

PEDIONOMUS TORQUATUS, *Gould.*

Collared Plain Wanderer.

Pedionomus torquatus, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., September 8, 1840.

THE structure of this singular little bird is admirably adapted for inhabiting those extensive and arid plains which characterize many of the central portions of Australia; and we may reasonably suppose, that whenever its vast interior shall be explored, other species of this new form will be discovered. The bird forming the subject of the present Plate was received from Mr. Strange, who merely stated that he killed it on the plains, near Adelaide. I also learn from Captain Grey, that Mr. Hack, of Adelaide, had a dog which was constantly in the habit of catching a small quail-like bird while hunting over those plains, and which is doubtless identical with the present, as a second species I obtained on Gawler Plains was caught in a similar way by one of my dogs.

Its lengthened and bustard-like legs are admirably suited for running, while its short round and concave wings are as little adapted for extensive flight; the general contour of this little Wanderer in fact suggests the idea of a diminutive Bustard; and were its legs not furnished with a hind toe, it would range very near to that group. It has also several characters in common with *Hemipodius*, and a bird from Africa, figured by Mr. Swainson in his "Zoological Illustrations" under the name of *Hemipodius nivosus*, but which in his more recently published "Classification of Birds" he has placed in the genus *Ortygis* of Illiger.

I regret to say I am unable to give any account of its habits and economy; but I trust that my friend Captain Sturt, who is resident near the locality it inhabits, and whose ardent love of Natural History will induce him to pay every attention to the subject, may be able to collect the requisite information on these interesting points, in which case his observations will be included in the present work.

Crown of the head reddish brown, speckled with black; sides of the head and the neck light buff, speckled with black; neck surrounded by a broad band of white, thickly spotted with black; all the upper surface reddish brown, each feather having several transverse crescent-shaped marks in the centre, and margined with buff; tail buff, crossed by numerous narrow brown bars; centre of the breast rufous, the remainder of the under surface buff; the feathers on the breast marked in a similar manner to those on the upper surface, and the flanks with large irregular spots of black; irides straw-yellow; bill yellow, passing into black at the point; feet greenish yellow.

The figures are of the natural size.