SERINUS HORTULANUS.

Serin Finch.

Fringilla serinus, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 320.

Serinus meridionalis, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 255.

Pyrrhula (Dryospiza) serinus, Keys. et Blas. Wirbelth. Eur., p. 41.

Serinus flavescens, Gould, Birds of Eur., vol. iii. pl. 195.

Pyrrhula serinus, Degl.

Dryospiza serinus, Cab. in Ersch und Gruber's Ency., p. 217.

Serinus islandicus, Bonap.

——hortulanus, Koch, Syst. Baier. Zool., p. 229.

So many instances of the occurrence of the Serin Finch in England have now been recorded in 'The Ibis,' the 'Zoologist,' and other journals, that I cannot refrain from including it among our accidental visitors. It is not a regular migrant; yet I suspect that its visits to the southern parts of our island have been far more frequent than is generally imagined, but that it had previously escaped detection, or been mistaken for its near ally the Siskin, which it greatly resembles, especially when seen among trees.

The first notice of its occurrence in England was forwarded to the 'Zoologist,' in 1860, by Mr. Bond, who states that it was caught at Brighton, in a clap-net, on the 20th of June, 1859. In some notes kindly communicated to me by this gentleman, he says:—"I saw another fine male, which had been captured near London, in the autumn of the same year. I also heard of two others having been taken near London." In 'The Ibis' for 1861, Mr. George Dawson Rowley mentions that three specimens had been caught near Brighton, and cast aside from ignorance of their value, the bird having been previously supposed to be a mule of some kind escaped from confinement. In 'The Ibis' for 1866, this gentleman records another example, which had been sent to Mr. Swaysland, of Brighton, to be mounted, by Mr. Henry Byne, who, in reply to some inquiries respecting it, stated that it was killed in the last week of January, 1866, by William Gorett, Esq., in a small garden surrounded by trees, in Bridge Street, North Town, Taunton. Mr. Byne, in whose possession this specimen remains, kindly sent it up for my inspection; and I can therefore testify that it is a veritable Serin Finch. In the 'Zoologist' for 1869 is a notice copied from the 'Field,' that "a very fine example of this rare English visitant was shot at Worthing, on the 4th of May" of that year; and in the 'Zoologist' for 1870 Mr. Bond says:—"I have seen a fine specimen, killed in April 1869. There have now been so many examples taken in this country that I think we should consider it a British bird."

Those who may wish to become minutely acquainted with the habits and economy of this charming little songster, must refer to the works of the various Continental ornithologists; but as these are not always accessible, I cannot perhaps do better than transcribe, nearly in his own words, the interesting account (derived from these and other sources) published by my friend Dr. Bree in his 'History of the Birds of Europe not observed in the British Isles.'

"The Serin Finch is found plentifully in Spain, the south of France, in Italy, and the neighbouring part of Switzerland, in Central Germany, the north of France, and in Holland, more rarely in the south and southwest of Germany, but not in the northern part of that country. According to Faber, it has been killed between 66° and 67° N. lat. It has been found in the Hartz Mountains, and is often seen in Thuringia. It is an autumn visitor at Malta, is common in Sicily, and very numerous in Smyrna. It is said to be plentiful in the neighbourhood of Heidelberg and Offenbach, but to be rare in the intermediate country. It is very common in Greece, is included among the birds of Algeria, and is stated to be numerous about the olivegroves of Sousa, in the neighbourhood of Tunis, but rare in the more elevated and mountainous parts of the Eastern Atlas.

"The Serin Finch is generally a migratory bird, quitting its summer- and breeding-ground in October, and returning the following March; but in the mild climate of the Rhine it is said to remain all the year round

"It lives most frequently in fruit-gardens, orchards or avenues of walnut- or nut-trees, and vineyards, and loves to dwell among willows and alders, on the banks of brooks and rivers as well as in garden-trees, and loves to dwell among willows and alders, on the banks of brooks and rivers as well as in garden-trees, and loves to dwell among willows and alders, on the banks of brooks and rivers as well as in garden-trees, in the middle of villages or near buildings. Wherever it may be, it makes itself known by its restless in the middle of villages or near buildings. Wherever it may be, it makes itself known by its restless habits, and by its custom of always singing on the summit of the tree-tops, from which it often flies down to the roofs of buildings. In autumn it is more retiring, but remains long on the thick tree-tops.

"It seeks its food principally on the ground, never very far from trees and bushes, and still less in the open fields. In its movements it is lively and active, springing from branch to branch very much after the manner of the Siskin and Common Linnet, with which it willingly associates, particularly