

## MEADOW BUNTING.

*Emberiza cia*, Linn.

Le Bruant fou, ou de pré.

THIS species of Bunting, although common in the meadows bordering the Rhine, as well as in the southern parts of France, Italy, Spain, and adjoining the Mediterranean, does not appear to be distributed in the North as is the case with so many of its congeners, neither Holland nor England being among the places of its habitat.

The nearest-allied species among our native Buntings is the Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schæniculus*, Linn.), which it resembles, not only in its general habits and manners, but in the peculiar character of its markings, particularly about the head, and in the feebleness of the beak. The nearest extra-British species in alliance with it is the *Emberiza lesbia*: and it would appear that with both of these birds in certain stages of plumage it has been confounded; and not with these only, as will appear from the following translation of a note which we have taken the liberty of extracting from M. Temminck's *Manuel d'Ornithologie*. "Besides the double use which Buffon makes of this species in describing it under the name of Foolish Bunting, and Lorraine Bunting, he commits a second error in giving his description and *Ortulan de neige*, pl. 511. fig. 2, as the female of the *Ortolan de Lorraine*. The German authors are equally in error in enumerating under the synonym of *Le Bruant fou* the birds described and figured by Buffon under the names of *Garoué* and *Mitilène de Provence*; these form two distinct species. The French naturalists place the *Emberiza passerina* of Gmelin, *Syst. i.* p. 871. sp. 27., in the synonym of *Le Bruant fou*, while the description of Gmelin portrays very exactly an old female of *Le Bruant des roseaux*."

The *Emberiza cia* offers in its sober tints a harmony of colours which renders it far from being the least pleasing of its genus. The food of this bird, as its feeble bill indicates, consists of the small seeds of farinaceous plants, such as millet, canary, &c., as well as insects of various species; in fact, as above stated, its manners and actions are in close unison with our well-known Reed Bunting. It constructs a nest in bushes and tufts of herbage, and not unfrequently on the ground: the eggs are five in number, of a whitish colour marked with a few lines of black.

The whole of the head and breast is ash coloured; three stripes of black occupy the face on each side, one passing above the eye, one through the eye to the occiput, and one encircles the lower part of the face from the angle of the beak; a greyish white stripe passes above the eye, bordered by the two lines of black; the whole of the upper surface is of a rufous brown, each feather having a dusky mark down the centre; the feathers of the shoulders are edged with light grey; the primaries brown; the three outer tail-feathers white, the remainder brown edged with reddish; the whole of the under surface pale rufous.

The female is destitute of the beautiful grey which ornaments the head and chest of the male, as well as the jet black lines, which are only faintly indicated on the cheeks; the head and chest are pale greyish brown; the throat dotted with dusky spots; the rest of the plumage resembles the male, except that it is more obscure.

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