ROCK MARTIN.

Hirundo rupestris, Linn.
L'Hirundelle de Rocher.

This bird is very abundant along the shores of the Mediterranean, and occurs also in such portions of Southern Europe as abound in rocky and precipitous places: it is an inhabitant of Savoy and Piedmont, but is more scarce in Switzerland, Germany, and the middle of France. As far as we are aware, it has never been found in the northern parts of Europe, nor has it as yet been observed in the British Isles. It is larger than the Common Sand Martin, to which species it bears a close resemblance both in the colouring of its plumage and also in its general economy. It builds its nest and rears its young in the holes of rocks; the eggs being five or six in number, white, marked with minute dots.

We need hardly observe that its general habits and manners are in strict accordance with those of its family. Its food consists of insects, which it takes during flight.

The sexes offer no distinguishable difference in the markings of their plumage.

The whole of the upper surface is a uniform light brown; the quills and tail-feathers being darker, the inner webs of all the feathers of the latter, except the two middle ones, having in their centre a large oval blotch of white; the under surface is of a dull sandy white, slightly tinged with rufous.

We have figured a male and female of the natural size.