

MOUNTAIN LINNET, OR TWITE.

Linaria montana, Ray.

Le Gros-bec à gorge rouse ou de Montagne.

THE Twite, although possessing a longer tail than the Linnet, has a more delicate contour of body, and is, we think, a more diminutive bird: in this respect, however, our opinion is not in accordance with that of Mr. Selby, who states, "It is rather larger than the Common Linnet, being bulkier in the body and having a longer tail." It differs from the Redpole in its larger size and in the total want of that rosy red colour which characterizes the crown of the head and breast of that species during summer. The changes to which the Twite is subjected, although quite apparent to the ornithologist, are nevertheless of a less striking character than in any other species of the genus *Linaria*. The specimen from which our figure was taken is in the plumage of the breeding-season; in autumn and winter they are lighter in colour, and more tawny on the face and throat. In its general economy and food the Twite is very similar to the Linnet, in whose company it migrates southward when the more northern countries become frozen. During these migrations every portion of our island is visited, and great numbers are captured by the bird-catchers while in pursuit of the more favourite Linnet and Goldfinch.

The Twite is abundantly dispersed over the northern portions of Europe, even within the regions of the arctic circle; the high and mountainous districts of these countries constitute its favourite residence and breeding-place, and are, indeed, its true habitat. It also passes the summer, but in smaller numbers, on the uplands of Scotland, the Western, Orkney, and Shetland Islands. "The nest," says Mr. Selby, "is placed amidst the tops of the tallest heath, and is composed of dry grass and heather, lined with wool, fibres of roots, and the finer parts of the heath; and the four or five eggs it contains are of a pale bluish green colour, spotted with pale orange brown. It leaves the mountains in autumn, assembling in flocks, which associate and travel with the Common Linnet, and are taken with them by the London bird-catchers, who can readily distinguish when there are any *Twites* in a flock by their peculiar note, expressive of that word."

In the colouring of their plumage, the only difference between the sexes consists in the female wanting the pink mark on the rump; but in size she is somewhat more diminutive than her mate.

Bill pale yellow; crown of the head and upper surface, with the exception of the rump, which is reddish pink, dark brown, each feather being edged with yellowish buff; throat, face, and stripe over the eye buff; flanks and under surface greyish brown, each feather having a darker centre; primaries and tail blackish brown, each feather having the external edge white; tarsi dark brown.

The Plate represents an adult male in summer, of the natural size.