

ART. XII.—PIED, OR LABRADOR, DUCK.—BY ANDREW DOWNS,
M. Z. S.

(*Read May 10, 1886.*)

DALHOUSIE College Museum contains a very rare pair of birds, which have now become extinct, the Pied, or Labrador, Duck. They were presented by the Rev. Dr. MacCulloch, of Truro, with his late brother's collection. Attached to them was this label—Family, Anatina; Brisson, Genus; Fulizula; Fulizula Labradora. Lath. Pied Duck. Male and Female. Very rare.

Audubon's description of this bird is given in Vol. 7, page 40, as follows: "Although no birds of this species occurred to me when I was in Labrador, my son, John Woodhouse, and the young friends who accompanied him on the 28th of July, 1833, to Blanc Sablon, found, placed on the top of the low tangled fir bushes, several deserted nests, which, from the report of the English clerk of the fishing establishment there, we learned to belong to the Pied Duck. They had much the appearance of those of the Eider Duck, being very large, formed externally of fir twigs, internally of dried grass, and lined with down. It would thus seem that the Pied Duck breeds earlier than most of its tribe. It is surprising that this species is not mentioned by Dr. Richardson in the *Fauna Boreali Americana*, as it is a very hardy bird, and is met with along the coasts of Nova Scotia, Maine, and Massachusetts, during the most severe cold of winter. My friend Professor MacCulloch, of Pictou, has procured several in his immediate neighbourhood; and the Honorable Daniel Webster, of Boston, sent me a fine pair killed by himself, on the Vineyard Islands, on the coast of Massachusetts, from which I made the drawing for the plate before you. The female has not, I believe, been hitherto figured; yet the represented was not an old bird."

Wilson's description of this bird, written about 60 years ago,

says they were not uncommon then. Of their particular manners, place, or mode of breeding, nothing is known. Latham observes, that a pair in the possession of Sir Joseph Banks were brought from Labrador in 1840. William Winton, of Halifax, and Capt. Waderburn, of the 42nd, Highland Regt., (stationed at Halifax,) each obtained a male in the market. Winton gave his specimen to me; I gave it to George A. Boardman, of St. Stephen, N. B., who had one already among his collection. Mr. Corre, of Boston, gave him \$200 for them. I saw a male at the Brown Museum at Liverpool, England; it belonged to the late Earl of Derby's collection. This bird now, like the Dodo and Great Auk, has become extinct. I think the Dalhousie Museum very fortunate in possessing a male and female of this rare duck. I do not know of another female in existence. I hope the MacCulloch collection will be a foundation for a museum in the new college. I have been a close observer of the birds of this province for 63 years, and I have never seen this bird, other than in the specimen given me by Winton, in the flesh. Professor Baird, and other American naturalists, are now trying to obtain all the information they can about this bird.