## MIGRATORY OUZEL.

Merula migratoria, Swains.

Le Merle erratique.

This beautiful species of Thrush, if not the theme of poets, has nevertheless called forth many spirited and flowing descriptions, the most animated of which are to be found in the works of Wilson, Audubon, and Dr. Richardson. From the latter author we find that few of the feathered race seek a more northern region for the purpose of breeding than the Migratory Ouzel. "It arrives in the Missouri (in lat.  $41\frac{1}{2}$ ), from the eastward, on the 11th of April; and in the course of its northerly movement, reaches Severn River, in Hudson's Bay, about a fortnight later. Its first appearance at Carlton House, in lat.  $53^{\circ}$ , in the year 1827, was on the 22nd of April. In the same season it reached Fort Chepewyan, in lat.  $58\frac{3}{4}$ , on the 7th of May, and Fort Franklin, in lat  $65^{\circ}$ , on the 20th of that month. Those that build their nests in the fifty-fourth parallel of latitude, begin to hatch in the end of May; but eleven degrees further to the north, that event is deferred till the 11th of June. The snow even then partially covers the ground; but there is, in those high latitudes, abundance of the berries of the Vaccinium uliginosum and Vitis idæa, Arbutus alpina, Empetrum nigrum, and of some other plants, which after having been frozen up all the winter, are exposed, on the first melting of the snow, full of juice and in high flavour. Shortly afterwards, when the callow young require food, the parents obtain abundance of grubs."

When we take into consideration the migratory habits of this bird, and the extreme high northern latitudes it affects, the fact of its occasionally occurring in Europe is not so startling as it would otherwise appear: a single glance at a globe will in fact make it plain to our readers, that when migrating from these high latitudes, a slight deviation from its regular course would carry it on to the continent of Europe, where, as we have before stated, it is occasionally seen. In the third part of his 'Manuel' M. Temminck states that it has been killed in Germany; and M. Brehm informs us that it has been seen in the neighbourhood of Vienna. In its affinities we are inclined to consider this bird as a true Merula, or as belonging to that section of the Merulidæ which includes the Common Blackbird, and we also find that its habits, manners, song, and nidification are much in accordance with those of that bird. "So much," says M. Audubon, "do certain notes of the Robin (the American name for the Merula migratoria) resemble those of the European Blackbird, that frequently while in England the cry of the latter, as it flew hurriedly off from a hedge-row, reminded me of that of the former when similarly surprised, and while in America the Robin of that country has in the same manner recalled to my recollection the Blackbird of England."

The sexes are alike in plumage, but the tints of the female are somewhat paler, and she is also smaller in size.

Head and sides of the face deep sooty black; round the eye a circle of white; all the upper surface fuliginous grey tinged with brown on the shoulders; wings and tail blackish brown externally edged with grey; two outer tail-feathers tipped with white; chin white spotted with brownish black; breast and under surface reddish orange, each feather delicately fringed with grey; vent and under tail-coverts mingled white and grey; bill yellow; irides hazel; feet pale brown.

We have figured an adult of the natural size.