

YELLOW BUNTING.

Emberiza citrinella, *Linn.*

Le Bruant jaune.

WHILE perched on the topmost branch of the roadside hedge displaying its richly coloured tints, this well-known bird would, were it less common, excite great interest in the passing traveller, as well as in those who lead exclusively a country life, and who therefore have it under their observation during all seasons of the year.

The male is most attractive in the early months of spring, his energies at this period having by the natural impulse warned him of the approaching breeding-time. Now, being mated, he may be seen mounted on the most slender twig pouring forth his simple song, which, although neither melodious nor varied, nevertheless has a natural simplicity which cannot fail to please, and it is doubtless cheerfully listened to by his less gaily attired mate, who prefers the more secluded bush or more dense parts of the hedge-row.

The Yellow Bunting is rather a late breeder, seldom commencing until the herbage is sufficiently grown to afford it a complete shelter from observation. The shelving side of a bank or tuft of grass is generally selected for the situation of the nest, which is most neatly constructed of dried grasses and moss, lined with finer grasses and hair: the eggs are four or five in number, of a pale bluish white, marked with spots and lines of chocolate red.

In winter the Yellow Bunting associates in considerable flocks, often in company of other granivorous birds, and spreads over fields and arable lands; in severe weather resorting to farm-yards and similar situations. It is, we believe, indigenous in every part of Europe, to which quarter of the world it appears to be strictly confined, as we have never seen any examples of it in collections from any other locality.

The young during the first autumn resemble the female, which, as we have above stated, is much less brilliant in all her markings than the male.

The male has the crown of the head, throat, chest, and under surface rich gamboge yellow, the flanks and under tail-coverts streaked with reddish chestnut; the upper surface rich brown inclining to olive, the centre of each feather being darker; primaries blackish brown with lighter edges; rump brownish orange; tail brownish black, the outer edges of the feathers yellow, and the inner web of the outer feather on each side largely blotched with white; legs and feet yellowish brown.

The upper surface of the female resembles that of the male, but the tints are less brilliant; the under surface also is not so bright, and is destitute of the rich chestnut streaks which adorn the male, these markings being brown.

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