well as by probing the mud. Their nests are usually small holes in the earth, lined with a few weeds, or merely the bosom of the bare sand. The Avosets, near their breeding-places, are very noisy; flying around in circles near their invaders, and in a sharp tone, uttering "click, click!"

THE BLACK-NECKED STILT.

The Stilts are sometimes called Long-legged Plovers. Vast flocks of them may be seen on the borders of the sea and the salt lakes, as well as upon the banks of rivers. They fly with great rapidity, but when running, appear to stagger in balancing their long legs. Their food consists of small worms, flies, shell-fish, and insects. They move about in small flocks. From the extraordinary length of their legs, it is believed that they are obliged to hatch their eggs in a standing posture. While the females are sitting, their mates are either wading in the ad-

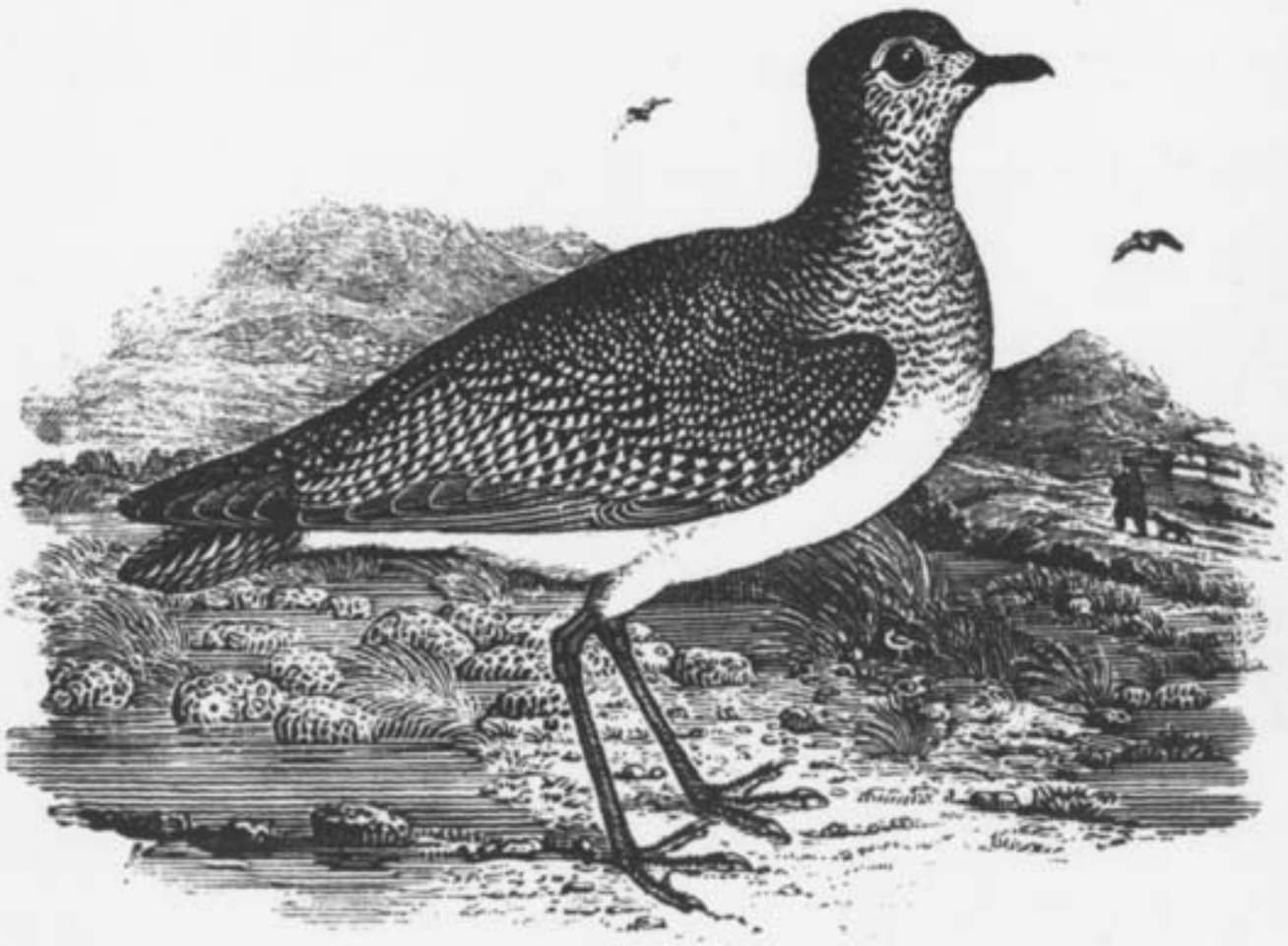
BLACK-NECKED STILT

joining ponds, or traversing the marshes in the immediate vicinity; but on the approach of danger, the whole flock rises in the air, and they fly steadily, with their long legs extended behind them, and keep up a constant yelping note of "click, click, click." The legs of the Stilt are longer, in proportion, than any other known bird, and from this peculiarity, it derives its name.

The Black-Necked Stilt is common in many parts of North and South America. Its flesh is regarded as very fine eating.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER.

WHO lives near the coast of the middle and northern states and does not know the call of the Golden Plover? This beautiful bird is the favorite of the sportsmen as well as of those who love to see and hear the sprightly visitors of the meadow and the river-shores. The Plovers live chiefly upon land-insects, or the worms they meet with in the salt marshes, and appear very fond of grasshoppers. It is a fine sight to see them about the time of their departure for the south. Early in the morning they assemble in great flocks, and as the sun rises, they fly high in the

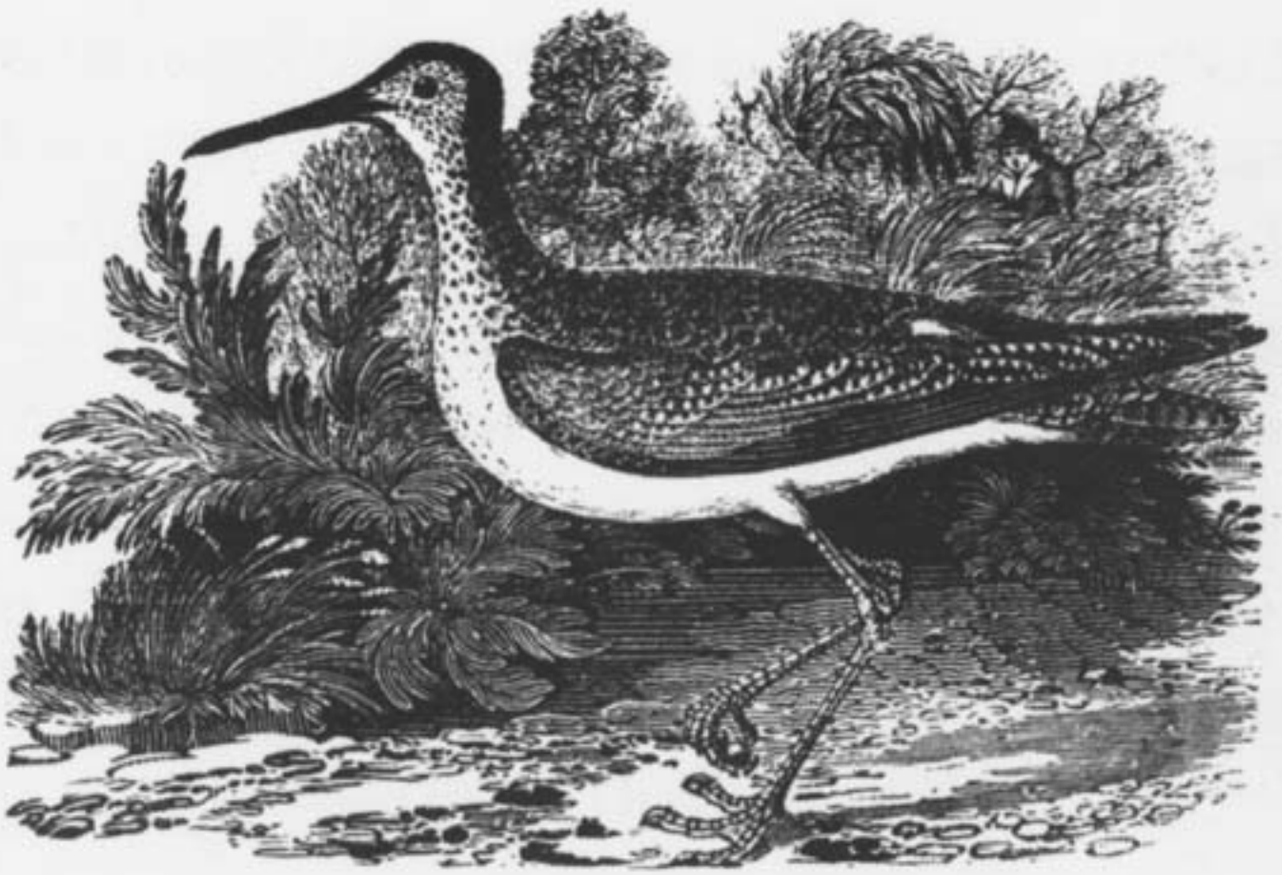


GOLDEN PLOVER.

air, and disperse for the season. They usually go about, however, in small flocks, and when alarmed, while on the wing, or giving their call to those feeding round them, they have a wild, shrill, and whistling note, and are at times timid, watchful and difficult to approach. In the evening, they disperse and repose apart from each other. At daybreak, however, the feeling of solitude again returns, and the early sentinel no sooner gives the shrill call, than they assemble in their usual company. At this time they are often caught in great numbers, by the fowler, with the aid of a clap-net, stretched before dawn, in front of the place where they pass the night.

YELLOW SHANKS TATLER.

The Yellow Shanks Tatler is a bird very common in the United States. It belongs to the wading family, and is usually found on the banks of rivers and lakes and in marshes. The salt marshes are favorite places of resort for these birds. After a heavy storm, they may be seen as far inland as the extent of tide-water. The Yellow Shanks has a sharp whistle of two or three notes, which it repeats, when alarmed, and when flying, and sometimes utters a simple, low, hoarse call, when starting upon the wing. It is a very timid bird, and as it is easily alarmed, and

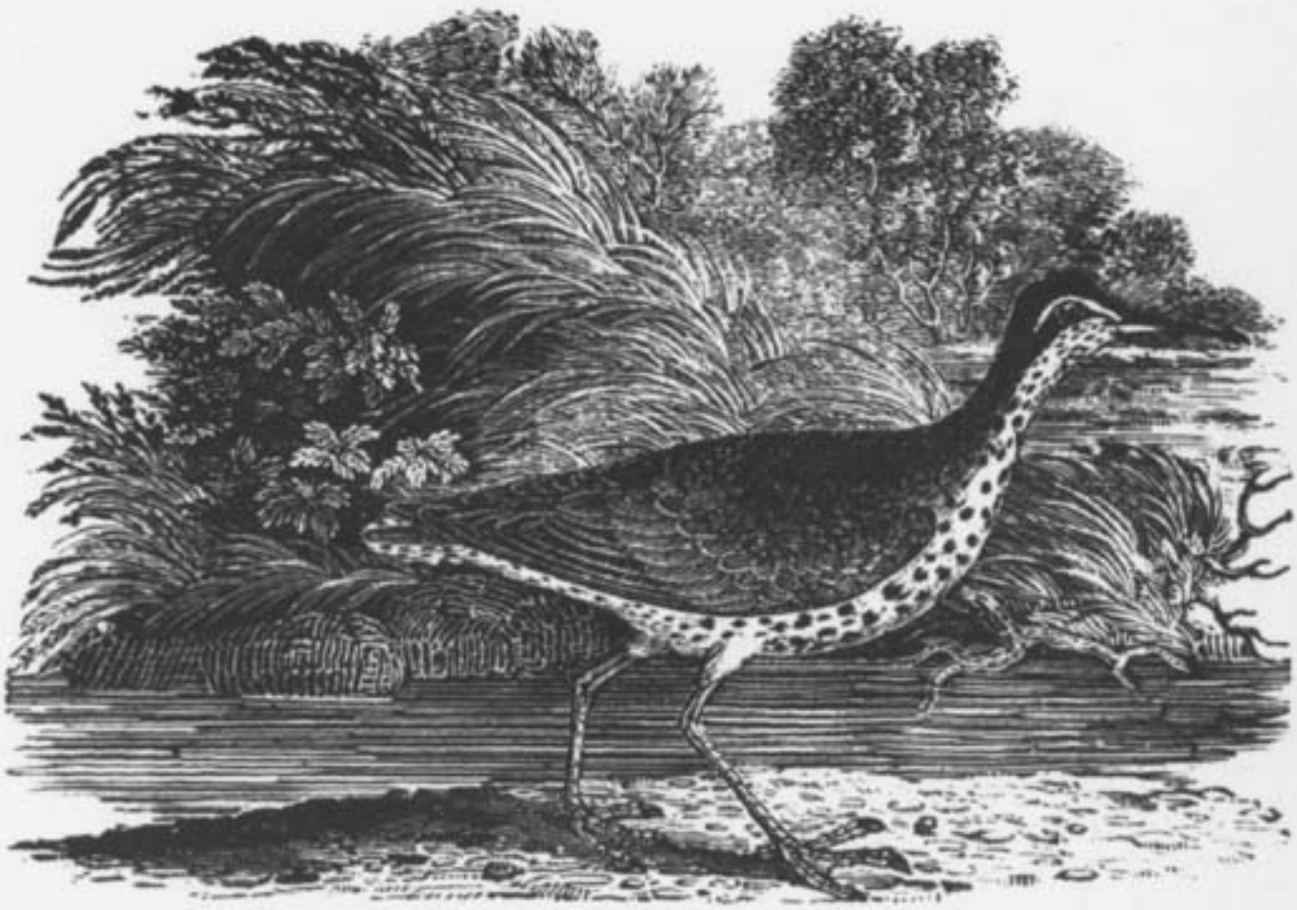


YELLOW SHANKS TATLER.

communicates its alarm to other birds, it is much disliked by sportsmen, though its flesh is considered very good eating. Sometimes, and most commonly at the approach of stormy weather, they are seen in small restless bands, roving over the salt marshes and along the banks of the rivers. The glittering of their wings and snow-white tails, make them a brilliant sight as they mount in the air. Like Plovers they may be called around a sportsman by an imitation of their whistle.

THE UPLAND PLOVER.

THE Upland Plover or Bartram's Tatler, is very common along the sea-coast of New England, making its appearance, with its well-fed brood, as early as the twentieth of July and becoming more abundant about the middle of August. At that time the market of Boston is amply supplied with this game. According to the season of the year, the Tatler's are found throughout the continent. They feed much upon grasshoppers, and become so plump as to weigh upwards of three quarters of a pound. They keep together in broods, or small flocks, and when ap-

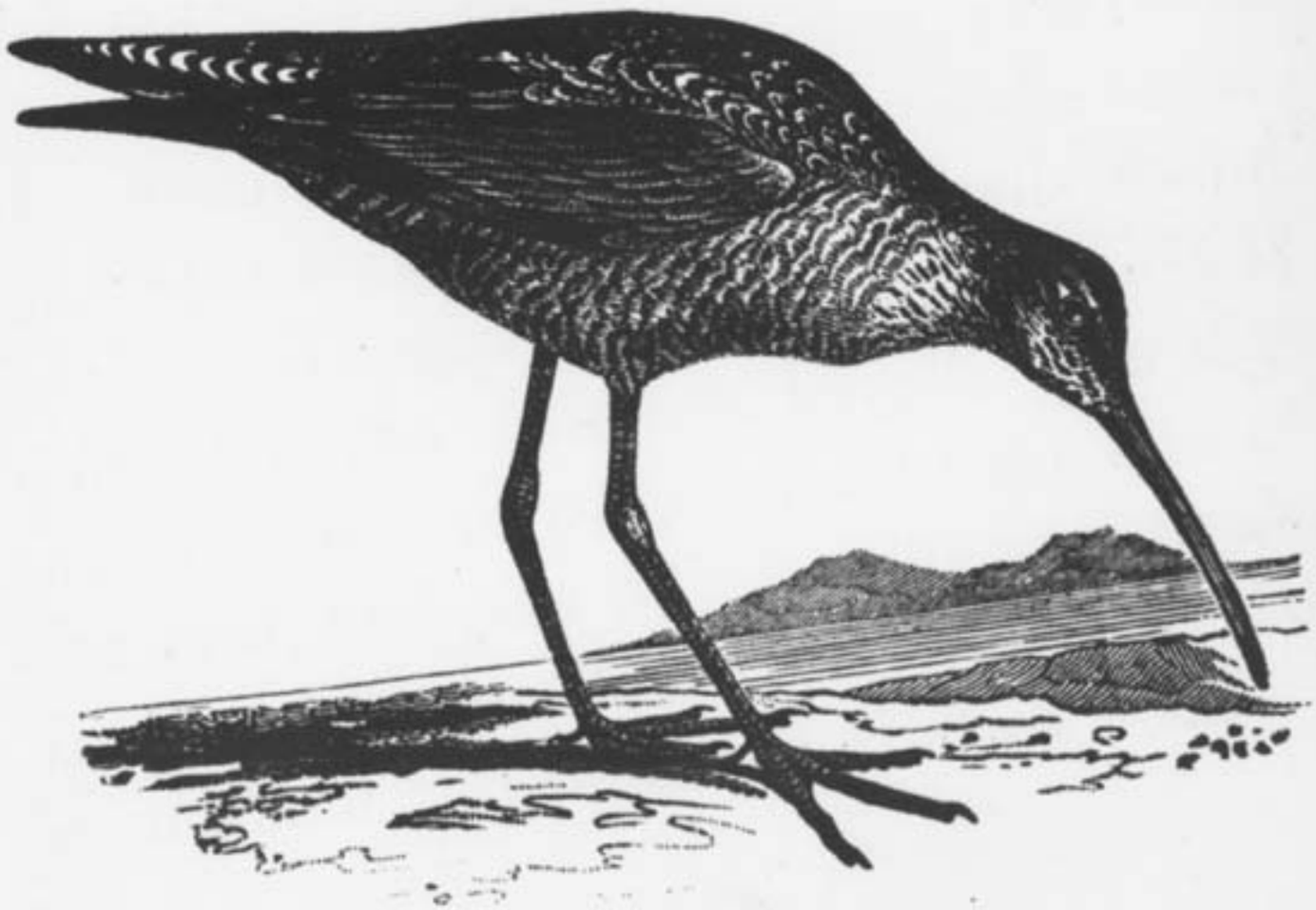


UPLAND PLOVER.

proached, are like the other Plovers, silent, shy and watchful, so that it requires some skill for the sportsman to get within gunshot. They run fast, the older birds sometimes dropping their wings and spreading the tail, as if trying to divert a spectator's attention from their brood. On alighting, they stand erect, remain still, and on any alarm, utter three or four sharp, whistling notes as they mount to fly. In the pastures they familiarly feed around the cattle.

THE STILT-LEGGED SANDPIPER.

The Sandpipers are amongst the smallest wading birds. Some species are common on the shores and in the marshes of the whole continent of America. In the summer, the Peeps, as the smallest Sandpipers are called, are very abundant in the northern states, particularly where there are salt marshes. The sportsmen shoot them with the greatest ease, as they will not forsake a wounded companion. When alarmed, they give a sort of whistle, like the word peet or peep. On seeing the larger marsh birds feeding, the Peeps will fly down among them, and when the



STILT-LEGGED SANDPIPER.

sportsman approaches, they give the alarm. Towards evening, in fine weather, the marshes almost re-echo with their shrill piping. At most times, except in the spring, they are fat and well-flavored. The Stilt-legged Sandpiper is only found in the cold regions of the far north. It is more than ten inches in length. The legs are very long in proportion to the size of the bird, and the bill is slim and weak. In the autumn, flocks of them may be seen about the shores of Hudson's Bay.

THE RED PHALAROPE.

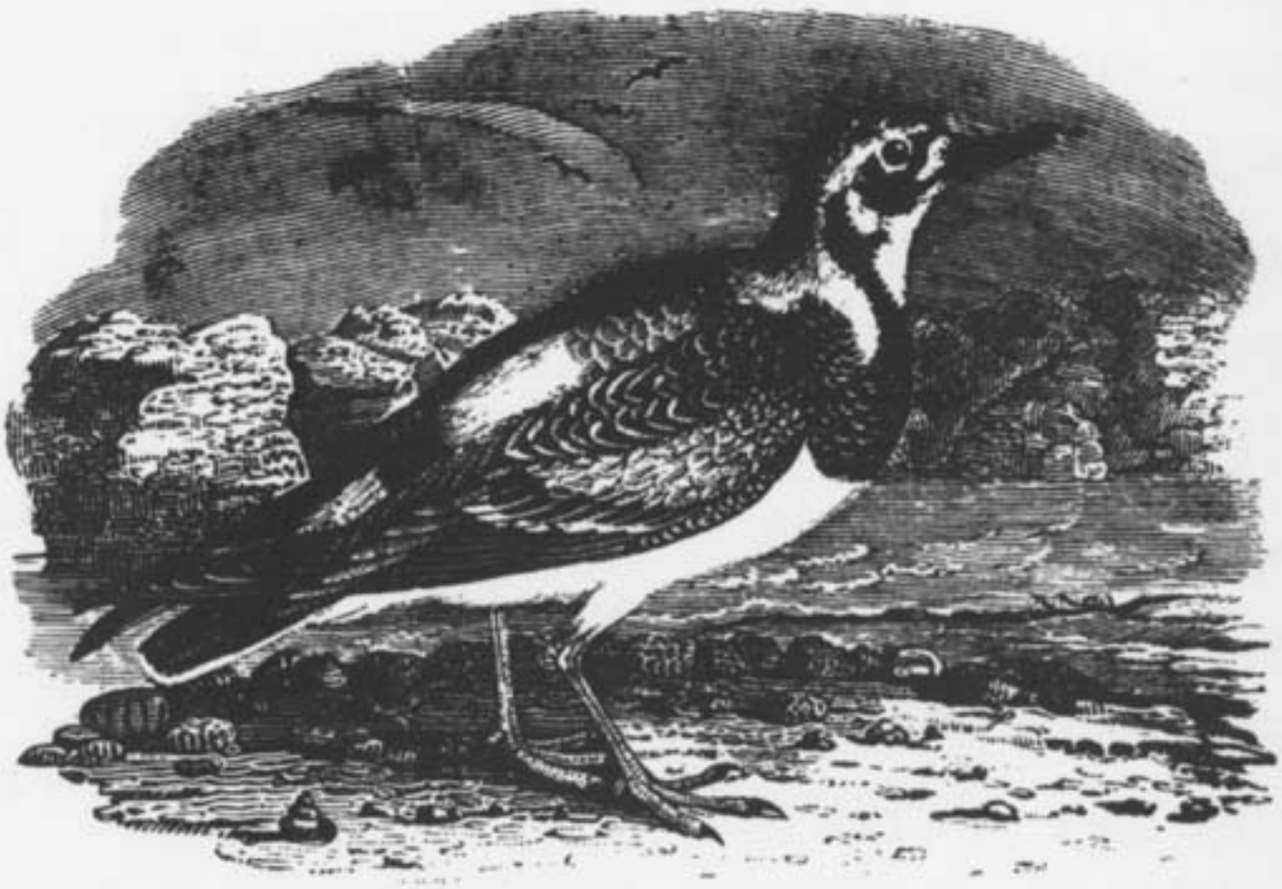
The Phalaropes are small but beautiful birds. They glide over the water swiftly and easily, and are able to withstand the heaviest waves, like stormy petrels. They are too light and buoyant to dive. They can walk and run quickly, but are seldom seen on the ground. Their flight is easy and elegant. The nests of the Phalaropes are among the grass or reeds. The young birds run about and swim as soon as they are hatched. The Phalaropes inhabit the Arctic seas, whence they migrate, at the approach of winter, into the warmer regions. The Red Phalarope has a fine

RED PHALAROPE.

plumage of mingled black, red and white colors. They abound in the northern seas. Not being easily alarmed, they are shot without difficulty. When seen swimming in pools, they are constantly dipping their flat bills into the water as if feeding on some insects, and while thus engaged they will allow the sportsmen to come very near them. The Red Phalarope is about seven inches in length. The bill is rather flat, and from this feature these birds are often called the Flat-billed Phalaropes. About the month of September, a few stragglers visit the United States, where they have occasionally been shot in the neighborhood of Boston and Philadelphia.

THE TURNSTONE.

The Turnstone, or Sea Dotterell, is a singular marine bird, which is found in nearly every part of the world. Its favorite breeding resorts, however, are in the far north. It is of a wild and solitary disposition, coursing along the shore in pairs or in small families, which have been bred together. In a mere depression of the sand along the sea-coast, the Turnstone drops its eggs, which are four in number, and of an olive green color, spotted with brown. While flying, this bird utters a loud, twittering note. It is not so swift in its movements as most of

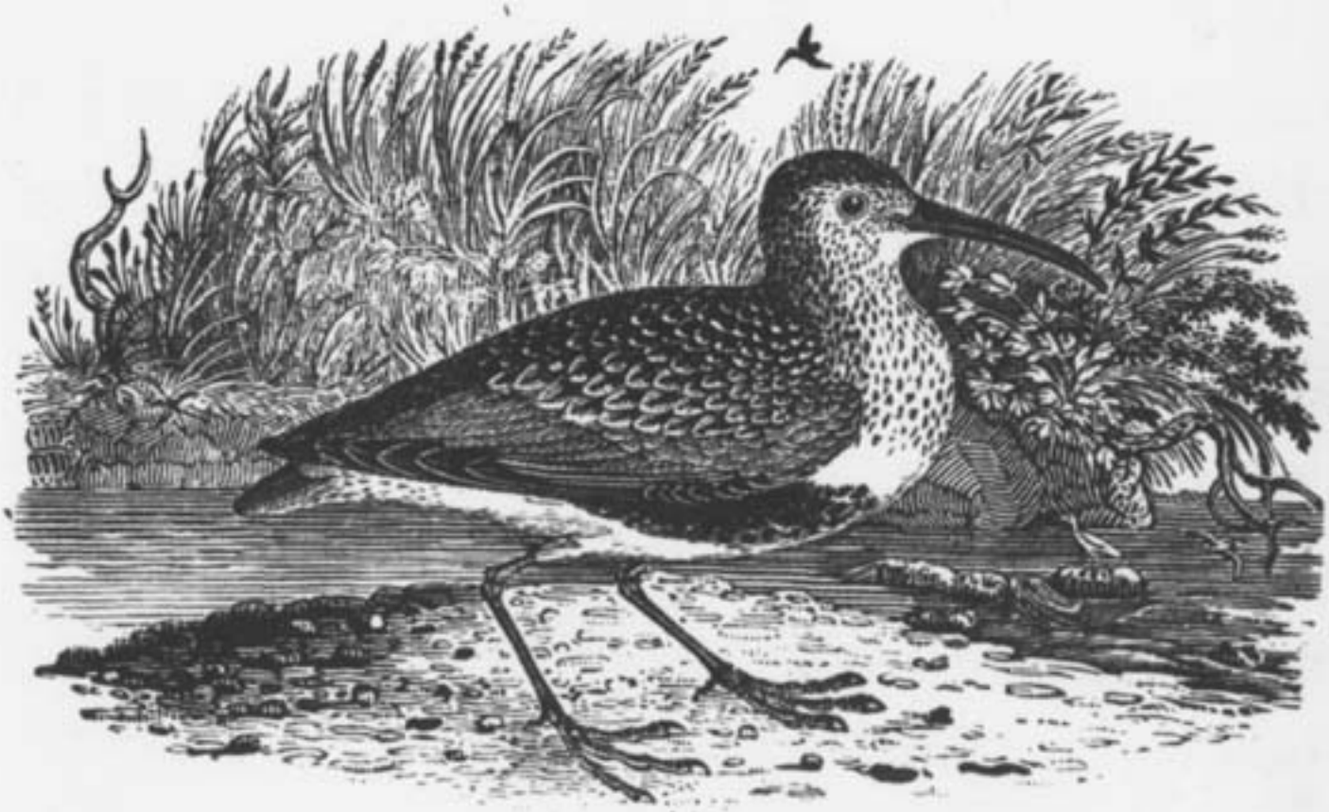


TURNSTONE.

the sandpipers, but is more patient and industrious. Like the woodpecker, the Turnstone will search over the same place until every particle of food is obtained. Its bill is well-fitted for this purpose, and the bird is often seen turning over stones and pebbles, in quest of worms and insects. The young Turnstones feed upon shrimps and different kinds of small shell-fish. The Turnstone is about ten inches in length. The upper plumage is of a chestnut brown color, spotted with black. The under portions are white. The bill is black, and the legs, orange, so that the Turnstone has a beautiful appearance.

THE DUNLIN, OR OX-BIRD.

The Dunlin belongs to the numerous tribe of Sandpipers. In the Middle States the Dunlins arrive on their way to the north, in April and May; and in September and October, they are again seen pursuing their route to the south. At these times they often mingle with the flocks of other strand birds, from which they are easily distinguished by the red color of their upper plumage. They frequent the muddy flats and shores of the salt marshes, feeding on the worms and insects such places generally afford. They are also very nimble on the strand, run-

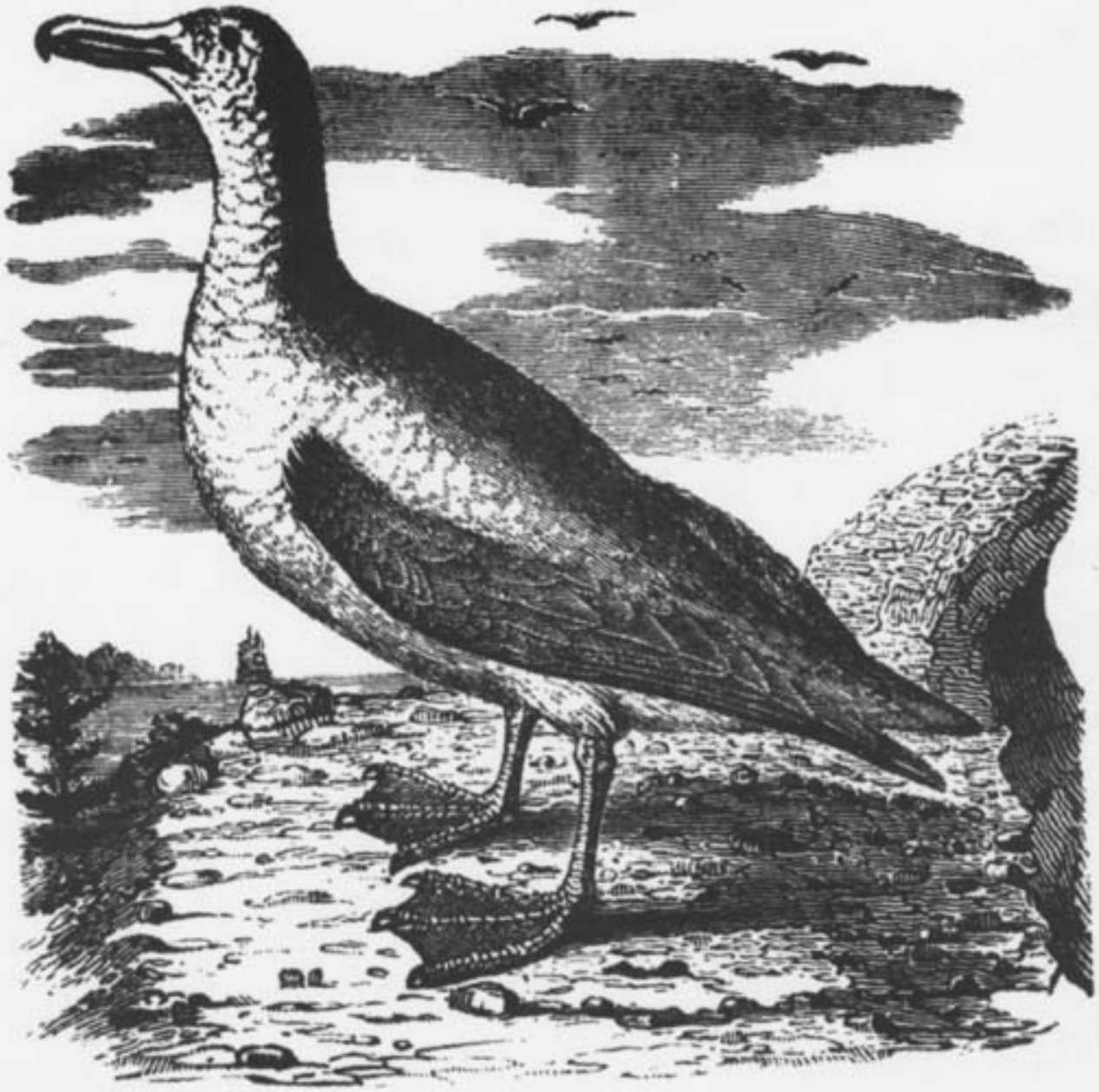


DUNLIN, OR OX-BIRD.

ning and picking up their prey, with great activity. These birds collect together in such flocks as to seem, at a distance, like a moving cloud, varying in form every instant. At such times, the keen gunner makes prodigious slaughter. When great numbers of the birds fall, the flock descends with them, and so the sportsman has a fine chance for their destruction. The length of the Dunlin is about eight inches. In the summer, the plumage has a beautiful mixture of black, red, and white colors. In winter, these change to brown, ash, and white.

THE ALBATROSS.

The Albatross is a very large marine bird, being from three to four feet long. It is believed that it passes from one end of the globe to the other in search of food. They feed chiefly upon flying-fish; and when these fail, they eat shell-fish. These birds are very abundant at the Cape of Good Hope. Their arrival is considered by the natives of Kamtschatka as the sure sign of the approach of shoals of fish, which they follow from the remotest seas. Their gluttony is almost unequalled. It is not uncommon to see one swallow a salmon of four or five pounds weight; but



ALBATROSS.

as the gullet cannot contain the whole at once, part of the tail will often remain out of the mouth. They become so stupified by their enormous meals, as to allow the natives to knock them on the head, without offering to resist. They are often taken by means of a hook baited with a fish, but not for the sake of their flesh, which is hard and unsavory, but on account of the intestines, which the Kamtschatdales use as a bladder to float the buoys of their fishing-nets. Sometimes, the Albatross will defend itself with its stout bill, at the same time uttering a harsh cry. But it is a cowardly bird, and flies from the smaller gulls.

THE CORMORANT.

This large, uncouth and gluttonous bird is abundant in the warm and temperate regions of the globe, though seldom found far inland. It is a skilful and voracious fisher, committing great havoc when it visits pools and lakes. Swimming beneath the water with great swiftness, and remaining a long time submerged, its prey scarcely ever escapes. On rising with a fish in its bill, the Cormorant employs the expedient of tossing it in the air, catching the head in its descent, so that the fins lie flat, and thus favor the passage down the throat. The

CORMORANT.

small pouch at the same time stretches so as to admit the whole body of the fish, which is often very large in comparison with the size of the neck of the bird. In some countries, the skill of the Cormorant in fishing is turned to profit. On the rivers of China, Cormorants, having rings buckled around their throats to prevent them from swallowing, are perched on the prows of boats; and at a signal, they plunge into the water, and soon rise with a fish, which the master takes. After he is satisfied, the bird is allowed to fish for itself. When glutted with its meal, the Cormorant becomes indolent, and dozes away the greater part of the time, perched in solitude, in places where it cannot easily be approached.

THE GANNET.

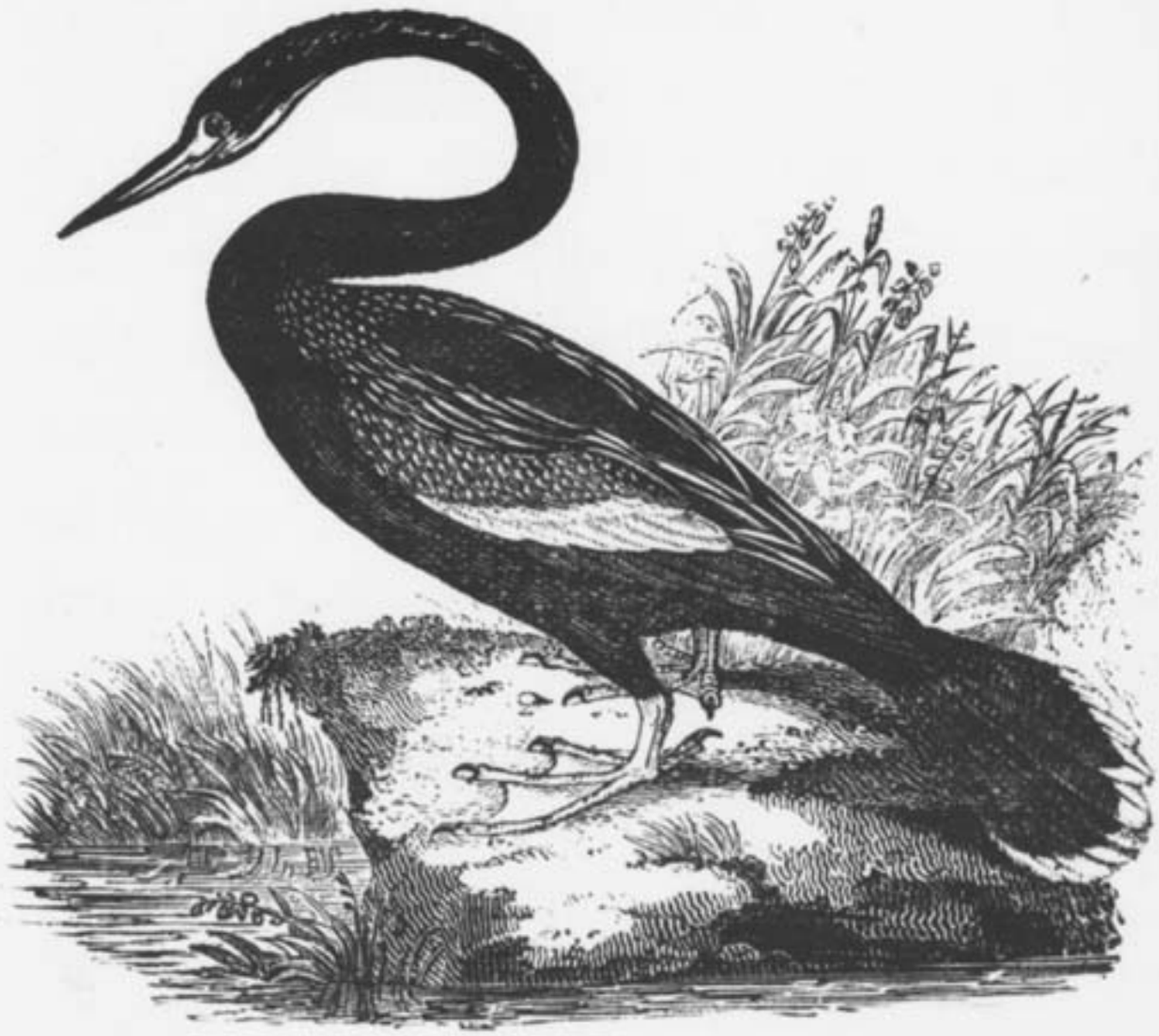
GANNETS are large sea-birds, which are very abundant along the rocky coasts of northern Europe, and on the bleak islands adjacent. Bass Island, not more than a mile in circumference, has, in the months of May and June, its surface almost covered with nests, eggs, and young birds, so that it is scarcely possible to walk without treading on them; and the flocks of birds are so immense, when in flight, as to darken the air like clouds; and the noise is like heavy thunder. Looking down towards the sea, from the top of the precipice, you see it on all sides co-

GANNET.

vered with multitudes of birds, swimming and chasing their prey; and if, in sailing round the island, you observe the hanging cliffs, you may see crowds of birds on every crag, and in every fissure. Other islands seem like the hives of bees, so numerous are the flocks. The young Gannets are favorite food of the North Britons. The Gannet is about three feet long. The whole plumage is white, except on the crown of the head, which is yellow.

THE BLACK-BELLIED DARTER.

The Black-bellied Darter is sometimes called the Snake Bird. It is found in the warm parts of America, on the banks of retired and shady streams. No bird can display a more sinister front than this Darter. Its small head, and long, dark and curved neck, present entirely the appearance of a snake, whether seen through the foliage of a tree, or rising from the sluggish stream in which it often swims, with the body wholly in the water; and on being startled even the neck is drawn down, and the bird sweeps away beneath the flood in perfect silence. The

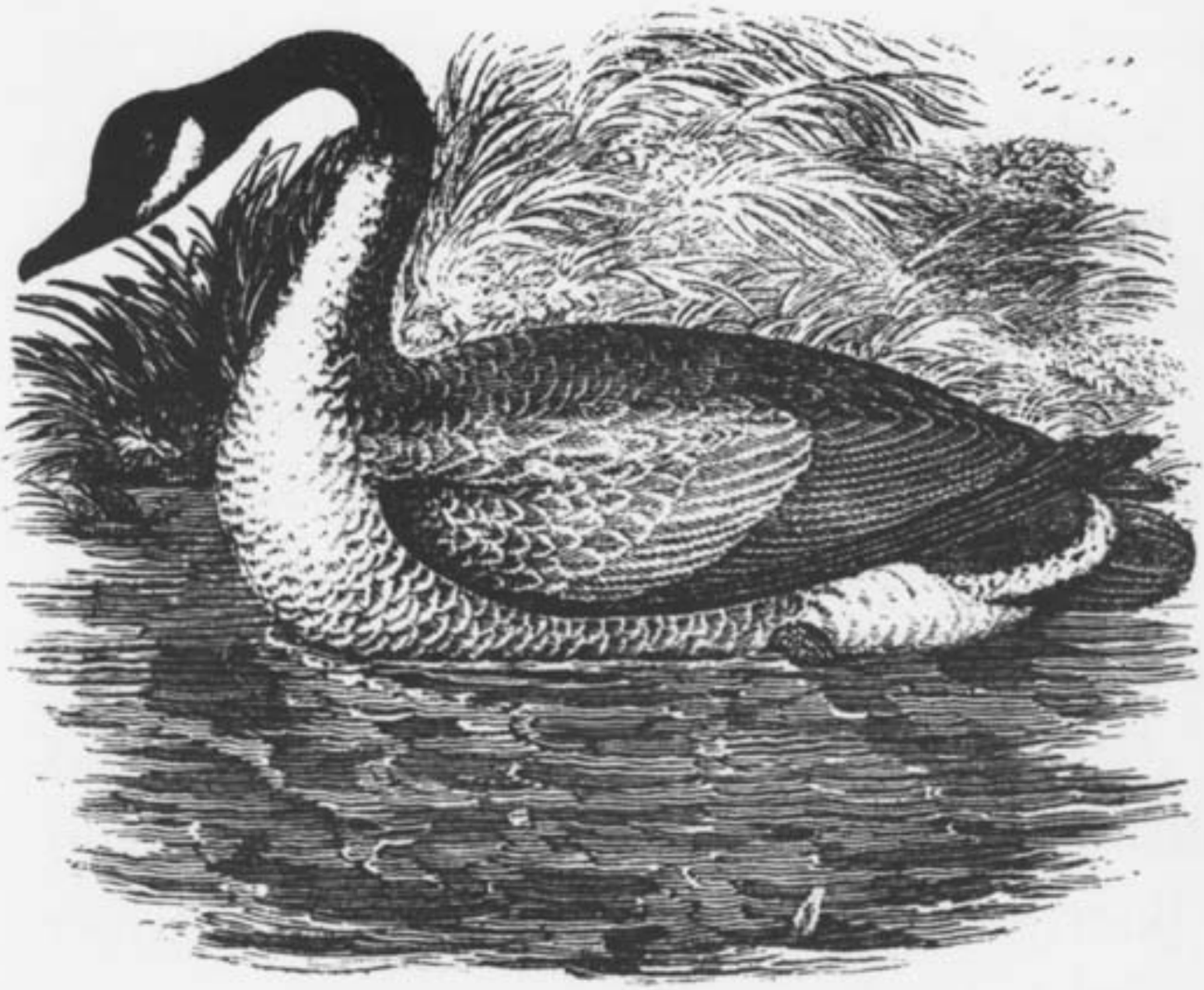


BLACK-BELLIED DARTER.

Darter grows to the length of two feet ten inches. The head, neck, and whole body above and below are of a deep, shining black, with a greenish reflection. The Darter usually builds in low trees stretching over the water, and sometimes selects shady islands. When approached, they glide into the stream as noiselessly as an eel. They watch for fish and dart upon them with unerring aim. The smaller ones they swallow at a gulp—the others they break to pieces.

THE WILD GOOSE.

The common wild Goose of America is well known in every part of the United States as a bird of passage. It is sometimes called the Canada Goose, because it breeds in Canada and the regions north of that country. The wild goose sometimes grows to the length of three feet and a half. The upper plumage is black and brown—the under portions, gray and white. In autumn, the geese, knowing by instinct that winter is approaching, and fearful of starvation, assemble on the sea-coast of British America and prepare to fly southward. Like the rest of their

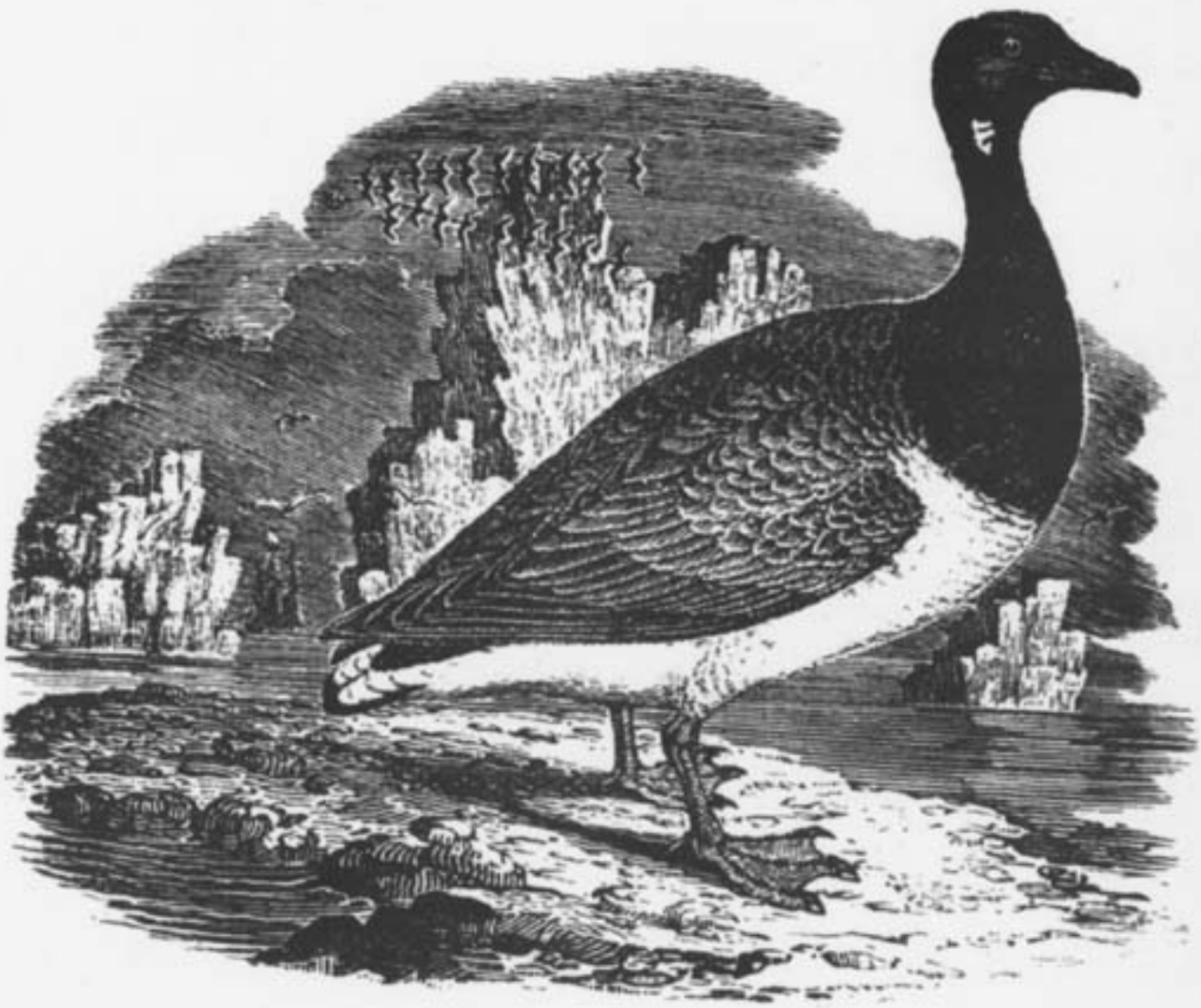


WILD GOOSE.

gabbling tribe, at the call of their leader, they ascend with loud cries, and fly in the form of the letter ⊳. Early in October, they arrive on the coast of the Eastern and Middle States. The inhabitants of the shores of Hudson's Bay depend upon the geese for a supply of winter provisions, and they kill a great number. These are obtained chiefly by ambuscade and decoy; bough huts being made by the Indians in lines over the marshes they frequent to feed. By mimicking their call, the geese are brought within the gunner's range. The deception is often carried out still further by setting dead birds on sticks. Thus in a single day, a native will kill two hundred geese.

THE BRENT GOOSE.

The Brent is one of the hardy water-birds found in the northern countries of the world, and at certain seasons, seen in the warmer climates. It is sometimes found two feet in length. The upper plumage is generally black, and the lower, white, and partially mottled. In winter, flocks of these geese may be seen on the coasts of the Atlantic states. The Brent usually feeds on the bars, at low water, and now and then, also, in the marshes. Their common food consists of tender sea-plants and small shell-fish. In the spring, the old birds are lean and badly flavored,



THE BRENT GOOSE.

but in the winter their flesh is esteemed a great delicacy. They never dive, but wade about in quest of their food, at the recess of the tide. At the time of high water, they swim out at their ease, ranged in long lines, particularly during calm weather. The voice of the Brent is hoarse, and clanking, and when they gabble in company, about equals the yell of a pack of hounds. When pursued, the Brent hisses like the common goose.

THE MALLARD.

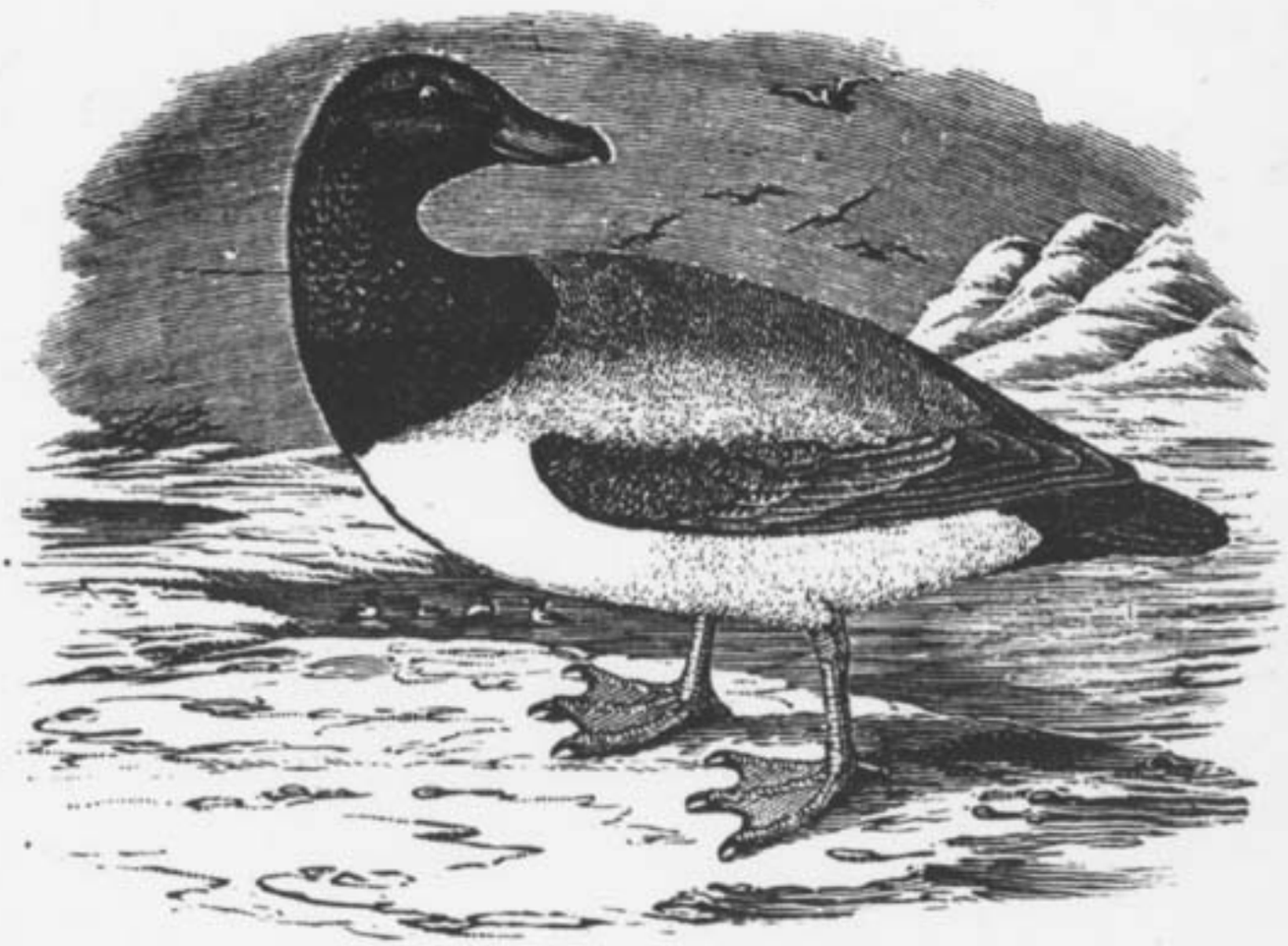
The Mallard, or common wild Duck is a bird of passage well known in every part of the United States, where it is seen in the spring and autumn. The Mallards rest generally on the borders of rivers and lakes, sometimes at a considerable distance from water, among the reeds or grass, and often upon trees. For their nests, they scrape together a small quantity of such dry weeds as happen to be contiguous. The female plucks the down from her breast to line the nest, when the eggs are ready for hatching. The ducklings soon learn to swim and dive with the

MALLARD.

greatest skill, and contrive to pick up their own food. The wild ducks feed and migrate usually in the night. About dusk, the rustling wings often mark their progress. Their flight is generally in the form of a wedge, and being very cautious, they never alight until they have wheeled several times around a spot. During the day, they roam at large on the lakes or rivers, far from the shores, resting or sleeping till twilight. In a domestic state, though their habits are much changed, they are very watchful and noisy in the evening and at dawn.

THE CANVASS-BACKED DUCK.

No game is more highly valued by sportsmen than the Canvass-Backed Duck. Its flesh is esteemed a great delicacy, and they frequently sell for two dollars a pair. About the middle of October, vast flocks of them visit Delaware and Chesapeake Bays, and the numerous streams that run into those bodies of water. Their principal food is a kind of sea-wrack, known as eel-grass, and the insects and shell-fish to be found along the shores. On their arrival the Canvass-Backs are lean, but by the beginning of November, they are in good order for the table. They are ex-

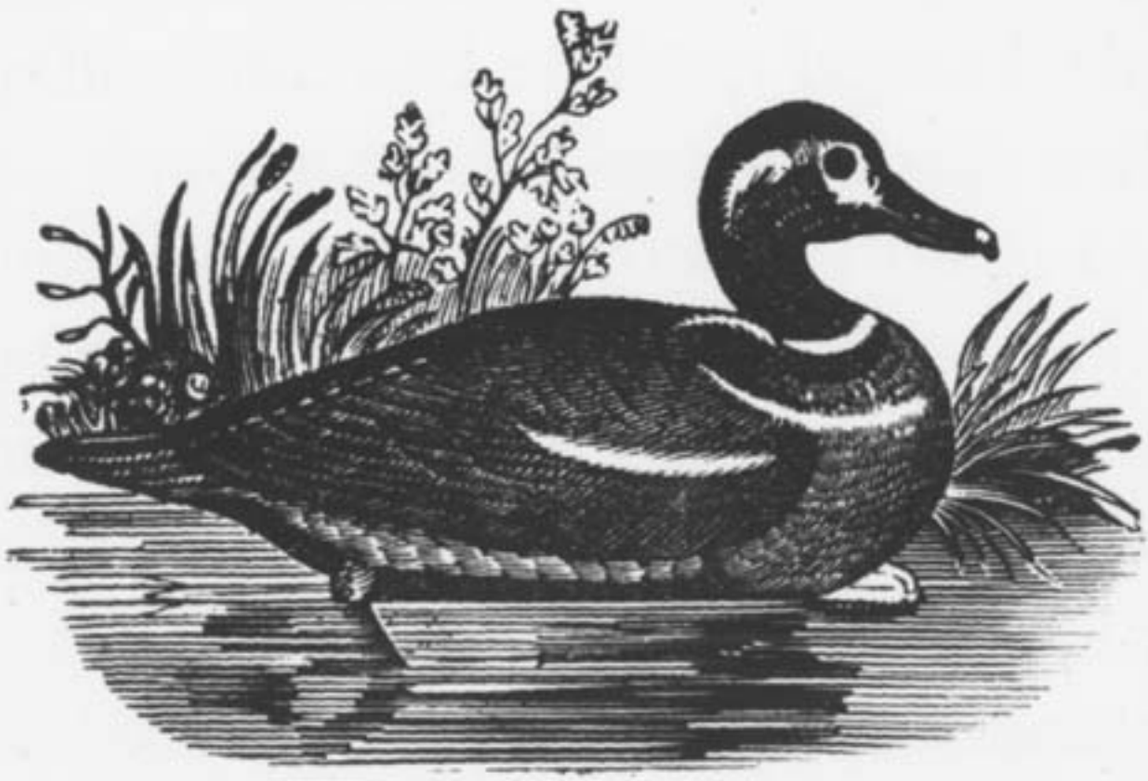


CANVASS-BACKED DUCK.

cellent divers and swim with speed and ease. They sometimes collect in flocks of thousands, and rising suddenly on the wing, cause a noise like thunder. When wounded in the wing, they dive to a great distance and pursuit is almost hopeless. The gunners practise various plans to obtain these ducks. Sometimes, by moonlight, the sportsman directs his skiff towards a flock, and keeping within the shadow of a wood or headland, gets within reach of many thousands among whom he makes great havoc. In winter, when their food is scarce, they are decoyed by holes made in the ice, near which the sportsman stations himself. This duck derives its name, from the greyish-white color of the middle of its back, resembling canvass.

THE HARLEQUIN DUCK.

This beautiful Duck is almost a constant resident in the far north. It is considered a game superior in flavor to the common wild duck. The general color of the male is bluish-plumbous, which is varied by cresent-shaped lines and marks of other colors, giving the bird a very attractive appearance. The flight is high and swift; and it swims and dives with much skill and ease. On the report of a gun reaching it, this duck dives at once and remains a considerable time beneath the surface of the water. It is said to have a voice like a whistle, and to be very



HARLEQUIN DUCK.

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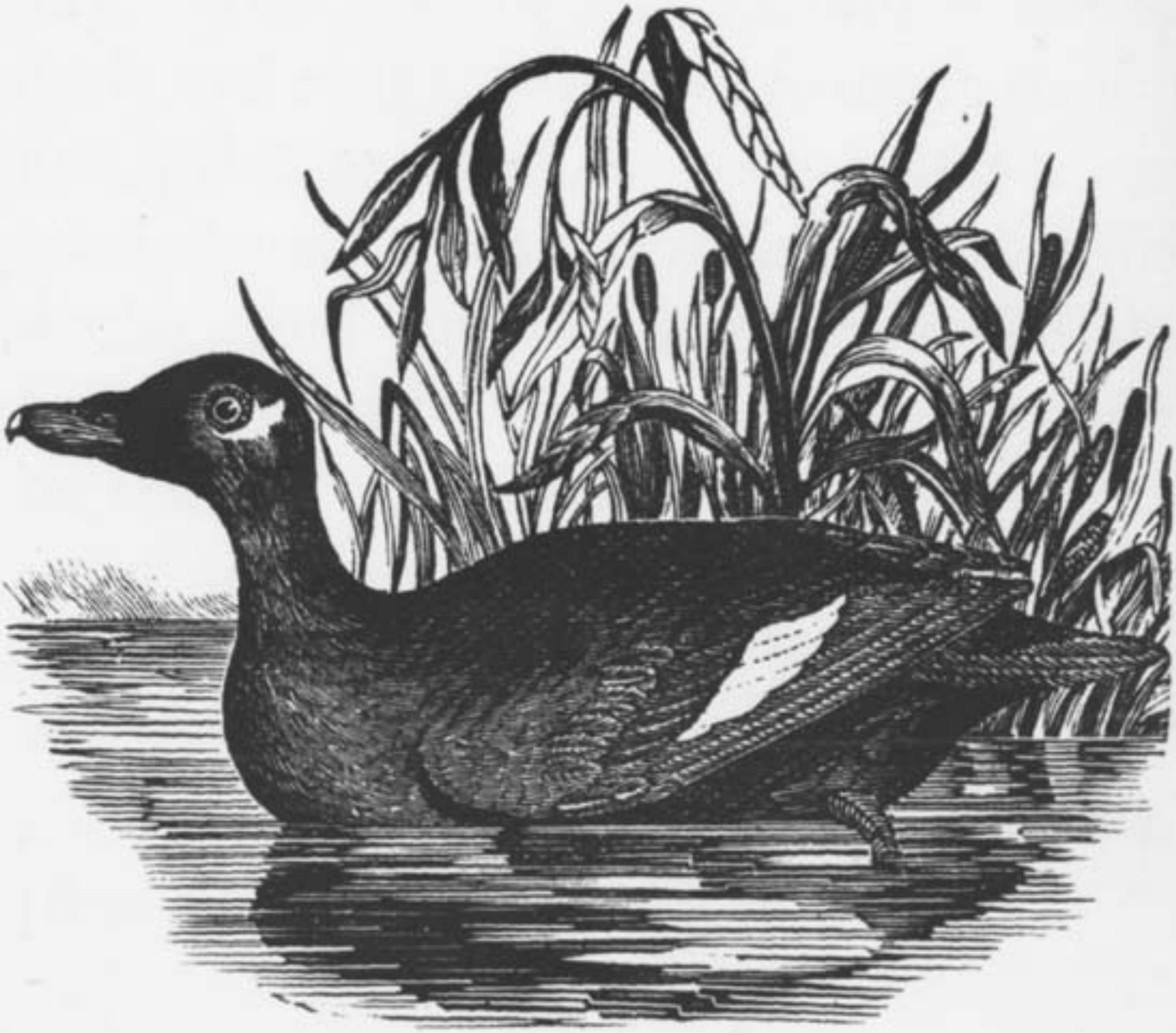
THE VELVET DUCK.

The Velvet Duck is so called on account of the glossy and velvety appearance of its black plumage. It is over two feet in length. They breed along the cold Arctic coasts and around Hudson's Bay, nesting adjacent to small fresh-water pools, in the shelter of pine or juniper bushes, and laying from eight to ten white eggs. The young are guarded by the mother until they are ready to fly. These ducks are abundant in the northern regions of the world, and at a certain season, visit the temperate countries. The Chesapeake Bay is a favorite resort of

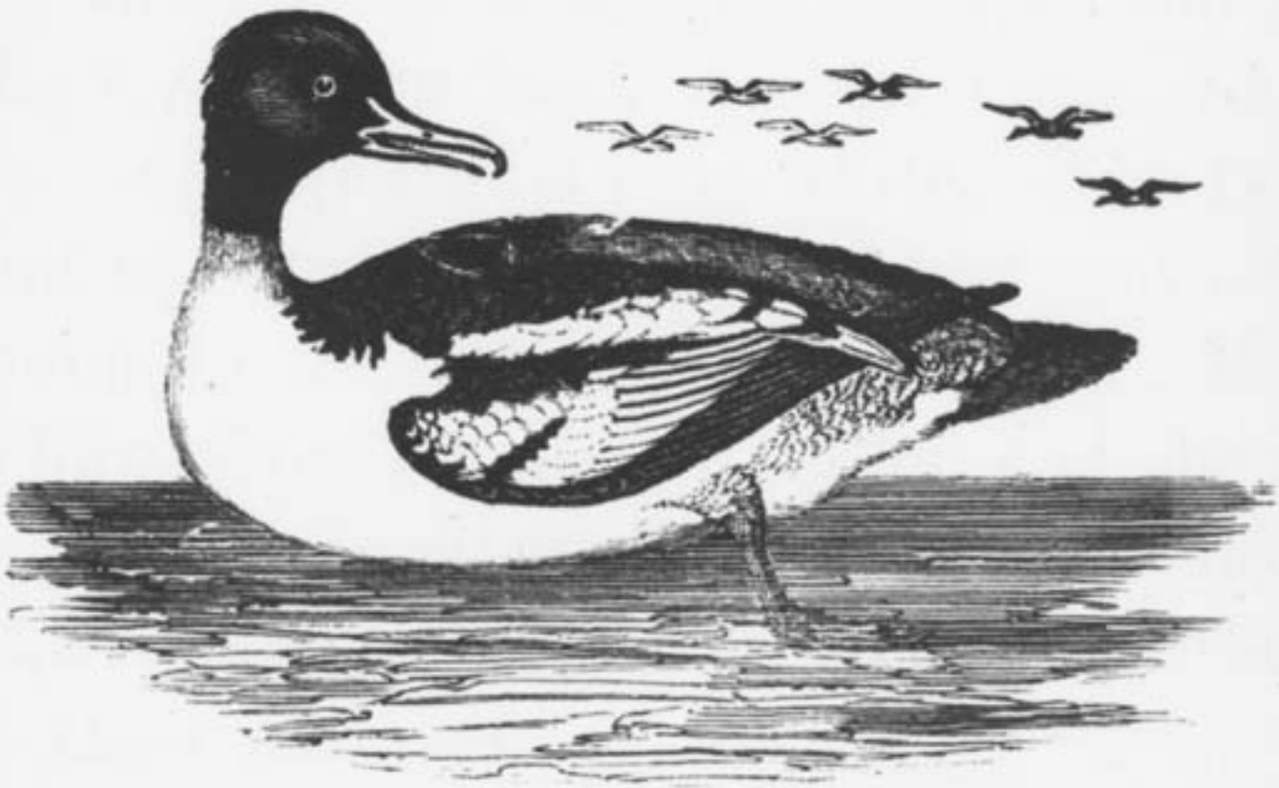


VELVET DUCK

these, as for all other wild ducks. They feed and fly by night, and rest during the day. The flesh of the old bird is strong, dark, and sedgy, yet they are much sought, and when exposed for sale, bring a very good price. They associate with other ducks, and are frequently confounded with the coot. In the spring, they may be seen, in vast flocks, proceeding northward, to the regions where they breed. At this time, they fly low, making a straight course just outside of the land, and are perfectly silent and intent on their voyage.

THE GOOSANDER.

The Goosander is frequently seen upon the coasts of the United States in the depth of winter. In its remote resorts in the north, it fears the cold much less than the ice, as in that condition, its supply of food is cut off. They are very gluttonous, and, like the Albatross, sometimes swallow a fish too large to enter whole into the stomach. The Goosander is said to lay twelve to fourteen whitish eggs, almost equally pointed at both ends; and to nest among the bushes or grass. They generally breed in the northern regions, but have been found as far south

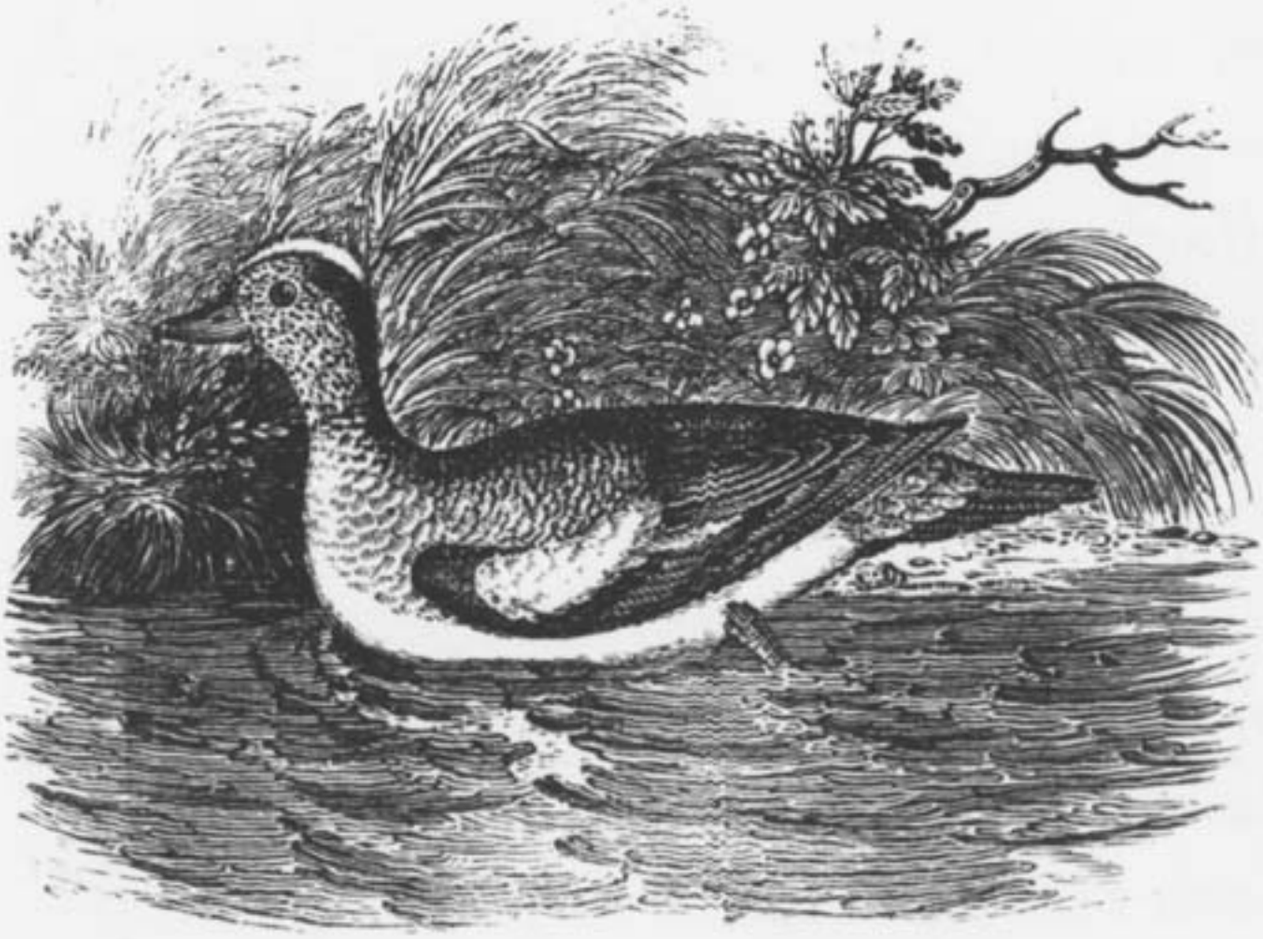


GOOSANDER.

as Pennsylvania in summer. The Goosander sometimes has a length of thirty-one inches. The female is smaller than the male. The head and upper part of the neck are of a greenish-black color—the top of the back a deep black, and the under portions pure white. The bill and legs are of a bright red hue, and add much to the beauty of the bird. The colors of the female are duller, and she is not near as attractive in appearance. The young scarcely differ from the mother in their plumage.

THE AMERICAN WIDGEON.

The Widgeon, or Bald-pate Duck, is a frequent attendant on the canvass-back, and often profits by this company. Not being accustomed to diving, the widgeon watches the motions of its laborious neighbor, and as soon as the canvass-back rises with a root, on which they both feed greedily, the Bald-pate snatches the morsel and makes off with it. They are always very quick and lively, feeding and swimming out into the ponds and rivers at all hours of the day; but are extremely watchful, sheltering in caves and behind banks; and on the slightest attempt

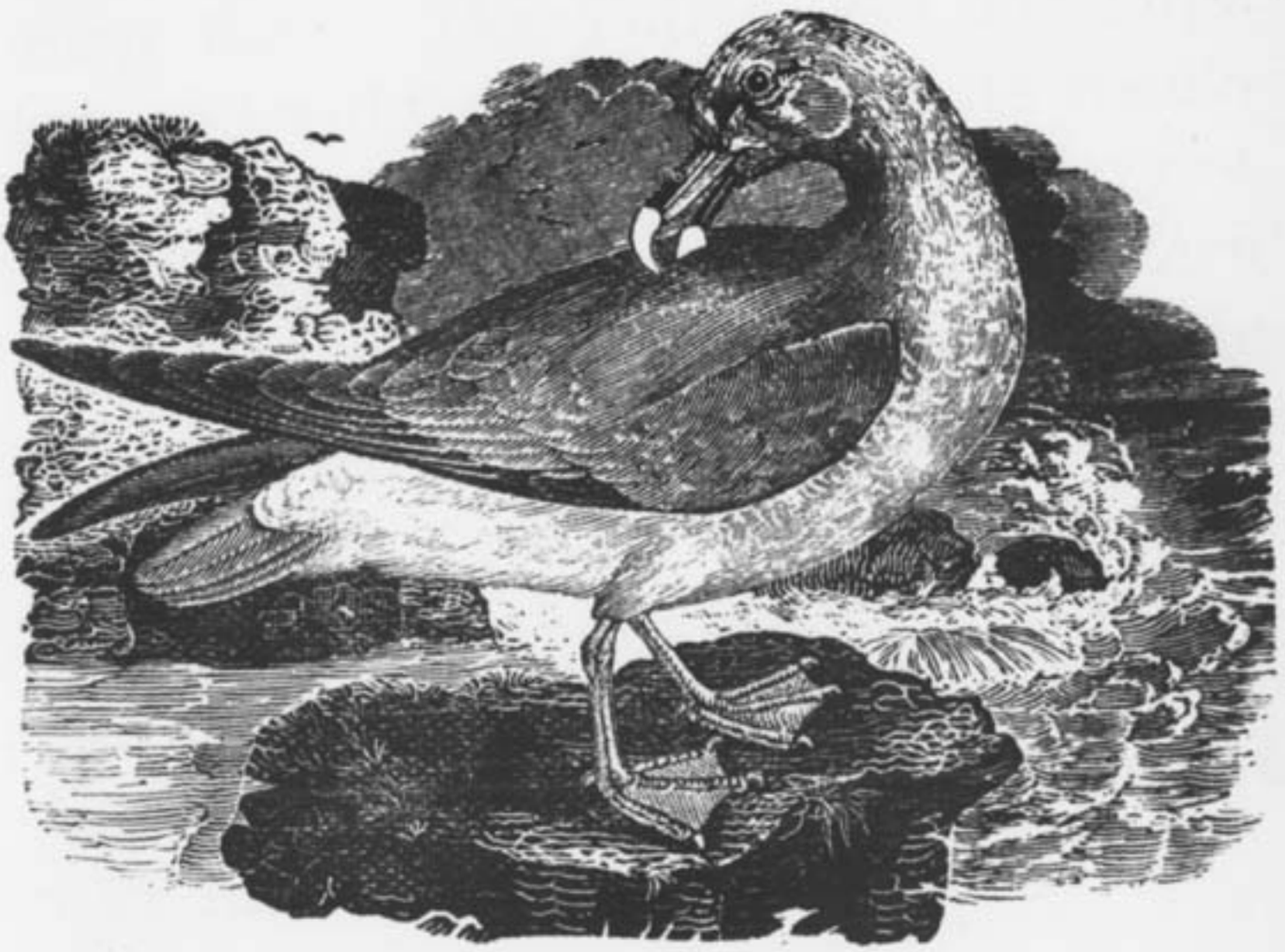


AMERICAN WIDGEON.

to steal upon them, start out into the stream, beyond gun-shot. They only take to the wing when much disturbed. In Carolina and the West Indies, they frequent the rice-fields in flocks, and in Martinico are said to do considerable damage to their crops. When feeding in company, they have a sentinel on the watch. At times they keep in covert until twilight, and are then traced by their low, guttural whistle, which is often imitated to lure them within gun-shot. In the Middle States, these birds are frequently brought to market, and are much esteemed as food.

THE FULMAR PETREL.

The Petrels are large birds, living mostly far out at sea, or on barren islands, among rocks and icebergs, in the coldest regions of the Arctic and Antarctic circles. They venture further on the ocean than any other birds, and seem aroused to greater activity on the approach of the tempest. They fly, rest, and walk upon the waves. Steadily driven by the blast, their wide-spread wings seem scarcely to require any exertion. Their food is fish, shell-fish, and sea-wrack. The Petrels associate in great flocks to breed in the clefts of rocks, or in holes burrowed in the

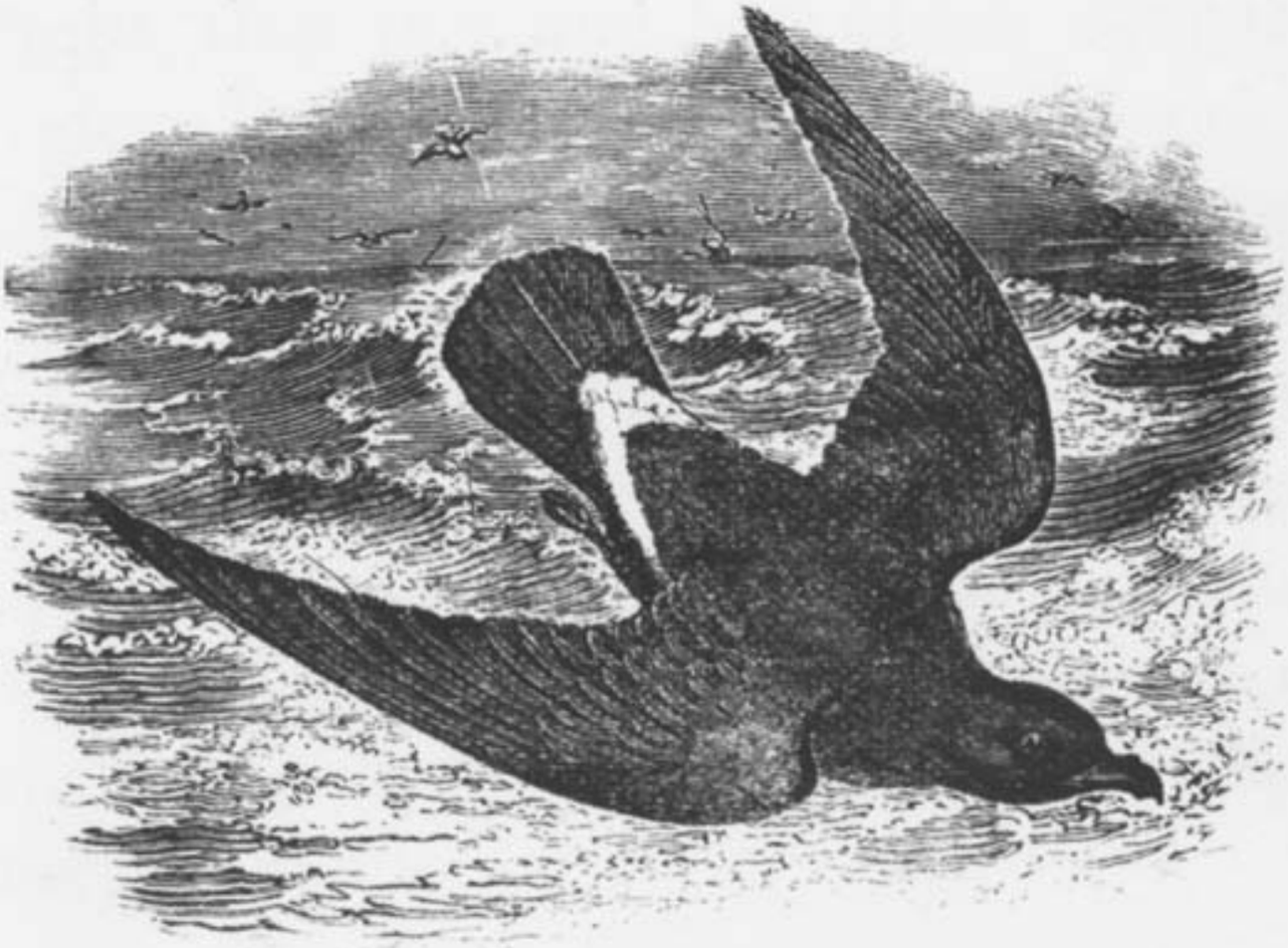


THE FULMAR PETREL.

earth, where they hide themselves while hatching, and never come to land at any other time. The Petrel lays one large egg, and will fight in defence of its young. The Fulmar Petrel is one of the largest of these birds, being sometimes seventeen inches in length. The upper plumage is of a bluish-ash color, the lower is pure white. The feathers are close and full, and have a fine down beneath. The Fulmar is sometimes seen on the coast of the United States, but these occasions are very rare.

THE STORMY PETREL.

The sailors have a strong dislike of the Stormy Petrel, looking upon it as the unfailing herald of a tempest. They call them Devil's Birds and Mother Carey's Chickens. In nearly all seasons of the year, these birds are seen wandering in small flocks, over the dreary waste of the ocean. On the edge of soundings, as the vessel loses sight of the land, flocks of these dark messengers begin to shoot round her and finally take their station in her foaming wake, watching for food. On discovering a small morsel, they stop in their whirling and skimming flight; and



THE STORMY PETREL.

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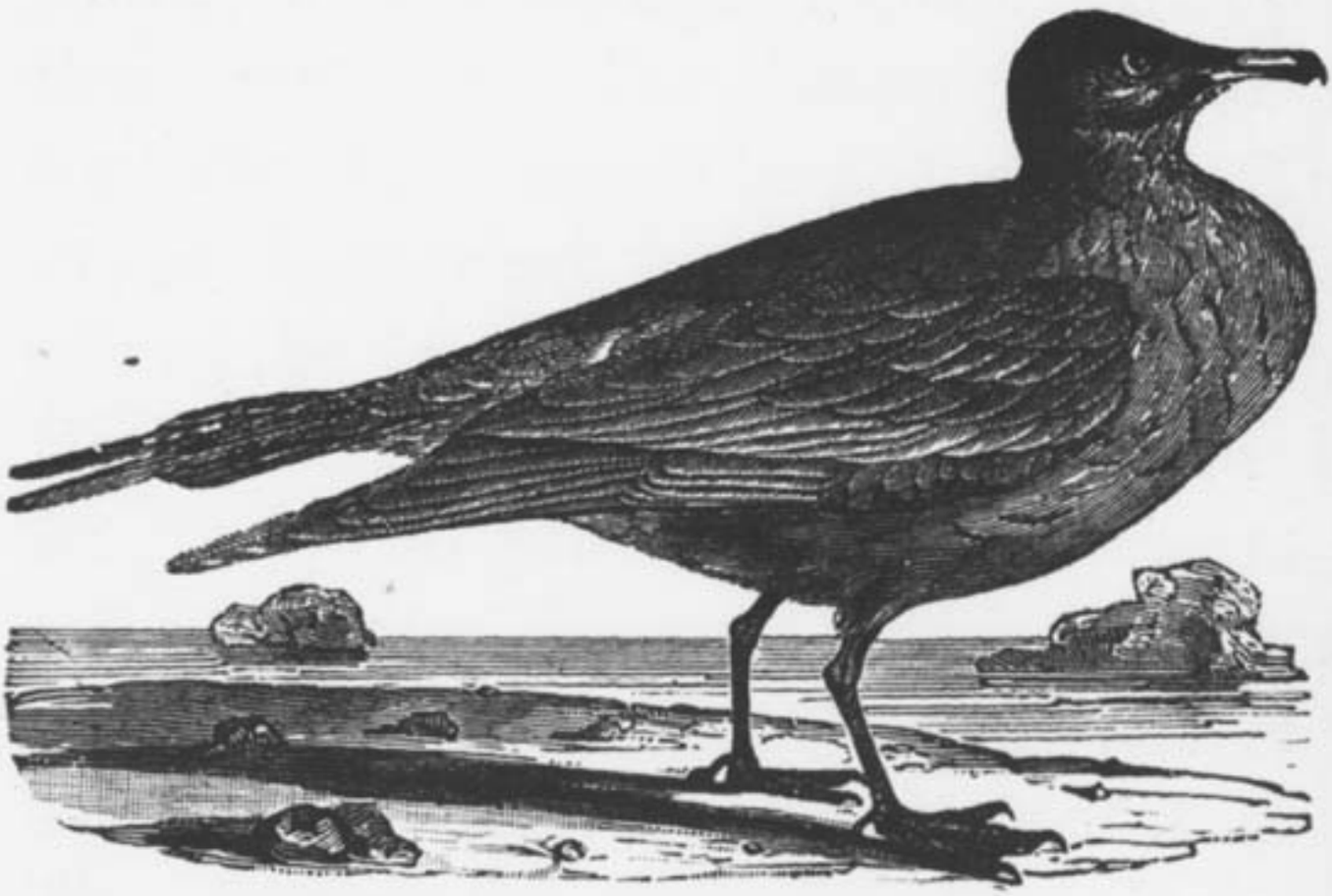
RICHARDSON'S JAGER.

The Jagers are bold and destructive birds. Except in the breeding season and during migration, they are almost constantly at sea. Their flight is high, easy, and majestic, describing circles round the object of which they are in quest. They are usually seen in pairs. They are very voracious, seizing their prey from other birds, particularly the Ferns and Gulls, and sometimes forcing the gigantic Albatross to yield its tribute. They attack their providers while on the wing, force them to disgorge their prey, and then seize it before it can reach the water. The



RICHARDSON'S JAGER.

Jagers breed in the cold regions, nesting on rocks, or on the sand of the shore. They will fight bravely in defence of their young, no odds being sufficient to dampen their courage. The Cataract Jager is considered as formidable as the eagle. The Jager discovered by Dr. Richardson is one of the largest and most active of the family. It is about twenty-two inches in length. The plumage is of a brownish color. These Jagers breed in great numbers at the Barren Grounds, and may sometimes be seen in the vicinity of Boston. They harass the Gulls in the same way as others of the tribe.

THE GREAT AUK.

The Great Auk is sometimes called the Northern Penguin. It choses the coldest regions of the globe for its residence, and is commonly found upon the floating masses of the frozen ocean, far from land. The length of this singular bird is about three feet. The upper plumage is black, and all the lower parts pure white. On each side of the bill, in front of the eyes, there is a large white spot. The Auk feeds on fish, and also on some marine plants. The older Auks are very shy, and but rarely venture to the shore, on which they walk badly.

GREAT AUK.

GOLDEN EAGLE.

WOOD'S NATURAL HISTORY