PASSER AMMODENDRI, *Severtzow.*

Turkestan Sparrow.

Passer ammodendri, Dode, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1871, pp. 480, 481.

The members of the genus *Passer* (of which our own *P. domesticus* may be considered a typical example, if not the veritable type of the form) are widely spread over various portions of the Old World. They amount to about fifteen in number, four of which inhabit Europe; as many or even more are indigenous in Africa; others occur in Asia Minor, Palestine, India, China, and Japan, to which modern research has recently added another very distinct and highly interesting species from Turkestan. The whole of them bear a very general resemblance in size; none are highly coloured or gaudy in their attire, but, generally speaking, the males are distinguished by conspicuous markings on the head and throat, which are absent in the females; some are peculiarly domestic in their habits, frequenting villages, towns, and great cities, while others resort to the open country, often in troops of hundreds, and roost on rocks, in woods, and great beds of reeds. On the whole they may be said to be a highly gregarious family of birds. Many persons believe that this form is found in America; but this is not the case, with the exception of *P. domesticus*, and that has been introduced; neither are any species found in Australia, New Zealand, or Polynesia.

In form and size the Sparrow of Turkestan assimilates closely to *P. domesticus*; but a glance at the accompanying Plate will convince the reader that it is very differently coloured, and of its specific value there can be no doubt. So little is known respecting it that the following brief note from the pen of M. Charles Dode, of St. Petersburg, published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London' for 1871, above referred to, comprises all that, so far as I am aware, has been recorded:—

"Cette jolie espèce de passereau a été trouvée par M. Severtzow naturaliste Russe dans les montagnes Célestes sur des plateaux d'un accès difficile; les seules données qui m'aient été communiquées, c'est que pendant l'hiver qu'on se trouve, cet oiseau ne descend pas dans la plaine."

Like most, if not all, the other members of its genus, it is not migratory, and probably never leaves the high plateaux of its native country; otherwise collectors would surely have met with it in China, India, or the eastern portion of Europe.

The male has the crown of the head and back of the neck black, each feather margined with grey; line from the bill above the eye white; sides of the head cinnamon-brown; lores, a curved line behind the eye, and the chin and throat deep black; mantle greyish brown, striated with black; lesser wing-coverts black, largely tipped with white; greater coverts and secondaries black, margined with greyish white; spurious wing and primaries brown, becoming much darker towards their tips, and narrowly margined with grey; lower half of the back grey; tail blackish brown, narrowly edged with grey; under surface greyish white, with a faint wash of brown on the ear-coverts and flanks; bill black; feet flesh-colour.

The female has the head and upper surface grey, streaked with black; across the forehead and over each eye a greyish-white line; ear-coverts brown; under surface buffy white, with a small obscure patch of blackish brown on the throat.

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