MELANOCORYPHA CALANDRA.

Calandra Lark!

Alauda calandra, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 288.
——— *sibirica*, Pall. Iter, tom. ii. p. 708 (G. R. Gray).
Melanocorypha calandra, Boie, Isis, 1828, p. 322.
——— *albigularis*, *subcalandra* et *semitorquata*, Brehm, in Naumannia, 1856, p. 374.

It need not be a matter of surprise that the Calandra Lark should have been killed in Great Britain, since it is a very common bird in Portugal, Spain, many parts of Italy, and France, although less abundant in the latter country than in those previously mentioned; further east than Portugal and Spain—in Greece, Turkey, the Crimea, and Palestine—it is, perhaps, equally numerous. Of its occurrence in Britain there are two recorded instances—one by Mr. Gatcombe, who, in the 'Zoologist' for 1863, p. 8768, says:—"A short time since, when looking over the collection of Mr. Pincombe, taxidermist, of Devonport, I recognized a specimen of a Calandra Lark which he assured me had been killed in the neighbourhood, but that he had hitherto considered it to have been a specimen of the Shore-Lark. Now, as the Calandra Lark is said to be common in the south of Europe, I do not see why it should not be occasionally found on our coasts. But notwithstanding this, the above is the first recorded instance of its capture in the British Isles." Respecting the second instance Mr. J. H. Gurney, jun., says, in the 'Zoologist' for 1869, p. 1599, "It may be of interest to know that Mr. Gatcombe has seen another specimen of the Calandra Lark, in the possession of Mr. Byne, which that gentleman obtained from Truscott, the Exeter birdstuffer, who said it was a 'Lapland Bunting,' and killed near Exeter."

The head quarters of the Calandra Lark appear to be Southern and Eastern Europe, and Palestine; it is also numerous in many parts of Northern Africa, yet, curiously enough, seems to be rare in Egypt, if, indeed, it be not altogether absent; for Mr. E. Cavendish Taylor informed Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser that he always found it to be "conspicuous by its absence from the avifauna of Egypt, which is the more remarkable, as it is a common species both in the Pashalic of Tunis and in Syria, Egypt being situated about midway between those two countries."

In the absence of any opportunities for personal observation of this bird, I am compelled to avail myself of the numerous notes which have been published respecting it in my friend Dr. Bree's 'Birds of Europe not observed in the British Isles,' 'The Ibis,' and Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser's work 'The Birds of Europe;' and this I now proceed to do with due acknowledgment.

"Like most of its tribe, except our Skylark," says Dr. Bree, "the Calandra seems to prefer wild and sterile plains to cultivated ground for its residence. In other respects, however, its habits are very similar. Dubois remarks that 'they often fly together in flocks, and have a clear, beautiful, and varied song, which is uttered as often when flying as in repose. Notwithstanding the perfection of their song, it is impossible for amateurs to keep them in their homes, their voice being too loud. When taken young, they may be taught to imitate the voices of all kinds of birds. They often mix together the notes of Thrushes, Finches, Tits, Linnets, Quails, &c., and will even imitate the croaking of the frog.'"

When in Malta, some few years since, I observed it as a caged favourite with the inhabitants of that island, to which, according to Wright, it is "an annual visitor in March and October; and a few may not unfrequently be detected, by their larger size, amongst flocks of Skylarks. It cannot, however, be said to be very common. Numbers are yearly imported from Sicily, and kept as cage-birds for their song, which is too powerful for a room. A good songster is much esteemed, and fetches a good price."

In Algeria, according to Mr. J. H. Gurney, jun., "the Calandra occurs in large flocks up to the middle of March, is very common at Ain-Oussera and Bougzoul, but I never met with any among the Larks in the Algiers market. It is quite unknown in the Mzab. The underside of the wing is black, which, joined to its large size, renders it conspicuous wherever it is found."

Speaking of the bird in Northern Africa, Mr. Tristram remarks:—"Though swarming on the coasts, and by far the most common Lark in the Tell, the Calandra soon becomes scarce in the interior, and can only doubtfully claim a place in the Sahara list. The two specimens I obtained on its edge are decidedly larger than those of the plains, but do not exhibit any further specific distinction. The Calandra is in high esteem by French epicures, and ranks among the best '*gibier*' of the Algerian chasseur."

Respecting the Calandra in Palestine the same writer says:—"In the southern wilderness in winter the flocks of Larks were in amazing numbers, consisting not of one or two, but of eight species. The most