GREAT GREY SHRIKE.

Lanius meridionalis, *Temm*.

Collurio meridionalis, *Vig*.

La Pie-Grieche méridionale.

We are indebted to the kindness and liberality of the officers of the British Museum, for allowing us to illustrate this fine species of Shrike from a specimen in the collection under their care, to which it was presented by Captain S. E. Cook, who obtained it in the centre of Spain; a country which, with Italy, the southern provinces of France and the districts bordering on the Mediterranean, appears to be its native habitat. Of the European Shrikes, the Lanius meridionalis is that which comes least under our notice; it is, however, the largest of its genus, and may be taken as typical of that group comprehended by Mr. Vigors under the generic title Collurio,—a group on which we offered some remarks when speaking of that rare British species the Lanius Excubitor of Linnæus, with which the present bird closely agrees, but from which it may be distinguished by its somewhat greater size, the darker grey of the upper surface, and especially by the beautiful vinous tinge which prevades the plumage of the breast. In the latter respect, indeed, it resembles the Lanius minor; but with this bird it can never be confounded, the disparity of size being at once a distinguishing character between them, to which we may add the long and pointed wings and less graduated tail in Lanius minor, as opposed to the short wings and cuneiform tail of the Lanius meridionalis.

The habits and manners of this interesting and natural group, ally the species together as closely as their forms and colours; and although we have been able to obtain no precise information respecting our present subject, still we cannot for a moment doubt that it exhibits the same properties and acts the same tyrannical part in its mode of obtaining food as its British congener, preying upon the larger insects, especially those of the Coleopterous order, young or feeble birds, and even small mammalia. The nidification and eggs are unknown.

The top of the head and the whole of the plumage of the back are of a dark ash colour; a large black band passes below the eyes and extends over the ear-coverts; the wings are black, having the origins of the quill-feathers and the tips of the secondaries white; the four middle tail-feathers are black, the exterior ones white; the breast and under part vinous or salmon-colour, fading into grey about the sides and thighs; bill and legs black.

The female differs only in having the tints of the plumage more obscure, with faint transverse bars on the under parts.

We have figured a male in full plumage.