ALAUDA ARBOREA, *Linn.*

Wood-Lark.

Alauda arborea, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 77.
—— *nemorosa*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 797.
—— *cristatella*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. 499.
Galerida nemorosa, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 316.
—— *arborea*, Brehm, ib., p. 317.
Lullula arborea, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 92.
Galerita arborea, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil i. p. 125.
Alauda anthirostris, Landb. 1843.

This charming little bird, although closely resembling the Sky-Lark in its colouring, possesses many characteristics by which it may be distinguished from that species: it is considerably smaller in size, has a more slender bill, the hinder claw not so lengthened, a somewhat redder tint on the upper surface, and a tail not more than two-thirds of the length of that of its congener, a feature which at all times renders it conspicuously different.

As its name implies, it is an inhabitant of woods, or, rather, wooded lands, such as parks and scantily timbered forests, where it readily perches on the branches of the oak and other large trees—a practice not in accordance with that of the Sky-Lark, whose province is the ground, except when prompted to ascend on high, pour forth its lays to the rising sun, and herald in the day with its spirited strains. The circular ascents of the Wood-Lark, though often of greater duration than those of its congener, are never so lofty; and its sweet and soothing song is as often uttered from the branch of a tree in the neighbourhood of its mate, who is incubating her eggs in a secretly ensconced nest on the ground, as in the air. No mother's lullaby tuned over her endeared infant was ever more sweet and soothing. By one author its note is said to be among "the most touching sounds of nature;" by another, "rich and rather of a plaintive cast, frequently poured forth during the warmer nights of summer." By the French it is called "le Lulu," a term having reference to some of its softer notes. Although a common bird in England, the Wood-Lark is by no means universally dispersed therein; for it would seem that in some counties it is seldom if ever seen, In Cornwall Mr. Rodd says it is "local, not common in the west, more frequent about Truro and Tregony;" and this reminds me of a question put to me by Lord Falmouth—"What bird is it I hear at Tregothnan, singing in the air long after dusk during the months of spring and early summer?"—a question I could not at the time satisfactorily answer; but, from Mr. Rodd's assertion that the bird is common in that district, I have now no doubt that it is the Wood-Lark. It appears to be numerous in all the south-western counties, but, according to Montagu, is more plentiful in Devonshire than elsewhere. I can myself affirm that it breeds in most of the southern and midland parts of England. In the eastern division of the country it would appear to be far less numerous. Mr. Stevenson says, in his 'Birds of Norfolk,' that it is by no means plentiful there, that it is confined almost entirely to the western parts of that county, and only to be found in those localities that are best adapted to its nesting-habits. Sherwood forest one would suppose to be the place of all others for the Wood-Lark; yet Mr. Sterland states, in his history of the birds of that district, that it is not common there. Selby, referring to Northumberland, says, "with us it is by no means an abundant species." Macgillivray states his belief that it has not been observed in Scotland; and that competent authority, Sir William Jardine, remarks that he has not seen a Scottish specimen, and cannot refer to any authentic instance of its capture; yet Sir Robert Sibbald and Dr. Fleming both include it in their Lists of the birds of that country; Mr. Thomas Edwards informed the Rev. F. O. Morris that he had found this bird as far north as Banff; and Yarrell states that the late Mr. Heysham says it is sometimes taken by the bird-catchers in the vicinity of Dumfries; I apprehend, therefore, that it only wants looking for, to confirm the opinion I am now hazarding that it does form part of Scotland's avifauna. In Ireland Thompson says it is a resident but very local species. Out of the British Islands the Wood-Lark is more or less numerously dispersed over the whole of the southern and central parts of Europe, and proceeds as far northward as Sweden and Russia; it is a common bird in Palestine and the neighbouring countries, but it is not found in India. In North Africa, Loche says it is to be met with in the south of Algeria.

In most, if not all the parts of England above mentioned, the Wood-Lark builds its cup-shaped nest on the ground, among the herbage, but sometimes under the shelter of a tuft of grass. It is said to go to nest

Walter Imp.