SONG THRUSH.

Turdus musicus, Linn.

La Merle grive.

This universal favourite appears to inhabit every country in Europe, which may be considered its true habitat. It may be taken as a typical example of the true Thrushes, which, as a tribe, are numerously dispersed over a great portion of the globe: the temperate countries of America afford us several examples of this particular form; both Asia and Africa as well as the Indian Islands having also their melodious Thrush. It is very generally dispersed over the wooded districts of the British Islands, and is particularly partial to shrubberies and thick hedge-rows. It is by no means fearful or suspicious of man, confidently venturing within the precincts of gardens and orchards, where its bold, varied and energetic song secures it good-will and protection. It builds its nest early in the spring a few feet from the ground, in any tree or shrub within the immediate vicinity of its haunt. Its nest is outwardly constructed of coarse moss intermingled with dead leaves and grasses; the inside is neatly covered with a composition of cow-dung, light vegetable mould, and clay; and without any other lining the female deposits her eggs, which are usually four or five in number, of a beautiful blue colour spotted with black.

The habits of the Song Thrush differ materially from those of the Redwing and Fieldfare. It is not gregarious; and although numbers annually arrive here from more northern countries, they scatter themselves singly over the fields and thickets in search of that food which the season affords. As the severities of winter approach, numbers appear to continue their migrations still further south; but it rarely occurs that our island is left entirely destitute.

The young at an early age assume the markings and general appearance of the parent birds: the difference in plumage which the sexes present is so trifling as to be scarcely distinguishable.

Their food consists of worms, insects, snails (more especially the Helix nemoralis), and fruits.

The head and upper parts are of a brownish olive; sides of the neck and breast of a pale yellow, the latter varied with arrow-shaped spots of rich brown; centre of the belly white; under wing-coverts pale reddishorange, but neither so deep or decided in colour as in the Redwing; base of the bill and legs light brown; tip of the bill inclining to black.

Our Plate represents an adult bird in mature plumage.

REDWING.

Turdus Iliacus, Linn.

La Merle mauvis.

This bird is strictly a migratory species; for although it frequently remains with us for the greater part of the year, viz. from October till May or June, it invariably retires to the pine forests of Norway and Lapland for the purpose of breeding. It is rather inferior in size to the Thrush, and unlike that bird is gregarious, visiting us in the autumn in flocks of considerable numbers, and when the weather is mild frequenting pasture lands, feeding on insects, worms, &c. On the approach of frost, it subsists on the berries of the white thorn, mountain-ash, and ivy, the last of which it is very partial to, particularly in the spring. We have seen this plant in the month of May, entirely stript of its fruit by the Redwing. We have often known this bird perish from starvation when the winter has set in early and severe, in which case they subsist as long as there are any berries remaining on the trees before named; but when this resource fails, they have not strength to proceed further south, and inevitably perish.

The habits of the Redwing are much more shy and suspicious than those of the Thrush. It evinces a great partiality for tall trees and woods, and never lives in low hedges and bushes like the Thrush. Its song is similar to that of the Thrush, with the exception of being less powerful; it often sings sweetly before it leaves us for its more congenial and favourite breeding places.

Head and whole of the upper surface olive brown; the space between the bill and the eye dark brown, intermingled with yellow; a streak of yellowish white extends over the eye; sides of the neck and flanks white with obscure blotches of brown; belly pure white; under wing-coverts reddish orange; legs light brown; the sexes present no external differences.

We have figured an adult male of its natural size.