MILVUS GOVINDA, Sykes.

Govinda Kite.

Milvus Govinda, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., Part II. p. 81.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. App. p. 2, App. to p. 24 of vol. i.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 21, Milvus, sp. 2.—List of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., Part I. 2nd edit., p. 43.

- Cheele, Jerdon in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. x. p. 71.
- melanotis, Temm. et Schlegel, Faun. Japon. Aves, p. 14. tab. v.?
- indicus vel Cheela, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 81.
- —— Cheela, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 24, Milvus, sp. 3.
- —— melanotis, Ib., Milvus, sp. 6.
- (Hydroictinia) govinda, Kaup, Isis 1847, p. 119.

Haliaëtus lineatus, Gray, Ill. Ind. Zool., pl. 18.

Falco Cheela, Lath. Ind. Orn., i. p. 14?—Daud. Orn., ii. p. 41?—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. vii. p. 69?

Cheela Falcon, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., p. 33?

Cheela Eagle, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 145?

Cheel, of the Hindoos.

Common or Pariah Kite, of the European residents in India.

This fine species of true Kite appears to be very generally dispersed over the Peninsula of India from Madras to the base of the Himalayas, performing the same offices there that the *Milvus affinis* does in Australia and the *Milvus ater* in Europe. Like its Australian prototype, it is a bold and fearless bird, the presence of man, in his wanderings through the country, at all times attracting its presence.

I cannot for a moment consider this bird in any other light than as specifically different from the *M. ater* of Europe and the *M. affinis* of Australia; in my opinion they form three very distinct species, of which the *M. Govinda* is by far the largest and finest. The accompanying drawing was made from specimens collected by Captain Boys, and which now form part of the fine collection at Philadelphia.

"This very useful bird," says Mr. Jerdon, "is very numerous, more especially in cantonments, camps and villages, and is continually upon the look-out for refuse of every description; Colonel Sykes says, Constantly soaring in the air in circles, watching an opportunity to dart upon a chicken, upon refuse animal matter thrown from the cook-room, and occasionally even having the hardihood to stoop at a dish of meat carrying from the cook-room to the house.' Away from the cantonments it preys chiefly on reptiles, and is also remarkably fond of fish.

Considerable difference occurs in the colouring of the young and old birds, the youthful plumage being characterized by a much greater amount of white on the head and neck, as well as on the upper surface generally, the white occupying the tips of the feathers of the upper surface and the margins of those of the under surface, which therefore appears as conspicuously streaked with buffy white, as in the adult it is with dark brown.

The entire head clothed with feathers, which are of a dark brown margined with white, giving it a streaked appearance; all the upper surface very dark brown, becoming of a paler hue on the tips of the wing-coverts; tail brown, crossed by numerous irregular bars of a deeper colour; breast and abdomen of a paler brown than the upper surface, with a broad streak of very dark brown, bounded on each side by a narrow line of brownish white down the centre of each feather, giving the whole a conspicuously streaked appearance; vent, thighs and under tail-coverts rusty red, with a narrow line of dark brown down the shaft; irides dark brown; cere and base of lower mandible yellow, upper mandible and point of the lower black; legs and feet olive-yellow; claws black.

The figures represent a young and an old bird about two-thirds of the natural size.