## GECINUS VIRIDIS.

Green Woodpecker, or Yaffle.

Picus viridis et P. semirostris, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 175.

—— alba et P. viridis, Nozem. Nederl. Vog., tom. iv. p. 373, pl. 190.

Gecinus viridis, Boie, Isis, 1828, p. 316.

—— frondium, G. pinetorum, et G. virescens, Brehm, Lehrb., p. 197.

Brachylophus viridis, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 308.

Chloropicus viridis, Malh. Nouv. Class. des Picinées, Mém. Acad. Metz, 1848–1849, p. 351.

I know of no one of our indigenous birds which gives a more tropical character to the scenery than the Picus viridis, with its strongly contrasted colours of green, yellow, and scarlet; how desirable it is, then, that this fine bird should not be unnecessarily persecuted! When unmolested, it will not only inhabit our woods and fields, but will very frequently resort to our shrubberies, and trimly mown lawns, where its actions may be watched and studied from the window of the breakfast-room or the arbour in the garden; here it may be seen awkwardly leaping sideways over the grass, prying for ants and other insects, which it secures by darting forth and retracting its long tongue with such amazing rapidity as to excite the astonishment of the observer. On leaving the grass-plat for the trees, it flies in a series of undulations, showing its bright yellow rump and scarlet crown to the utmost advantage. The terrestrial habits of the Green Woodpecker are quite in unison with its structure, which, particularly in the more feeble character of its legs and the less wedge-shaped form of its bill, differs from that of the Spotted Woodpeckers and the other members of the restricted genus Picus; it is also far less arboreal than they, mostly confining itself to fallen and decayed trees, pollard willows, and old wood fences. The ant-hill has far more attractions for it than the most beautiful tree; it is also said to be destructive to bees, and not to reject the fruits of the garden. Its loud, wild, laughing cry resounds through the woods, and may be heard far over the mead: this cry is so peculiar that, once heard, it can never be forgotten. In the spring the Green Woodpecker becomes very garrulous and noisy, and thus often betrays the site of its breeding-place, in a hole of some upright stately tree, to which it returns again and again for many years, unless it be displaced by the Starling, against which bird it is ever on the watch. The Duke of Argyll informs me that in Cliveden woods he has seen the Green Woodpecker sit motionless for hours together, at the entrance of its hole, to prevent its being occupied by a pair of Starlings which frequented the neighbourhood.

In England the Green Woodpecker is strictly an indigenous bird; for it remains with us all the year, and breeds in nearly every county. Mr. Rodd states that it is very common in the eastern woodlands of Cornwall, but that it is rare in the western, and almost unknown in the neighbourhood of Penzance. Macgillivray states that it "does not occur in any part of the northern or middle divisions of Scotland; and if it exist in the southern, it must be extremely rare." In Ireland it is unknown. M. Malherbe states that it inhabits the whole of the European continent, Persia, and Asia Minor.

"The Green Woodpecker," says Mr. Yarrell, "is generally seen either climbing over the bark of trees in search of its insect food or passing, by a short, somewhat laboured, and undulating flight, from one tree to another. When seen moving upon a tree, the bird is mostly ascending, in a direction more or less oblique, and is believed to be incapable of descending, unless this action be performed backwards. On flying to a tree and is believed to be incapable of descending, unless this action be performed backwards. On flying to a tree to make a new search, it settles low down on the bole or body of the tree, but a few feet above the ground, generally below the lowest large branch, and proceeds from thence upwards, alternately tapping to induce any insect to change its place, pecking holes in a decayed branch that it may be able to reach any insects lodged within, or protruding its long extensible tongue to take up any insect on the surface; but, the summit of the within, or protruding its long extensible tongue to take up any insect on the surface; but, the summit of the tree once attained, the bird does not descend over the examined part, but flies off to another tree, or to another part of the same tree, to recommence its search lower down, and nearer the ground.

"The tongue and its appendages are admirably adapted to the bird's mode of life. Its great extensibility is obtained by the elongation of the two posterior branches or cornua of the bone of the tongue, which, extending round the back of the head and over the top, have the ends of both inserted together into the extending round the back of the head and over the top, have the ends of both inserted together into the extending round the back of the head and over the top, have the ends of both inserted together into the extending round the back of the head and over the top, have the ends of both inserted together into the extending round the back of the each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the right nostril. These elongations, forming a bow, are each accompanied throughout their cavity of the tongue pushed length by a slender slip of muscles, between the tongue, and by their contraction bring the tongue back forward, are attached to the anterior part of the tongue, and by their contraction bring the tongue back forward, are attached to the anterior part of the tongue, and by their contraction bring the tongue back forward, are attached to the anterior part of the tongue, and by their contraction bring the tongue at a