LINOTA MONTIUM.

Twite or Mountain-Linnet.

Fringilla montium, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 917.
——— *montana*, Penn. Brit. Zool., vol. i. p. 467.
Linaria montana, Briss. Orn., tom. iii. p. 145.
——— *montium*, Leach.
——— *flavirostris*, Macgill. Hist. of Brit. Birds, vol. i. p. 379.
Linota montium, Bonap. Geogr. and Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Am., p. 34.
Cannabina flavirostris, Degl.
Acanthis montium, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 125.
Cannabina montium, Brehm, Isis, 1828, p. 1277.
——— *montium*, *flavirostris*, et *media*, Brehm.
Fringilla flavirostris ?, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 87.

"The nest of the Twite is placed amid the tops of the tallest heaths, and is composed of dry grasses and heather, and lined with wool, the fibres of roots, and the finer parts of heath; and the four or five eggs it contains are of a pale bluish green, spotted with pale orange-brown. The bird itself leaves the mountains in autumn, and assembles in flocks, which associate and travel with the Common Linnet, and are taken in their company by the London bird-catchers, who can always tell when there are any Twites in the flock by their peculiar note, expressive of that word." These are the words of Mr. Selby, one of our best observers, with respect to this interesting little bird, which is very generally dispersed over the lowlands of the British Islands in winter and the mountain-tops in summer; there, amidst the pure air and flowering ling, it pours forth its mirthful little song, and brings forth its young. In the Peak district of Derbyshire, in the Cheviots of Northumberland, in the Grampians of Scotland the Twite may always be found; and northward of these localities, even to the Orkneys and the Outer Hebrides, it is the most abundant of the summer visitants, and may be seen breeding at the proper season. In the northern parts of Europe, from Scandinavia to Prussia, it is as plentiful as with us; but it becomes sensibly more scarce as we proceed southwards.

The Twite has but few fine colours to recommend it to our notice: unlike the Linnet and its allies, in which red is the prevailing tint, a little deep blood- or purplish red on the rump of the male, and the male only, is the only variation from the uniformity of its brown colouring; I must mention, however, that in the breeding-season the bill, which is usually of a mealy white, becomes of a wax-yellow. As a bird for the cage, it is less in request than the Linnet.

Macgillivray states that "it is plentiful in the Hebrides, and in winter frequents the corn-yards in large flocks, clinging to the stacks of oats and picking out the seeds. Its flight is rapid and undulating, and it wheels over the fields previous to alighting, uttering a soft twitter at intervals. When disturbed, it betakes itself to tall trees or to a distant field; but is not shy, and may be easily approached when feeding. In spring, it forsakes its winter haunts, and disperses over the hilly tracts, where it forms its nest on the ground, among short heath or on the grassy slopes of craggy spots. The nest is a neat structure of fine dry grasses, fragments of heath, and a little moss, lined with roots, wool, and hair. In habits it almost precisely resembles the Common Linnet, with which in winter it sometimes associates. Towards the commencement of that season, the individuals unite into flocks, sometimes of vast extent, and search for food chiefly in the stubble-fields, where, besides the seeds of chickweed, field-mustard, polygona, and other plants, they pick up those of the cultivated grasses. Although both this and the Common Linnet might seem too small to feed upon these latter seeds, yet in winter I have generally found the greater part of the contents of their stomach to consist of them."

Sir William Jardine informed Mr. Yarrell that the Twite is abundant in the North Highlands, where it takes the place, in summer, of the Common Linnet in the Lowlands. A pair shot within a few hundred yards of Jardine Hall in Dumfriesshire, whither they had been driven by a winter storm, were feeding on the heads of the black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).

The presence of the Twite in the Orkneys has been noticed by the Rev. Mr. Low, by Mr. J. D. Salmon, and by the late Mr. Dunn. Mr. Low states that it remains there all the year, building in the heath, but seldom or never in bushes; Mr. Salmon, that the Mountain was the only species of Linnet seen by his party: two nests came under their observation; one was placed upon the ground, among the young corn, the other amidst some whins (*Ulex*): they were both alike, their outside composed of small roots and dried grass, and their insides lined with a small quantity of hair and a few feathers; and each contained six eggs, similar