Genus PHILOMELA, Swains.

Gen. Char. Bill of mean length, straight; culmen rounded; tip of the upper mandible slightly deflected and emarginated; lower mandible as strong as the upper; gape smooth. Nostrils basal, lateral, round, pierced in a large membrane. Wings of mean length; first quill very short; second of the same length as the fifth; third and fourth nearly equal and the longest. Tail slightly rounded. Tarsi long. Feet adapted for perching, and also for hopping upon the ground. Claws moderately curved and very sharp.

NIGHTINGALE.

Philomela luscinia, Swains.

Le Rossignol.

In our notice of this exquisite songster, which has been the theme of poets in every age, we shall confine ourselves rather to details connected with its habits and the localities it prefers in our own island, its migration, &c., than to the merits of its vocal powers or to indulging in strains of useless admiration.

So much attention has been lately paid by Mr. Blyth to the migration and localities frequented by this species, that we consider it only our duty to refer our readers to that gentleman's paper on the subject published in the 15th and 16th Nos. of the Analyst, which will require but little addition of our own to render the matter clear to every one.

In our island it appears to be confined to particular districts; it is plentiful in the southern and eastern counties, while Devonshire appears to be its limit westward, and Doncaster in Yorkshire in a northern direction, few if any authenticated instances being on record of its occurrence beyond that town, which is the more singular as Nightingales are common in Sweden and other countries situated further north than England.

Our own observation respecting the migrations of the Nightingale is, that after leaving our island it proceeds to the opposite shores of the Continent, and gradually makes its way southwards until it arrives in Africa, which is its ultimate resting-place during our winter months. We have ourselves received specimens killed in the northern districts of Africa, but have never obtained any from the central or southern parts of that portion of the globe; it would appear therefore that its distribution over that vast continent is comparatively limited. In no part of Europe is it more abundant than in Spain and Italy; from whence however, equally as from our own, it regularly migrates on the approach of winter.

The Nightingale is exceedingly shy in its habits; and inhabiting low and swampy coppices, close thickets, hedges, and similar situations, it is seldom seen, its retreat being only discovered by means of its peculiar call-note and its song, which for richness and power is unrivalled until he is mated, but as soon as this takes place his notes are only poured forth at intervals and entirely cease previous to migration, when the sexes separate, and the males precede the females by ten days or a fortnight.

The nest is placed on the ground or on a low stump, and is constructed of withered leaves, sometimes lined with dry grass: the eggs, which are of a plain yellowish brown, are from four to six in number. The young appear to be principally fed with small green caterpillars, "in all probability the larvæ of some moth, or perhaps of a *Tenthredo*, peculiar to some localities."

The food of the adult consists of insects and their larvæ, berries, and fruit.

The sexes are alike in plumage, and may be thus described:

All the upper surface deep rich brown; rump and tail reddish brown; throat and middle of the belly greyish white; sides of the neck, breast, and flanks grey; bill and legs light brown.

The Contraction of the Contracti

We have figured an adult male of the natural size.