

## RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER.

*Muscicapa parva, Bechst.*

Le Gobe-mouche rougeatre.

So rare is this species of Flycatcher in the collections of Europe, and so little has been recorded of its history, that we are led to hope that the accompanying Plate illustrating the old and young bird, and the present notice of its habits and manners, will prove a trifling addition to our knowledge of European ornithology. During a recent visit to Vienna we had opportunities of observing it in a living state, both in its immature and adult plumage. Its actions and manners are strikingly peculiar, and appear to partake of those appertaining to the species of more than one genus; it resembles the Robin not only in the colour of its plumage but in several of its actions, being sprightly and animated, constantly jerking its tail and depressing its head in the manner our Redbreast is observed to do; it also imitates the action of the Whinchat in the depressed oscillating movement of the tail: thus it appears to form an intermediate link between the *Muscicapidae* on the one hand, and the *Saxicolinae* on the other. In the comparative length and robust form of its legs this intermediate station is also further evinced; for though the tarsi have not the strength which we see in the true *Saxicola*, still they are more developed than in the genuine Flycatchers. It is a bird of migratory habits, and in Europe its habitat appears to be limited almost exclusively to the eastern portions of the continent. It is tolerably abundant in the neighbourhood of Vienna, and is known to breed annually in the woods of that district. From the circumstance of our having seen it in collections from the East Indies, particularly from that portion adjacent to Persia, it is doubtless widely diffused over the intermediate regions.

The sexes are alike in their colouring, but the female is less brilliant than the male. The upper figure in our Plate represents an adult male, and the lower one that of the young bird of the year in its second plumage, the first having been spotted like that of the Robin. M. Temminck states that the moult is simple, but that the colours of the plumage, particularly on the under surface, change periodically. Like the *Muscicapidae* in general, the Red-breasted Flycatcher is quick and active, taking its prey on the wing with great dexterity. Its food consists of soft-winged insects, to which in all probability berries are occasionally added.

The nest, according to M. Temminck, is placed among the interwoven twigs of trees or in the forks of the branches, but of the number or colour of its eggs no information has yet reached us.

The male has the whole of the upper surface brown; the four middle tail-feathers and the extremities of the outer ones blackish brown; the base of the latter being white; the throat and breast of a bright rufous; the under surface white tinged with rufous brown on the flanks; the beak, legs, and irides brown.

The young have the breast, which is so richly tinted in the adult, white with a slight tinge of yellow.

The figures are of the natural size.