BLACK AND WHITE KINGSFISHER.

Alcedo rudis, Linn.

Le Martin Pêcheur Pie.

Although the continents of Africa and Asia constitute the natural habitat of this species, still from its occurrence in some of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, it is necessarily added to the Fauna of Europe, although it is but a rare and accidental visitor. It is abundantly dispersed over the whole of Africa, particularly on the banks of the Nile and the other rivers of Egypt, as also those of Syria and the adjacent countries. The discovery of this Kingsfisher in a quarter of the globe where until lately only a single species had been found, renders it a bird of great interest, and we regret that we cannot lay before our readers any authentic information relative to its peculiar habits and manners. In the third part of his "Manuel" M. Temminck merely states that it feeds on fishes, and lays white eggs. In the form of its bill and in its general structure, it so nearly resembles the Alcedo ispida, that although differing from it in size and in the character of its plumage, we may reasonably suppose its general economy to be in strict accordance with that species.

As is the case with most species of its tribe, the plumage of the sexes is very similar; the female and young, however, appear to have the chest crossed with a somewhat narrow and single band of white, while the male has two bands, the upper one of which becomes very broad towards the shoulders, and gradually diminishes towards the middle of the chest; in other respects they are so similar that one description will be sufficient.

Crown of the head and occiput black; the whole of the upper surface varied with numerous bars of black and white, the latter colour terminating and bordering all the feathers; a black band extends from the angle of the beak and spreads over the ears; all the under parts white except the bands of black, which extend across the chest; primaries black; tail white at the base, the remainder barred with black and white; bill black; feet reddish brown.

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