

Genus **PTEROCLES**, *Temm.*

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* moderate, compressed, sometimes slender; the upper *mandible* straight, and curved towards the point. *Nostrils* basal, partly closed by a membrane, and covered by the feathers of the forehead. *Feet* furnished with short toes, the hind toe being very small, and articulated high on the tarsus; three toes before united together as far as the first articulation and edged by a membrane; the front of the tarsus covered with short feathers, the posterior aspect being naked. *Nails* very short, that of the hind toe sharp, the rest obtuse. *Tail* conical; the two middle feathers occasionally prolonged into filaments. *Wings* long and pointed; the first *quill-feather* longest.

SAND-GROUSE.

Pterocles arenarius, *Temm.*

Le Ganga unibande.

THE birds which compose the genus *Pterocles* have been separated by M. Temminck from the genus *Tetrao*, under which they had been previously included; and, as they now stand, form a well-defined genus, the species of which inhabits the dry and sandy deserts of the hotter portions of the globe. The number, however, is far from being considerable; two only have, we believe, as yet been ascertained to be natives of Europe. The present species is found in many of the provinces of Spain, particularly Granada and Andalusia; it is also found in Sicily and in the deserts of the North of Africa, as well as in Asia, whence we have received it from the Himalaya Mountains. It does not appear to extend itself further northward in Europe than the places above noticed.

The *Pterocles arenarius*, as far as our experience goes, is the largest of its genus, and belongs moreover to that section of it which wants the elongated filiform tail-feathers, so characteristic of the other European species. In habits, manners, and places of nidification, it closely resembles the *Pterocles setarius*,—circumstances which we have detailed at length in our description of that beautiful bird.

The male and female differ considerably in their plumage,—a circumstance in a greater or less degree characteristic of the species of this genus.

In the male, the top of the head, the occiput and breast are of a delicate grey colour; the back and wing-coverts light rufous; each feather being irregularly blotched with greyish black and tipped with tawny yellow; the quill-feathers dark grey; the throat and sides of the cheeks rufous, beneath which a large triangular black mark surmounts the delicate grey of the breast, and across this again extends a black band passing from one shoulder to the other. The whole of the under surface is black, with the exception of the extremities of the tail-coverts, which are white; the tail tawny yellow with grey bars, and terminating gradually with the same colour. Total length twelve or thirteen inches.

In the female, the whole of the upper surface is of a tawny yellow, thickly covered with irregular zigzag and barbed markings of black; the throat merely affords an indication of the black mark which distinguishes the male; the breast is of the same colour as the upper surface, spotted with black and crossed from shoulder to shoulder with a narrow band of black, beneath which, and the under surface which is black, intervenes a space of about an inch broad of a delicate fawn colour; the under tail-coverts partly white as in the male; feet greenish olive.

We have figured a male and female in their adult plumage, rather less than their natural size.