GLYCYSPINA HORTULANA.

Ortolan Bunting.

Emberiza hortulana, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 84.
——— *Badensis*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 873.
——— *chlorocephala*, Gmel. ib., p. 887.
——— *Tunstallii*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 418.
——— *Malbeyensis*, Sparrm. Mus. Carls., tom. i. tab. 21.
——— *citrinella*, var., Flem. Hist. Brit. Anim., p. 77.
——— *pinguescens*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 295.
Citrinella hortulana, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 142.
Hortulanus chlorocephalus, Bonap. in Parz. Cat. Ois. d'Eur., p. 4. sp. 131.
Glycyspina hortulana, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil i. p. 128.

Birds not only contribute to the pleasure of man by their songs, their thousand actions, interesting ways, and varied habits and economies, but they also contribute their fair share towards his sustenance. Besides the amount afforded by the great group of Gallinaceæ, the marsh-, and water-birds, many of the smaller species form no inconsiderable item in supplying his wants and desires. In the acquirement of delicacies for the pampering of his appetite many devices are resorted to, some of which are accompanied by a degree of cruelty much to be deprecated: I allude to the means adopted to obtain the celebrated "pâté de foie gras," to the repeated takings of the nest of the esculent Swallow, and the continued robbery of the eggs of the Plover—acts which cause the Goose to die a miserable death, the Swallow to exhaust itself in the reconstruction of its glutinous cradle, and the Plover to weaken its system by a forced reproduction of its eggs. In Europe three little insessorial birds are especially regarded as delicacies for the table—the Wheatear, the Beccafico, and the Ortolan. The last of these (the bird represented on the accompanying Plate), which, although not indigenous to our island, is sometimes found here, is sent from the continent to London by thousands, but the great bulk of the community, the middle class and the poor, never see or partake of them; it is the noble and wealthy epicures alone who can afford to gratify their appetites with this costly "bonne bouche." The marchioness and the lady of the alderman consult their poulterers as to the more choice viands for the summer season, that nothing may be wanting for their next recherché dinner. A dish of Ortolans being the "chose," the fattening-cage is resorted to, and a dozen or more are taken out and killed if they have not already been trampled to death by their companies, or died during the night from apoplexy or sheer obesity, the little birds, which in a state of nature scarcely exceed the size of a Tit, having become a mass of fat the appearance of which is very unlike that of an ordinary plucked Bunting. This essence of millet and canary-seed is certainly not to be despised; and the clubman of our great metropolis frequently doubles the amount of his dinner-bill by ordering a couple of Ortolans. Alas for the fate of the little birds! which have been netted in Italy, Savoy, and France, and sent hither to be fattened and stifled in low cages, where they have not sufficient room to flutter their wings, for the special gratification of those whose gustatory enjoyments dominate over their other senses. The procuring of a string of Larks is, comparatively speaking, unattended with cruelty; a trapped Wheatear is killed in a moment, a Beccafico is destroyed with shot, or taken from the meshes of a net and immediately dispatched; but the Ortolan, captured during his migration from the southern to the northern parts of Europe, where he would otherwise have paired, loved, and bred, terminates the last summer of his existence in the cruel manner above described.

It is somewhat surprising that a bird so common on the continent, and which is a migrant withal, should not have been more frequently seen in this country; few, however, as are the instances of its occurrence, they are sufficient to entitle it to a place in our avifauna. The first specimen recorded as having been taken in England was captured by a London birdcatcher in Marylebone Fields, and was figured in Brown's 'Illustrations of Zoology,' a work published in 1776: this is the example described by Latham in the third volume of his 'Synopsis of Birds,' and moreover was the source, according to Yarrell, from which Gmelin, Lewin, Montagu, and others copied their descriptions. Bewick's figure was taken from a specimen caught at sea off the Yorkshire coast by the master of a trading vessel, and which subsequently passed into the possession of G. T. Fox, Esq. Another was killed near Manchester in 1827. A fourth, taken near London, in a birdcatcher's net, in 1837, along with Yellow Buntings, was deposited in the aviary of the Zoological Society of London in the Regent's Park. The bird is said to have been seen in Norfolk. Mr. Rodd has recorded that an example was killed at Trescoe, one of the Scilly Islands, in 1851; the next year one was