Genus ACCENTOR, *Bechst.*

Gen. Char. *Bill* strong, straight, of mean length, and drawn to a fine point; the tomia of both mandibles bending slightly inwards, and the upper mandible emarginated. *Nostrils* basal, naked, and pierced in a large membrane. *Legs* strong. *Toes* three before and one behind; the outer one joined at its base to the middle toe. *Wings* having the first quill very short, and the second a little shorter than the third, which is the longest.

ALPINE ACCENTOR.

Accentor alpinus, *Bechst.*

Accenteur pegot ou des Alpes.

The genus *Accentor* is extremely limited in the number of its species, and, with the exception of an undescribed bird from the Himalayan mountains, the members are confined to Europe.

The native habitat of the Alpine Accentor are the bleak and mountainous parts of the Continent, and, as its name implies, it gives preference to the Alps, where it dwells in districts of the most abrupt and rocky nature. It is extremely common in Switzerland and the Tyrol, ascending in summer to their most elevated portions, and seeking shelter, as winter advances, in their valleys and central regions. Several specimens have been taken in England, and if we recollect right the Rev. Dr. Thackeray, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, informed us that he observed two examples of this singular and rare bird in the garden of King's College; from the great interest he has always taken in the study of our native birds, two more welcome visitors could scarcely have come under his notice: one of them, we believe the male, was obtained, and now enriches the extensive and valuable collection of this worthy gentleman.

Its food consists of insects and their larvæ, worms, grubs, &c. It is also said to destroy grasshoppers and small locusts, which abound in alpine regions.

It breeds in the holes and fissures of the rocks, laying four or five greenish blue eggs, which, though a little larger, are not otherwise unlike those of the common Hedge Accentor of England.

In this well-defined and very natural group, we find the sexes of all the known species to be so strictly similar in the colouring of their plumage as to present no outward difference in their markings; neither do the young offer any material deviation, possessing as they do at an early age the general style of dress, but wanting that brilliancy and decisiveness of marking which characterize the adults.

Our Plate represents a male and female, corresponding in every particular with the bird taken at Cambridge, which, as Mr. Selby informs us, formed the subject of the Plate in his admirable work on the birds of the British Islands.

The crown and upper surface grey brown, the feathers on the back having their centres darker; scapularies and tertials deep brown edged with chestnut brown; greater and lesser wing-coverts black with a white space on the tip; quills blackish brown, with lighter edges; flanks chestnut brown, each feather being edged with greyish white; tail dark brown, each feather having a yellowish white spot on the inner web at the tip; legs light flesh brown; upper mandible dark horn-colour, the under one much lighter.

The figures are of the natural size.