

LEIOTHRIX LUTEUS.

Fork-tailed Leiothrix.

Mésange de Nanquin, Sonn. Voy., tom. ii. p. 205. pl. 114. fig. 2.

Sylvia lutea, Scop. Del. Flor. et Faun. Insub., pars ii. p. 96.

Tanagra Sinensis, Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 897.

Parus furcatus, Temm. Pl. Col. 287. fig. 1.

Chinese Finch, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vi. p. 85?

Bahila calipyga, Hodgs. Ind. Rev. 1838, p. 88.

Mesia (Bahila) calipyga, Hodgs. Ind. Rev. 1838, p. 88.

Leiothrix luteus, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 99.

Calipyga for *Bahila*, Hodgs. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. x. part i. p. 29.

Leiothrix calipyga, Hodgs. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvii. part ii. p. 934.—Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 94.

THIS beautiful little bird is one of the indigenous and stationary species of Upper India, over the hilly parts of which it is generally diffused ; it is consequently one of the commonest birds in all our collections ; the older writers have also given China and Manilla as its habitats, but I have never yet seen examples from either of those countries. Mr. Hodgson states that it inhabits the central and hilly regions of Nepaul ; it was killed by Captain Boys between Bumorie and Burthal, and by the late Hon. F. J. Shore in the Doon, where it would appear to be very abundant, as Mr. Shore mentions that he killed five at one shot, while engaged in picking up worms or insects from the dry gravelly bed of a stream from which the water had recently retired.

According to Mr. Hodgson it “ feeds equally upon grass-seeds, and upon insects and their larvæ and pupæ ; ” and I learn from Mr. Shore’s Notes that it is known to the natives of the Doon by the name of *Nance chura*, and that it retires to the cold ridges of the hills during the hot season. He further states that it builds in small bushes, where the underwood is tolerably abundant, a nest composed of grass and hair, and lays four or five eggs which are “ black spotted with yellow ” (?).

General plumage olive-green, becoming of a brighter olive on the forehead ; primaries and secondaries black ; the first seven primaries margined with bright yellow, deepening into rich chestnut-red at their base ; the next three feathers with a mark of rich orange at the base, and a streak of rich red on the apical portion of their external webs ; secondaries with a similar orange mark at the base of the external web ; the three secondaries nearest the body olive, washed externally with rufous ; upper tail-coverts reddish olive, slightly tipped with white ; tail olive, the two central feathers largely tipped with black, lateral feathers margined externally and slightly tipped with the same hue ; lores yellow ; throat yellow, deepening into rich orange on the breast ; streak from the angle of the bill running beneath the eye and the under surface pale greenish olive, becoming yellow down the centre of the abdomen ; under tail-coverts yellow ; bill coral-red ; irides dark brown ; legs fleshy brown.

The female is similar in colouring, but the hues are not so bright, nor the markings so decided as in the male.

Mr. Hodgson states that as the feathers become old the colours fade very considerably ; the green of the upper parts changing to plain grey, the yellow of the throat and breast to a dull buffy hue, and the yellowish tinge of the abdominal region disappears altogether.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.