horseback nor by stalking could he approach them. After being many times disturbed they betook themselves, flying with no small noise, to the bank of the Tarei and eastwards over the high steppe, alighting on two places where herds of cattle had been folded in the winter, and consequently covered with a thick layer of dung, trodden so hard that no vegetation appeared through it. Here they settled closely; and as night came on he left them, making sure of finding them the next day; but in the morning they had vanished, and throughout the summer he did not meet with a single example in that district. The herdsmen assured him they would return; but it was not until October and in another locality, near Abagaitui, that he again saw them. They were then flying in skeins, like Plovers, high and rapidly towards the north. The Cossacks who accompany the caravans to Pekin across the Gobi told him that Syrrhaptes also inhabits those plains in great numbers, and serves them for game on their march. From the above passages it will be seen that the bird is subject to sudden movements on a very large scale, and of a kind which, at first sight, appear almost capricious."

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"During winter," says Mr. Swinhoe, "flocks of hundreds constantly pass over the plains between Peking and Tientsin with a very swift flight, not unlike that of the Golden Plover. The market at Tientsin is literally glutted with them, and you may purchase them for a mere nothing. The natives call them 'Sha-chee,' or Sand-fowl, and told me they were mostly caught in clap-nets. After a fall of snow their capture is greatest; where the net is laid, the ground is cleared and strewed with small green beans. This clear patch is almost sure to catch the eyes of the passing flocks, when they descend and crowd into the snare. It only remains for the fowler, hidden at a distance, to jerk the strings, and in his haul he not unfrequently takes the whole flock. Numbers, however, are shot with matchlocks. When on the ground they are rather shy and difficult of approach; but on the wing they will sometimes dart within a few yards of you. The only note I have heard them utter is a rather melodious chuckle. The natives say that during summer they are numerous on the vast plains of Tartary beyond the Great Wall, and that they breed there in the sand."

The male has the face buff, deepening on the lower part of the throat into a large gorget of light chestnut-red; on each side of the neck a mark of the same tint; head, ear-coverts, sides of the neck, breast, and abdomen blue grey, passing into greyish buff on the flanks, a few of the feathers on each side of the breast edged at the extremity with black, forming a band which nearly meets in the centre; beyond the grey a broad band of black crosses the abdomen in front of the legs, posterior to which the abdomen, the vent and under tail-coverts, the legs, and feet are creamy-white; all the upper surface sandy-red crossed by numerous crescentic bands of black, anterior to each of which is a wash of grey; wing-coverts grey, stained on the edges with reddish buff; tips of the first row of the greater coverts bright chestnut-red, the the second row black; centre of the primaries and secondaries black, the inner webs bordered with greyish stone-colour, and the outer webs bordered with grey next the shaft and outwardly with buff; tail similarly marked to the upper surface, the outer feathers tipped with white; the filamentous extremity of the outer primary on each side and those of the two central tail-feathers black; bill olive-green becoming darker towards the tip of the upper mandible; irides dark brown; naked skin round the eye olive-grey; toe-nails greenish black.

The above description is taken from a specimen killed in the Altai: I mention this because the bird seems to be subject to some slight variation in colour.

The female has the cheeks and chin light buff becoming gradually deeper on the lower part of the throat, where it is bounded by a narrow crescentic line of black; feathers of the head sandy-red, each with a dark-brown centre; the colouring of the upper surface is similar to that of the male, with this exception, that the dark bands assume the form of arrow-heads; the breast is dull greyish stone-colour, numerously spotted on the sides with black; the wing-coverts have each a spot of black near the tip; in other respects the colouring is similar to that of the male, but less vivid.

The Plate represents the two sexes, of the natural size.