

STREPSILAS INTERPRES.

Turnstone.

Tringa Interpres, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 248.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 738.

Strepsilas Interpres, Leach in Cat. of Brit. Mus., p. 29.—Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xi. p. 520. pl. 39.

Strepsilas collaris, Temm. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 553.

IF any one bird be universally dispersed over the sea-shores of the globe, it is the Turnstone, for there are few of which it is not an inhabitant. I find no differences whatever between Australian and European specimens, nor do examples from America present sufficient variation to warrant any other conclusion than that the whole are one and the same species.

I could never detect the breeding-place of the Turnstone in any one of the Australian colonies, and I must not fail to add, that in the southern parts of that continent and Van Diemen's Land, examples in the adult livery are but seldom seen, while individuals in the immature dress are very abundant; on the contrary, most of the specimens from Raine's Islet and other parts of Torres' Straits are mature birds clothed in the full livery or breeding plumage. In all probability the northern parts of Australia will hereafter prove to be the part of the country in which it breeds, and that the young make an annual migration towards the south and disperse themselves over every part of the coasts of Southern Australia, the islands in Bass's Straits and Van Diemen's Land, all of which, as well as the Houtmann's Abrolhos off the western coast, are visited by it.

The habits, manners and economy of the bird in Australia differ not from those it exhibits in Europe; there, as here, it feeds on marine insects, as well as on small bivalve mollusca and crustacea, which it finds by turning over stones with its bill; whence its popular name.

The sexes when fully adult are alike, but the colours of the female are not so bright as those of the male; the young even when they have attained the size of the adult differ considerably.

The adult has the forehead, eyebrows, an oval spot before each eye, the centre of the throat, ear-coverts, nape of the neck, lower part of the back, abdomen and under tail-coverts white; from eye to eye across the forehead a band of black, which dips downwards in the centre to the bill; from the base of the lower mandible proceeds a mark of black, which passes upwards to the eye, dilates backwards towards the nape, covers the front of the chest, and bifurcates towards the insertion of the wing; mantle and scapularies reddish brown irregularly varied with black; rump black; wings black, the basal part of the inner webs and the shafts of the primaries white; secondaries broadly tipped with white, forming a conspicuous bar across the wings; bill black; irides black; legs and feet rich orange, darkest on the joints.

The young has the whole of the upper surface and the breast mottled brown and black, the white mark on the throat much larger, and only a trace of the white markings of the face and nape.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.