

“ Few birds are more wary and less easily procured than the *Megapodius* ; it inhabits the belts of brush along the coast, and I never found the tumulus at a greater distance from the sea than a few hundred yards. When disturbed it seldom rises at once, unless on the margin of a thicket, but runs off to some distance and then takes to wing, flying heavily, but without any of the whirring noise of the true *Gallinaceæ*. It seldom takes a long flight, and usually perches on a tree, remaining there in a crouching attitude with outstretched neck, but flying off again upon observing any motion made by its pursuer ; and it is only by cautiously creeping up under cover of the largest trees that it can be approached within gunshot. As an example of its shyness, I may mention that a party of three persons, scattered about in a small jungle on Nogo Island, for the purpose of shooting the *Megapodius*, did not see a single bird, although they put up several, one of which came towards me and perched, unconscious of my presence, within 20 yards. At Port Essington I have shot this bird among mangroves, the roots of which were washed by the sea at high water ; and Capt. F. P. Blackwood killed one while running on the mud in a similar locality, in both instances close to a mound. I never witnessed the escape of the young from the mound ; but one, as large as a quail, and covered with feathers, was brought to Lieut. Ince by a native, who affirmed that he had dug it out along with several eggs.

“ Iris yellowish brown ; stomach a complete gizzard, being thick and muscular, containing small quartz pebbles, small shells (*Helix* and *Bulimus*), and black seeds ; intestine 34 inches in length, of the size of a goose-quill, and nearly uniform in thickness, much twisted and contracted at intervals ; cæcum slender, dilated at the extremity, and  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length.”

#### Family TINAMIDÆ ?, *G. R. Gray.*

#### Subfamily TURNICINÆ, *G. R. Gray.*

#### Genus PEDIONOMUS, *Gould.*

Generic characters.

*Bill* nearly as long as the head, straight, compressed towards the tip ; nostrils basal, placed in a groove, and protected by an operculum ; *wings* short and concave, first, second and third primaries equal in length ; tertiaries longer than the primaries ; *tail* nearly obsolete ; *tarsi* elongated and defended in front with transverse scales ; toes four in number, the hinder one feeble and placed high on the tarsus.

Few of the discoveries I made in Australia interested me more than that of the species forming the subject of the present genus, and of which during my sojourn in the country I only obtained a male. Subsequently Mr. Strange sent me another example, which from its much larger size and the circumstance of its neck being adorned with a beautiful collar of mingled black and white feathers, I considered a distinct species and characterized it as such, under the name *P. torquatus*, and assigned that of *microurus* to the males or birds destitute of the collar, an error which the observations of Sir George Grey and Mr. Strange have enabled me to rectify, and which shows that this bird is another of the anomalies so often met with in Australia, since, contrary to the general rule, the female is a far finer and more conspicuously-coloured bird than her mate.

“ You ask me,” says Sir George Grey, “ to tell you something about *Pedionomus*. There is but one species ; you have described two, *P. torquatus* and *P. microurus* ; the former is the female and the latter is the male. We have now three of these birds in confinement, all similar to your *P. torquatus*. We had four ; the fourth, which died, was like your *P. microurus* ; and was certainly a male ; they were all caught in the same net, hence I infer that several females associate with one male.

“ We have had several of these birds in confinement at different times ; they eat pounded wheat, raw and boiled rice, bread and flies ; the latter appear to be their favourite food. They soon become perfectly tame ; the three now in our possession we have had for upwards of four months.

“ These birds are migratory ; they appear at Adelaide in June and disappear about January ; where they go has not yet been ascertained. They never fly if they can avoid so doing, and are often caught by dogs ; when disturbed, they crouch down and endeavour to hide themselves in a tuft of grass. When running about they are