MELODIOUS WILLOW WREN.

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Sylvia Hippolais, *Temm*.

Le Bec-fin à poitrine jaune.

The bird which we have figured in the accompanying Plate appears to be the true Sylvia Hippolais of M. Temminck and other Continental writers, and is a species which has hitherto never been found in England; the bird known under the above name in our island being now unanimously acknowledged to be the Sylvia rufa. It is somewhat singular that this species, so familiar to every naturalist on the Continent, and which inhabits the gardens and hedgerows of those portions of the coasts of France and Holland that are immediately opposite our own, should not, like the rest of its immediate congeners, more diminutive in size, and consequently less capable of performing extensive flights, have occasionally strayed across the Channel and enlivened our glens and groves with its rich and charming song, which is far superior to that of either of the three other species of the group.

Although we cannot with propriety separate the present bird from the true Willow Wrens, still we cannot but be struck with the shorter and stouter contour of its body and its more robust bill; it also differs considerably in its habits and mode of nidification; all those species that inhabit England constructing a singular domed nest, which is always placed on the ground, while the species here illustrated invariably builds on trees, sometimes in the shrubs of the garden, at others in the trees of forests; laying five eggs, of a reddish white blotted with spots of darker red. Those who have not had an opportunity of listening to the song of this little tenant of the grove can scarcely form an idea of its power and melody, in which respects it is only equalled by those of the Black Cap and Nightingale.

The Sylvia Hippolais appears to be dispersed throughout the European continent from Sweden to the shores of the Mediterranean.

The sexes offer no difference in the colouring of their plumage.

Its food consists of insects, such as aphides and other small kinds, to which are added caterpillars, &c.

The whole of the upper surface is greenish ash; a small patch of yellow is situated between the bill and the eye; the throat, breast, and under surface pale yellow; wings and tail brown, the edge of each feather being lighter; feet and bill fleshy brown; irides dark brown.

The Plate represents an adult male of the natural size.