TURNIX DUSSUMIERI, *Temm.*

Little Hemipode.

Hemipodius Dussumieri, Temm. Pl. Col. 454. fig. 2.—Sykes, Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii. p. 155.—Id. Beng. Sport. Mag., 1836, pl. i. fig. 5.—Id. Trans. Zool. Soc. of Lond., vol. ii. p. 23.
Turnix Dussumieri, G. R. Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. *Gallinæ*, &c., p. 41.—Id. part v. *Gallinæ*, p. 67.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part ii. p. 599.—Blyth, Ibis, 1867, p. 161.
Hemipodius variabilis, Hodgs. Beng. Sport. Mag., 1837, p. 345.
Turnix Sykesi, Smith, Zool. of S. Africa.—Jerd. Birds of Ind., vol. ii. part ii. p. 600.—Blyth, Ibis, 1867, p. 161.
Dabki of some Hindoos, *Tura* of others.
Chininaj of the Hindoos at Muttra.
Libbia of the Hindoos at Purneah.
Tata battera in Scinde.
Chinna, tella, or *pedda daba gunalu,* in Telegu.

This little Turnix has been for a long time a sad puzzle to ornithologists, and much confusion consequently exists respecting its synonymy. Mr. Blyth is, I believe, convinced that there is only one species of these little Button-Quails, as they are called by many Indian sportsman, and that the birds named *Turnix Dussumieri* and *T. Sykesi* are identical; and I may remark that I have never seen a bird with characters sufficiently different to induce me to regard them as otherwise. Probably the great variation in the size and colouring of the sexes may have been the cause of Dr. Smith and Mr. Jerdon considering them to constitute two species. Colonel Sykes, in his valuable paper "On the Quails and Hemipodii of India" published in the second volume of the 'Transactions of the Zoological Society of London,' states that the *Turnix Dussumieri* "affects short grass and fields of pulse of *Dolichos biflorus*, *Phaseolus max*, and *Ervum lens*," that he "never found the bird otherwise than solitary," and that "it is so difficult to flush that it not unfrequently rises from beneath the feet; and when on the wing its flight is so abrupt, angular, and short that it is generally down ere the gun is well up to the shoulder."

This "Button-Quail," as it is called by sportsmen in India, says Mr. Jerdon, "is found in open grassy glades in forests or jungles, both on the plains and more especially in hilly districts, and is also found in grass jungles throughout Bengal and the countries to the eastward. It occurs throughout India in suitable localities, is rare in the bare Deccan and North-western Provinces, and is not uncommon in open glades of the upland districts of Malabar, in the Eastern Ghats, and in lower Bengal. It is always seen singly, in patches of long grass, cornfields, and wherever there is thick herbage. It is flushed with great difficulty, often, getting up at your very feet, flies but a few yards, and drops down again into the grass, not to be re-flushed but after a most laborious search, and sometimes allowing itself to be caught by the hand or by a dog. Its name of *Dabki*, signifying 'squatter,' is given from this habit. It emits a low plaintive moan of a single note. I regret that I know nothing of its habits as to breeding, &c."

Feathers of the crown light brown, with dark margins; line over the eye and the ear-coverts light fulvous; back of the neck bright rust-red; upper surface reddish brown, barred with dark brown, these bars being most conspicuous on the lower part of the back and the rump; scapularies, and some of the contiguous back-feathers margined with yellowish cream-colour; wing-coverts pale sandy brown, with a black spot near the pale-yellowish-margined tip; primaries dark brown, narrowly margined with yellowish white; chin and upper part of the throat white, remainder of the under surface rusty red, richest on the upper half of the abdomen and the breast; bill yellow; irides yellowish white; legs and feet deep yellow.

The plate represents the two sexes of the size of life.