MICROPERDIX ERYTHRORHYNCHA.

Little Red-billed Partridge.

Coturnix erythrorhyncha, Sykes in Proc. of Com. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii. p. 153.—Id. Trans. Zool. Soc., vol. ii. p. 16, pl. 1.—Gray, Zool. Ind., vol. ii. pl. 44. fig. 2.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 507, *Coturnix*, sp. 10.—Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 40.
——— ? *erythrorhyncha*, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 255.
Perdicula erythrorhyncha, Bonap. in Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. des Sci., Mai 12, 1856, tom. lxii.
Perdix erythrorhyncha, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 808.
Kokui Lowa of the Hindoos (Jerdon).
Red-bellied or *Black Quail* of the Neilgherries.

The little bird figured in the accompanying Plate may claim the precedence in point of beauty over all the smaller *Gallinaceæ*, its form and contour being especially elegant. It appears to me to be very nearly allied to the *Excalfatoria Chinensis* of China and the little Bush Partridges of Australia, figured in my work on the birds of that country under the generic appellation of *Synoicus*; at the same time it is quite distinct from both those forms. Neither can I for a moment hesitate about separating it from the small Bush Partridges (*Perdiculæ*) of India, with which it has hitherto been associated,—those birds having stout and deeply formed bills, and being clothed in a very different style of plumage; I have therefore made it the type of a new genus—*Microperdix*.

The great peninsula of India is the country in which this bird dwells in a state of nature, and over which it is generally distributed; at the same time it is somewhat local, as will be seen from the following brief notes by Col. Sykes and Mr. Jerdon, which comprise all that is known respecting it.

"This very handsome bird," says Colonel Sykes, "I have never met with out of the valley of Karleh, in the Ghauts, frequenting the same ground as the Black Partridge (*Francolinus pictus*). It is gregarious and abundant."

"This handsomely plumaged Quail," remarks Mr. Jerdon, "is very abundant on the tops of the Neilgherries, frequenting the low brushwood of the woods, and occasionally entering gardens. As it is mentioned by Colonel Sykes and Mr. Elliot, in his Catalogue, it is probably to be found in all the more elevated districts of the Western Ghauts."

The following is Colonel Sykes's description of the two sexes:—

"Male: the bill and legs are red, which colour nearly disappears in dried specimens; the irides are of a brownish yellow-ochre colour; crown velvet-black; the throat is pure white, bounded by a narrow line of black; and a white bar passes across the forehead, and is extended over both eyes to the back of the head; all the upper surface of the body and the breast rich chocolate-brown, studded with lunules of velvet-black; the feathers of the scapularies, wing-coverts and secondaries with large patches of black; a yellow line runs down the shaft, which is crossed by one or two yellow lines; wings reddish brown, spotted and barred with faint chestnut on their outer webs; tail brown, spotted with black, and barred with yellow lines; lower part of the breast, abdomen and vent rufous; each feather of the flanks with a broad spot of black, and with a whitish tip.

"The female differs only in the absence of the black on the head and the white bar across the forehead, the latter being rufous; and in the throat and under surface being pale chestnut, washed with brown on the breast."

The stomachs of those examined by Colonel Sykes were "full of grass-seeds, with a few seeds of *Ervum Lens*."

The Plate represents two males and a female, of the natural size.