

## Genus EMBERIZA.

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* conical, strong, hard, and sharp-pointed; tomia of both mandibles bending inwards, and compressed towards the point; the upper mandible narrower and smaller than the under one, and its roof furnished with a hard bony knob; base of the mandibles, or gape, forming an angle, and rather open. *Nostrils* basal and round, partly hidden by the small feathers at the base of the bill. *Feet* having three toes before and one behind; the anterior ones entirely divided. *Claws* rather long and curved. *Wings* with the first quills rather shorter than the second and third.

## COMMON BUNTING.

*Emberiza miliaria*, Linn.

Le Bruant Proyer.

THIS well-known species of Bunting may be considered a permanent resident in the British Islands, over the whole of which it is dispersed; it is also equally abundant on the Continent, where it ranges from the regions of the arctic circle to the most southern boundary of Europe: of this fact we have received satisfactory evidence, by the inspection of examples from Trebizond in Asia Minor, which country would, however, appear to be nearly its southern and eastern limit, as we have never observed any specimens in collections either from India or Africa.

It is the largest and one of the most typical of its genus, having the palatine knob more fully developed than in any other species. Its food consists, in a great measure, of grains and seeds, which induces it to give a preference to those cultivated districts which afford the most abundant supply. Besides grain, many of the Buntings eat insects and their larvæ with avidity, and we have observed the present bird in particular feeding on the body of the large species of Chafer *Melolontha vulgaris*. During autumn and winter the Common Bunting congregates in flocks, often in company with the Lark, to which, in the flavour of its flesh, it is very similar; on the return of spring it is dispersed over the face of the country, being partial to hedge-rows skirting large fields, where it may be observed perched on the topmost twig uttering its oft-repeated monotonous note, which is more loud although not unlike that of the Yellow-hammer, *Emberiza citrinella*.

The ground is the situation chosen for the purpose of incubation, and in this respect it resembles the true Larks; the nest is composed of various grasses lined with hair and fibrous roots; the eggs are five or six in number, of a pinkish grey, streaked and spotted with reddish brown.

The sexes so nearly resemble each other in the colour of their plumage as to render a description of both unnecessary; the young also assume at an early age, with a trifling exception, the precise tints of the adult.

The whole of the upper plumage is brown inclining to olive, the centre of each feather being darker; the under surface yellowish white, with numerous stripes of dark brown running down the shaft of each feather; feet and bill brown.

The Plate represents an adult male of the natural size.