

Gen. Euph. Black long straight pyramidal; and cutting towards the point. Wings long, broad, rounded by anterior; covered with being situated towards. Wings long, broad, rounded by posterior; rounded with a long tip. The foot; in being; not; the front pair united at their base. Vols. twelve; feathers; graduated short; white with elastic. Wings, hind and fourth with black-tipped longest.

GRAND BLACK WOODPECKER.

Picus melanurus, Linn.

Le. Pic. nigr.

The Woodpeckers form a family more numerous perhaps than any other in the whole range of Ornithology; and it is except Australia and the South Sea Islands, are equally extended over the old and new portions of the globe. Abundant, however, as the species may be, they are so united by a pertaining similarity of habits, such manners, and even coloration, as to constitute a group pre-eminently natural and well defined;—hence the description of one species is to a great extent applicable to all; still, however, as in the case of all natural families, differences sufficiently obvious to exist to warrant a subdivision into groups more or less typical.

Among the more typical Woodpeckers, may be placed the *Picus melanurus*, at once exhibiting the generic characters in their highest degree of development, it extends in size all its range of the Old World, and indeed is known only to the truest of the United States of America.

Its habit is peculiar in that it has been when seen, has been observed than any other, and covered with extensive scars, which it is now so common to be met with, it is not so scarce to come under the denomination of a typical species. According to M. Temminck it is rare even in France and Germany, and found the most in the more northern regions of Europe, as Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Russia, and also Siberia, in which it is the present day its habits are almost entirely changed.

At the head of a family of four (including the habits of the Great Black Woodpecker are in conformity with its name and its mode of supplying them. It is said hardly any that it is on the back of trees more exclusively than the Woodpecker, which its food and to this end the power and means adapted. It we examine the toes of the present species, which are to be taken as illustrative of form as the whole of the family, (with the exception of a single British group) we find them long and powerful, furnished with strong claws, obviously adapted for clinging to the rough inequalities of the bark; besides this, they are placed in pairs, so as in some measure to correspond but not as generally stated, two before and two behind, for one pair is lateral and directed from the other as an acute angle, some correspond to the symmetry of the tree, and thus render the grasp close and firm. The tail is composed of stiff feathers, the shafts of which taper gradually from the base to the extremities, which causing them to project against a tree, not only form a fulcrum for the support of the body, but by their elasticity tend to project it forward. This provides the more needed from the posterior position of the legs, is advantageously calculated for ascending; and having explored the bark by a spiral course, the Woodpecker then all to the next tree, to repeat the same process.

The flight of the present species is undulating, seldom prolonged to any extent, but limited to a transit from tree to tree in the selection of its native woods.

Its food consists of the larvae of wasps, bees, and other insects; in addition, however, it devours fruits, berries, and nuts with avidity.

The female selects the hollow of old trees, in which she deposits two or three eggs of no great whiteness. The two sexes differ but little in plumage;—the crimson crown distinguishing the male, that color being in the female confined to the occiput; the rest of the plumage is a deep jet-black; the irides reddish-brown; the beak chiefly round the eye and the feet black; the bill horn-colored, black at the tip.

The young males are characterized by the irides being of a light ash color; the crown of the head is marked with alternate spots of red and black, which give place gradually to the bright uniform crimson of maturity.

The length of an adult bird is about eleven inches; and our Plate represents a male and female of their natural size.