EMBERIZA CINEREA, *Strickl.*

Cinereous Bunting.

Emberiza cinerea, Strickl. in Proc. Zool. Soc., part iv., 1836, p. 99.—Gray & Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 377, *Emberiza*, sp. 12.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 464, *Emberiza*, sp. 5.—Jard. Mem. of Strickl., p. clxiii.

It gives me great pleasure to figure in the 'Birds of Asia' this very rare species of Bunting, inasmuch as it affords me an opportunity of reminding my readers, if indeed, such a reminder were necessary, of the existence, discoveries, and writings of the late Hugh E. Strickland, whose early, sad, and lamented death is still and will long be retained in the memory of his many friends and admirers, among whom I am happy to be numbered. More especially do I figure this bird with pleasure, since Strickland not only gave it a name, but was its first discriminator. The original description appeared in his "List of Birds noticed or obtained in Asia Minor in the winter of 1835 and spring of 1836," published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for the latter year, p. 97; the specimen from which it was taken is now in the Cambridge University Museum, to which the whole of Strickland's collections have been presented by his widow, the second daughter of that veteran ornithologist Sir William Jardine, Bart. I have two in my own cabinet, sent to this country direct from Smyrna by Dr. Kruper, and I hear that many others have been collected in the same locality; still the bird is so rare and so little known to ornithologists, that some of them have even questioned its existence, and others have considered it a mere variety of some previously known species; but these doubts will, I think, be readily dispelled from the mind of any one, conversant with birds, who will be good enough to examine my figures in the accompanying Plate, or obtain specimens from the neighbourhood of Smyrna, where it was met with by Strickland, and where we now know it is by no means uncommon.

At a first glance the bird would appear to be a *Euspiza* or a *Glycyspina*; but it is really a true Bunting, the knob under the roof of the upper mandible being as conspicuous as in the most typical of the *Emberizinæ*. As is usual with this group of birds, the sexes are very different in colouring, the female being destitute of the yellow tint on the head which distinguishes the male, and consequently is a more sombre-looking bird, as will be seen on reference to the figures of the two sexes on my Plate.

Nothing, so far as I am able to ascertain, is on record respecting the habits and economy of this Bunting. The following is Strickland's description, upon which I cannot improve:—

"*Male.* Crown of the head greenish yellow, becoming cinereous at the nape; back cinereo-fuscous, with an obscure streak of brown down the middle of each feather; rump cinereous; tail dark brown, the two lateral pairs of feathers white on the inner web for nearly half their length towards the extremities; wings dark brown, the coverts and quills margined with whitish, the scapularies with fulvous; chin and throat yellow, becoming greenish on the cheeks; breast cinereous; abdomen white; sides cinereous; bill dusky; legs flesh-colour.

"Total length 6 inches, bill $\frac{2}{5}$, wing $3\frac{1}{2}$, tail $2\frac{3}{4}$, tarsi $\frac{3}{4}$.

"The beak of this species most nearly resembles that of *Emberiza cia*.

"Habitat. The low hills near Smyrna. Killed in April."

The female is characterized, as above mentioned, by the absence of the yellow colouring on the face and throat, by having a gorget of small streaks of brown down the sides and across the base of the throat, and by the feathered eyelash being white instead of yellow.

The figures are of the natural size.