WOODCHAT.

La Pie-grièche rousse.

Although the Woodchat is abundantly spread over the Continent, particularly the warmer portions, such as Spain, Italy, and all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, it is so rare in the British Islands as scarcely to merit a place in our Fauna; indeed, two or three instances of its having been seen or captured in England are all that we are acquainted with, and we have ourselves never received it in a recent state. In general habits and manners it strictly resembles its nearly allied species the Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius Collurio*; but a moment's comparison will be sufficient to establish the distinctions of the two species. In one respect, however, the Woodchat appears to be peculiar; we allude to the circumstance of the nearly allied style of colouring of the two sexes, which is contrary to what prevails in the Red-backed Shrike, and agrees more strictly with the rest of the European representatives of the present family. The only point by which the sexes may be distinguished is the less brilliant colouring of the female.

The food of the Woodchat consists of coleopterous and other large insects, and occasionally small and nestling birds. According to M. Temminck, it builds its nest in bushes, selecting the fork of a small branch among foliage sufficiently dense for its concealment. It lays five or six eggs, of a whitish green, irregularly blotched with grey.

The plumage is as follows: A narrow white band borders the margin of the upper mandible, and is followed by a black belt across the forehead; the same colour occupying the ear-coverts passes down the sides of the neck and the middle of the back, where it fades off into grey; the occiput, back of the neck, and upper part of the back, rich chestnut; wings black, the scapularies and a bar across the base of the quills being white; upper tail-coverts white, with a tinge of yellow; tail black, except the outer feather on each side, which is nearly white, and the next, which is tipped with white, and is white at its base; the third is also tipped with white; beak and tarsi black.

In the female the black is tinged with brown, and the chestnut of the back is less vivid.

The Plate represents a male and female of the size of life.