Genus ---?

55. —— BICOLOR.

White-bellied Swallow.

Another American form, for which a generic title has not yet been proposed. It is said that a specimen has been killed near Derby; vide Wolley, in the 'Zoologist' for 1853, p. 3806, and Newton in 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1860, p. 131.

Family MEROPIDÆ.

The members of this family are among the most ornamental of the Insessorial birds, and are as elegant in form as they are beautiful in colour. Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia are the countries in which one or other of the not very numerous species are found. As the thinness of their plumage and the slightness of their form would indicate, they appear to be sensitive to cold; and most of them are resident in the tropical or warmer portions of the countries mentioned, though one species, the *Merops apiaster*, is very common in Spain. Insects of the various orders constitute their chief food. The species have been divided into several genera.

Genus Merops.

The species inhabiting Europe is the type of this form.

BEE-EATER.

Although there are many instances of the occurrence of this bird in Britain, it can only be regarded as an accidental visitor; and so uncertain are its visits, that years may elapse without an example being seen. It is common, and breeds in Spain, where it deposits its eggs in holes of sandbanks.

Family ALCEDINIDÆ.

The distribution of the Kingfishers may be said to be almost universal; but of the 125 species described, few are to be found in the New World, the family being very feebly represented in America. The various species have been much subdivided and received many generic appellations, their structure being as diverse as their modes of life and the kinds of food upon which they subsist. Water is by no means essential to the existence of many of them, especially those which dwell amidst the scoriæ of volcanoes and on hot and