## ANTHUS RICHARDII, Vieill.

## Richard's Pipit.

Anthus Richardii, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxvi. p. 491.

—— longipes, Hollandre, Faune de la Moselle, p. 84.

—— rupestris, Ménétr. Catal., p. 37.

Corydalla Richardii, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. ii. p. 397.

—— sinensis, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 247, Corydalla, sp. 2?

THE Anthi or Pipits principally reside in the Old World, over which they are far and widely distributed. In Europe they are abundant, both in species and individuals; in India and China they are equally numerous, and they are not without a representative in Japan. These grass-loving birds are graceful in form and elegant in deportment; their ample wings enable them to fly with vigour and continuance, their long legs to run with great facility; their claws, particularly the hinder one, are generally lengthened and slender; their plumage is never gay or brilliant, but usually assimilates to that of the herbage with which they are surrounded; and the sexes do not differ in their tints, and scarcely in size. Of all the species known, the present, if not the largest, is certainly the most elegant in form, the most graceful in appearance, and the one which stands forth conspicuously as the chief of the European species: at the same time it is the rarest and the least-known, very little having been ascertained respecting its habits and economy, either in this country or in any part of the globe. Its visits to the Continent and to us are very uncertain. It may be here to-day or to-morrow, and years may roll round before it comes again. Its breeding-places are unknown to us, and its eggs are desiderata in the cabinets of all oologists. In 1824 Mr. Vigors exhibited to the Meeting of the Zoological Club of the Linnean Society a specimen which had been taken alive in the fields on the northern side of London. In the spring of 1836 two others were also captured alive near the Metropolis; and in the autumn of 1866 I saw two more living examples, which had been taken near Highgate. These were birds of the year, and, although they were placed in the aviary of the Zoological Society, and every care taken of them, did not long survive. They had evidently been bred in some northern country, as they were passing southwards with other migrants when they were taken. Mr. Gatcombe believes that the bird occasionally remains the entire winter in some parts of England, and in confirmation of this opinion has sent me the following note:—" Nine specimens of the Richard's Pipit have occurred to my certain knowledge in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, seven of which have been killed by myself, my brother, and friends, and are now preserved in different collections. It seems to me that the species must remain with us during the whole winter, from the dates on which the specimens above-mentioned were obtained. Four of them made their appearance in November, two others later in the winter, one on the 29th of January; and two more, a pair, were seen by myself and a friend, one of which he shot. We were out for the purpose of procuring some small birds for a tame Buzzard, when the note of the Richard's Pipit caught our ears; and I shall never forget how excited we were on hearing the note for the first time. We could not imagine what it was, until I suggested that it must be that of the Richard's Pipit, as it afterwards proved to be. The note is similar to, but louder than, that of the Pied Wagtail, or something between it and that of the Skylark when moving from place to place. It seems very partial to fields in which there are cows, and often alighted on their dung. The stomach of all those I examined contained the remains of numerous small beetles and a few flies. In its undulating flight, as well as its note, it resembles the Pied Wagtail."

Mr. Thomas Bodenham informed me that a specimen of this species "was taken in a net at Shawardine, a few miles from Shrewsbury, on the 23th of October 1866." Mr. Rodd states that it is rare in Cornwall: "several examples were killed some years since in Redinnick fields, Penzance; but the bird has not since been observed." In Norfolk, Mr. Stevenson records four examples as having been obtained on the Denes, in the months of April and November. I find no mention of its occurrence in Scotland or Ireland; but it doubtless pays occasional visits to both those countries. On the Continent no author gives it more than a passing remark, its occurrence there being as infrequent as with us, in proof of which assertion I may mention that Nilsson, in his 'Scandinavian Fauna,' states that a specimen taken alive on board a steamer while lying to in Calmar Sound, during a fog, is the only known Swedish example. It has, however, been killed in Italy, Spain, France, and Germany. In India and China it occurs more frequently than in any of the western countries of Europe; and I suspect that we must there look for its nest and eggs, believing, as I do, that that portion of the globe is its true home, and England the extreme limit of its range in a western direction.

Mr. Jerdon says, "this large Pipit occurs throughout the greater part of India, but is only found during the cold weather or up to the end of April. It extends from Nepaul and the Himalayas to the extreme south;