PODOCES PANDERI, Fischer.

Pander's Podoces.

Podoces Panderi, Fischer, Mém. Imp. Soc. Nat. Mosc., v. pl. 21.—Bp. Consp., i. p. 388.—Sharpe, P. Z. S., 1870, p. 334.—Cab. J. f. O. 1873, p. 63, Taf. iii. figs. 37, 38.

Corvus Panderi, Eversm. Reis. Buch. App., p. 126.

Pica Panderi, Wagl. Syst. Av., Pica, sp. 17.

Garrulus Panderi, Gray, Hand-l. B., ii. p. 3 (1870).

Although many years have elapsed since this fine species was first described, it still remains one of the rarest kinds of birds known, and not half a dozen examples are as yet to be seen in the galleries of European museums. As far as I know, only one specimen has ever been sent to England, and from that bird my present Plate has been drawn. I owe the opportunity of portraying this remarkable species to the liberality of Lord Lilford, in whose collection the bird remains. His Lordship may be congratulated on the acquisition of this rarity, though it could be wished that it were in better condition.

Structurally *Podoces* reminds us of *Pastor*, and it resembles the members of the latter genus in its style of coloration. Four species of the genus have been discovered, and all of them are inhabitants of the great desert region which stretches across Central Asia. From the inaccessibility of their habitat little is known of their habits; and the few notes reproduced below are, I believe, all that has been recorded respecting the economy of *Podoces Panderi*.

Dr. Eversmann brought back one specimen from his Buchara expedition, this being the bird noted by Lichtenstein, Bonaparte, and Cabanis as existing in the Berlin Museum, where for a long time it was the only one known. He observes, "One example was shot during our upward journey in the beginning of December in the Desert of Kisilkum." He gives at the same time a very minute description of the species. Severtzoff has more recently met with it during his journey to Turkestan; and the late Professor Fedtschenko discovered the eggs of the present species while travelling through the last-mentioned country. These were exhibited by Dr. Cabanis at a meeting of the German Ornithological Society held on the 10th of October, 1872, when the following note was given respecting the *Podoces*:—"The birds were found nesting in the Steppes on low trees, the nest being placed about the height of a man from the ground. The cry of *Podoces* is remarkably loud and like that of a *Garrulax*."

The accompanying description has been taken from Lord Lilford's specimen:—

Adult.—General colour clear grey; the forehead, eyebrow, and a circlet of feathers round the eye white; in front of the latter a triangular patch of black; ear-coverts a little lighter grey than the crown; least wing-coverts grey like the back, the greater series white, with black bases; primary coverts externally white, black at base of inner web; primaries pure white, except towards the ends, which are black, as also the shafts of the quills; the secondaries white, the bases black, shaded with metallic green, this black colour increasing diagonally on the secondaries and occupying nearly the whole of the innermost, excepting a small patch of white at the extreme tips; upper tail-coverts entirely black, shaded with metallic green; throat white; fore neck black, forming a conspicuous patch; rest of under surface of body suffused with a blush of pale pink; the abdomen and under tail-coverts white; under wing-coverts pure white, the base of the quills black, forming a bar right across the wing; bill horn-colour; legs brown. Total length 9 inches, culmen 1·3, wing 4·7, tail 4, tarsus 1·9.

6. V. O. E. : C. V. O. E. : C.

The figures are the size of life.