SITTELLA CHRYSOPTERA, *Swains.*

Orange-winged Sittella.

Sitta chrysoptera, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., p. xxxii.—Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 296.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 316.
Orange-winged Nuthatch, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 146. pl. 227.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 120.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 77. pl. lxiii.
Sitta? chrysoptera, Steph. Cont. Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 189.
Neops chrysoptera, Vieill. 2nde édit. du Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxxi.—Ency. Méth. Orn., Part III. p. 915.
Sittella chrysoptera, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 317.
Mur-ri-gang, Aborigines of New South Wales.

This species appears to be as much confined to the south-eastern part of Australia as the *Sittella pileata* and *S. leucoptera* are to their respective portions of the country; the former inhabiting the western, and the latter the northern parts of the continent. New South Wales then is the true habitat of this species, over nearly every part of which it is rather plentifully distributed; more abundantly so, I should say, than is the Nuthatch in Europe, to which it offers considerable similarity in its habits, actions, and economy. I have generally observed it in small companies of from four to eight in number, running over the branches of the trees with the greatest facility, and assuming every possible variety of position; often in that which distinguishes the actions of the Nuthatch from those of all other European birds, namely, that of traversing the boles of the trees downwards, not, like the *Climacteris*, with a backward shuffle, but with the head pointing to the ground. The whole tribe of *Sittellæ* live exclusively on insects and spiders, for the capture of which they possess an admirably constructed bill.

During its flight, which is quick and darting, the red mark on the wing shows very conspicuously; its powers of wing are, however, seldom brought into action, further than to enable it to pass from one tree to another.

Although I possess a nest and eggs, which I have reason to believe are those of the present species, I could not ascertain with certainty that this was the case, or the situation of its breeding-place.

The colouring of this species is more sombre, and has the markings of the head less decided than any other species of the genus. The darker colouring of the head of the female, however, which is spread over the ear-coverts, at once points out to the ornithologist the sex of any specimen he may possess of this genus.

The male has the head dark brown; all the upper surface grey, with a broad streak of dark brown down the centre of each feather; wings dark brown, with a broad patch of rich rufous crossing the primaries and secondaries; upper tail-coverts white; tail black, the outer feathers tipped with white; all the under surface grey, with a faint streak of brown down each feather; under tail-coverts white, crossed near the tip with a spot of brown; bill horn-colour at the base; irides cream-colour; eyelash light buff; feet yellow.

The female differs only in having the head of a darker tint of brown.

The figures are of the natural size.