

SARDINIAN STARLING.

Sturnus unicolor, *Marm.*

L'Etourneau unicolore.

THE *Sturnus unicolor* does not possess that wide range of habitat which characterizes the preceding species, the *Sturnus vulgaris*. It is dispersed over the warmer parts of Spain, Sardinia, and the rocky shores of the Mediterranean generally. In these situations it may be observed in small numbers throughout the year, building in the recesses of the rocks, in the absence of which, old towers and ruins offer it an asylum equally suited as a place of repose, and a situation where it may raise its progeny: in fact, its general habits and manners bring it in close connexion with the *Sturnus vulgaris*; and if it is not seen congregated in almost countless flocks, it must be attributed to the limited number of the species, rather than to any difference in manners. We have not, with any degree of satisfaction, been able to trace the extent of the range which this species takes in Northern Africa: it would appear, however, to be somewhat limited, as we have never received or seen it in any collection from that continent, with the exception of Egypt and Abyssinia. On close examination, its plumage presents to the eye many rich and resplendent lights; and if not so gay as our pert and prying Starling, its general contour of body, clothed all over with long silky plumes, fully compensates for the deficiency.

The outward sexual differences are but trifling: the male may be always distinguished by the elongated feathers of the throat, which in fine adults are carried to an extreme, and which are displayed in the most beautiful manner when the throat is distended by their simple whistling strain.

The young birds bear so close a resemblance to the young of the common species, that a description will be unnecessary; if any difference exists, it is that the prevailing colour is darker.

The moult of the first autumn is characterized by the feathers being slightly tipped with white, which is totally lost in the following spring.

The adult male has the whole of the plumage of the body, wings and tail of a shining black, which is enlivened by reflections of purple and violet; beak blackish brown at the base, the point yellow; feet light brown.

The Plate represents a male and female in the adult livery and of the natural size.