

LEIOTHRIX ARGENTAUROS.

Silver-eared Leiothrix.

Mesia argentauris, Hodgs. Ind. Rev., vol. ii. 1838, p. 88.—Gray, List of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 94.

Leiothrix argentauris, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 269.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 99.—Id. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, vol. xxiv. p. 279.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 332.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 365.

Philocalyx argentauris, Hodgs. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. x. p. 29.

Fringilloparus argentauris, Hodgs. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xiii. p. 935.

Fringilloparus (Mesia) argentauris, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., 1844, p. 84.

THIS bird has so many characters in common with the type of the genus *Leiothrix* (*L. luteus*), that I am inclined to associate it with that bird, rather than to adopt the generic term of *Mesia*, proposed for it by Mr. Hodgson. Both *L. luteus* and *L. argentauris* have very truncate tails: the outer feathers of the former, it is true, turn outwards in a somewhat singular manner, reminding one of *Lyrurus* among the Grouse, but I regard this difference as specific rather than as generic; in the form of their bills, legs, and wings, they are very similar. The native locality of this fine bird is the southern face of the great Himalayas; and it is in all probability universally distributed over every district, from Nepaul on the east to Afghanistan on the west. My own specimens are from the former country; but Mr. Moore, of the India Museum, states that a specimen contained in that collection was obtained in Afghanistan by Mr. Griffith. Like most of the Leiotrichine birds, a great similarity exists in the colouring of the two sexes of this species; but some individuals are much less brightly coloured than others: in all probability these are females.

The few members known of the genus *Leiothrix* are more robust in form than those of *Siva*; they have also more hooked and stouter bills.

Forehead, bill, throat, and chest fine orange; ear-coverts silvery grey, remainder of the head black; nape orange-brown; back, scapularies, and wings dark grey; the greater coverts rich, deep blood-red, and the primaries margined with orange-red; upper and under tail-coverts deep blood-red; tail dark olive, margined externally with dull orange; under surface grey; centre of the abdomen orange-buff; feet reddish flesh-colour; irides brown.

The figures are of the natural size. The plant is the *Dendrobium cretaceum*.