

MEALY REDPOLE.

Linaria canescens, *Mihi*.

It is not without due reflection and the examination of a great number of specimens that we are induced to consider this bird as truly distinct from the Lesser Redpole; although, it must be confessed, that to a casual observer little would appear to distinguish it from that bird. Independently of a marked superiority in size, its conspicuous greyish white rump, the broad band across the wing, the lighter stripe over the eye, and the general paleness and mealy appearance of the plumage at once tend to bear us out in our opinion, the more so as these circumstances are not accidental, but occur regularly in all the individuals which we have had opportunities of examining. In our views on the subject we are borne out by the concurring opinions of many ornithologists of the present day who are deservedly eminent for the closeness and accuracy of their researches. The practical bird-catchers in the neighbourhood of London have no doubts on the subject, but have ever been in the habit of regarding the Mealy Redpole as truly distinct. They also assert that it differs from the Lesser Redpole in its habits, manners, and in the situations it frequents; and that during some winters it is so scarce as seldom to be taken, while at others it is so abundant that flocks of hundreds are frequently seen. About the year 1829 it was particularly abundant and was taken in great quantities, but since that period it has occurred in far less numbers, so much so that only one or two have been latterly taken by any one person during the season. Whether this species is truly a native of Europe, or whether those which occur in our island are arrivals from the northern portions of the American continent, is a matter of doubt; true it is, that the specimens brought home by Dr. Richardson, which furnished the descriptions given in the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, are strictly identical with the bird before us. A further knowledge of this bird, and especially of the changes which it undergoes, will at a future period determine whether the specific term of *canescens* must eventually stand or fall.

The Plate represents an adult, taken in the month of October, of the natural size.