

V.—Notice of some New Species of Birds from Upper Burmah.

By Surgeon-Major T. C. JERDON.

THE following birds were obtained by me near Thayetmyo, our frontier station in Burmah. The climate and productions, both vegetable and animal, are quite distinct from those of Lower Burmah. The climate is comparatively dry; and the vegetation partakes of the character of the dry countries of India, mixed with some of the forms peculiar to Burmah. Ferns and orchids are few and rare.

I was only in this locality for two or three months, but managed to obtain a few novelties and some interesting birds that have lately been described. Among these is *Chatarrhæa gularis*, Blyth. This bird is abundant and familiar, entering compounds and building in the hedges. It is a typical Chatachee, and when hopping with great bounds gives you the idea of a rat rather than of a bird. It has the usual whistling call of its congener in India. *C. earlei*, Blyth, is also not rare, but is confined entirely to the long grass and reeds on the islands and churrs of the Burrampootra.

I obtained both sexes of the little-known *Pratincola leucura*, Blyth, which has only hitherto been sent from the banks of the Indus, and is figured among the drawings of the late Sir A. Burnes. It appears not to be rare here, but is only found in the bed of the river in the long grass. I never saw it once in the jungle that lines the banks.

Lanius hypoleucus, Blyth, is common, and the only true Shrike I saw. I believe the Parrakeet will turn out to be a new species. I shot several on my arrival, but being in imperfect plumage (nearly unmixed green), I rashly concluded them to be young birds of *Palæornis barbatus*, which I had not myself had opportunities of observing in India. The call is peculiar, gentle, and distinct from that of *P. torquatus*, which species it appears to resemble most closely, but it has no ring. I found it in the month of May in large flocks, feeding in the bed of the river on cow-dung. A plain-coloured Bulbul (*Pycnonotus*) is common at Thayetmyo, but I have very little doubt that Mr. Blyth has already described it. It is of a dingy greenish-brown ochre, paler and albescent

beneath, with yellowish under tail-coverts, and the ears with the barbs of the feathers dead-white*.

(1.) *CRYPsirrhina* (*TEMIA*) *CUCULLATA*, Jerdon, n. sp.

White, head and neck deep glossy black; the rest of the plumage pale, somewhat brownish ash-colour, faintly glossed with a vinous tinge on the tertiaries, tail-feathers, and the plumage beneath; a semi-collar of white round the upper part of the neck, separating the black from the ash colour; quills unglossed black; some of the secondaries edged externally with ashy white, and the wing-coverts also faintly edged with the same, forming a longitudinal light bar along the wing; the centre tail-feathers black, widened at the tip, suddenly on the outer web, gradually on the inner web; bill black; legs brown-black; iris very pale glaucous-blue. Length 12 inches; expanse 13; wing $4\frac{1}{2}$; tail 7; bill $\frac{5}{8}$; tarsus 1.

The tail is much graduated, and as in its congener, *Crypsirrhina* (*Temia*) *varians*, consists of ten feathers. Compared with that bird, the tail-feathers, judging from a drawing I have, are much narrower, and the broad termination more marked. The bill also appears to be comparatively shorter.

I found this neatly plumaged little Magpie not rare at Thayetmyo, in Upper Burmah. It was generally seen singly, now and then in pairs; wanders about a good deal in low jungle, and feeds on grasshoppers, locusts, Mantides, and the like. I have seen it catching white ants, as they issued from their nest in the winged state, with considerable dexterity, returning usually to the same perch. It breeds early, I imagine, for I killed young birds in June. They differ from the old ones in having the hood dusky-ashy, instead of black. A native Shikaree assured me that it occasionally perched on the backs of cattle, to devour the insects that often infest them.

(2.) *PERICROCOTUS* *ALBIFRONS*, Jerdon, n. sp.

Male.—Crown of head, nape, back, wings, and tail glossy black; forehead and a wide supercilium white; lores and ear-coverts mixed white and black; chin, throat, sides of neck, nearly meeting on the back of the neck, the greater coverts,

* If new, *Pycnonotus blanfordi*, Jerdon.

tertiaries, and a band of the primaries, and the whole of the lower parts white; all the tail-feathers, except the four centre ones, broadly and obliquely tipped with white; the breast with a gorget of shining orange-red, and the rump the same, mixed with white. Bill black; legs dark brown; irides light brown. Length $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; expanse 8; wing $2\frac{8}{4}$; tail $3\frac{1}{4}$; bill rather more than $\frac{5}{16}$; tarsi $\frac{9}{16}$?

The female differs in having the parts that are black in the male sooty brown, in wanting the breast-spot of the male, and in the rump being only slightly mixed with red.

This pretty little bird is the representative in Upper Burmah of the *P. erythropygia* of Southern and Central India, from which it differs conspicuously in the white forehead and in the somewhat paler and more aurora tinge of the red on the breast and rump. It is found usually in pairs or in small families, chiefly in low and thorny jungles, not frequenting the dense forests. It is active and restless, flitting about the smaller branches and feeding on various insects, which it usually picks off from a leaf or twig, now and then catching one in the air.

(3.) STURNIA BURMANNICA, Jerdon, n. sp.

Head (crested), face, throat, and neck in part sullied or cinereous white; the feathers of the head long and very narrow; back and scapulars dingy grey, paling on the rump and upper tail-coverts; wings with the shoulders dark grey, the lesser coverts glossy hair-brown, the greater coverts and secondaries pale, glossed, yellowish brown, the latter deep brown on their inner webs; the primary coverts mixed black and white; primaries deep brown, pale at the tip, and with a white bar near the base, forming a white wing-spot; tail with the two centre feathers glossy brown, the outer ones black with a broad white tip; plumage beneath, from the breast, pale vinous, albescent on the middle of the belly and vent, and white on the under tail-coverts; flanks of abdomen inclining to greyish. Bill orange-red, the nostrils and two-thirds of the lower mandible dusky; orbital skin blackish; irides yellow-brown; legs and claws deep yellow. Length 9 inches; expanse $13\frac{1}{2}$; wing $4\frac{1}{2}$; tail 3; bill $\frac{11}{16}$; tarsus $1\frac{1}{4}$.

This Mynah is somewhat aberrant, being allied in its colouring

and less robust form to *Sturnia*, but approaching *Sturno-pastor* in its red bill and habits. It is a Ground-Mynah, of familiar habits, feeding in the compounds and about villages in Upper Burmah, and breeding in holes in old trees. At the pairing season it is generally in pairs; afterwards small flocks of them are seen together, and many resort together in the same tree. It is rather a silent bird, but has the usual Mynah-like call when it takes wing. It feeds chiefly on insects.

(4.) *STURNIA NEMORICOLA*, Jerdon, n. sp.

Head, nape, face, and whole lower parts white; the back of the neck, back, and wings ashy, tinged with ferruginous on the upper tail-coverts; quills black; secondaries the same, edged with grey externally; winglet, and a spot on the greater coverts, pure white; thigh-coverts tinged with rusty; tail-feathers blackish on the inner web, more or less grey externally, and tipped with chestnut, increasing in extent from about $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch on the middle feathers to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch on the outer tail-feathers. Bill blue at the base, then green, with the tip yellow. Irides glaucous white; legs dull yellow. Length $7\frac{3}{4}$ to 8 inches; expanse $12\frac{1}{2}$; wing 4; tail $2\frac{1}{2}$; bill $\frac{5}{8}$; tarsus $\frac{7}{8}$.

This is a typical *Sturnia*, and, like my *S. blythii* and *S. malabarica*, keeps entirely to the forests and to the tops of the trees. It has a pleasant warbling song.

(5.) *CHRYSOMMA ALTIROSTRE*, Jerdon, n. sp.

Above pale reddish brown, deepest on the wings and tail; forehead and streak over the eye hoary grey; beneath whitish, tinged on the lower part of breast, abdomen, and flanks with pale fulvescent; quills and tail-feathers slightly dusky on their inner webs; under wing-coverts pale ferruginous. Bill fleshy horny; legs fleshy; irides dark brown, with an outer circle of white; eyelids pale sulphur-yellow. Length $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; expanse $7\frac{1}{2}$; wing $2\frac{3}{8}$; tail 3; bill $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch high; tarsus 1.

This interesting bird is very closely allied to *Chrysomma sinense*, for a young bird of which I at first glance mistook it. It differs however in some important particulars, more especially in the depth of the bill, in which it makes an approach to the *Paradoxornis* group. The claws are more lengthened and less curved

than in that species. It will probably be considered worthy of separation as a subgenus. I found it frequenting long grass in islands on the Burrampootra river, in Upper Burmah. It had partaken of ants and small Coleoptera.

VI.—*Note on Falco circumcinctus, a rare Bird of Prey from South America.* By PHILIP LUTLEY SLATER.

(Plate II.)

At a meeting of the Zoological Society in February 1851, Professor Kaup described as new a small species of Falcon from a single specimen then in the late Earl of Derby's collection at Knowsley, and referred it to the genus *Harpagus*, under the title *Harpagus circumcinctus*, at the same time proposing for it the new subgeneric appellation "*Spiziapteryx* *."

"One of the most interesting birds," says Dr. Kaup, "in the collection of Lord Derby is a little Falcon, belonging to the subfamily *Falconinæ*, which enables me to correct the characters of the genus *Harpagus*.

"The characters must be changed as follows:—Bill large, with two teeth, slender and indistinct, or strong and distinct; wings short, and in the proportions of the quills very like *Nisus* seu *Accipiter*; toes short, and the inner and outer toes of the same length.

"The genus *Harpagus* must be divided into two subgenera.

"The oldest subgenus (*Harpagus*) must be distinguished by the following characters:—Two strong and distinct teeth; the nostrils placed near the end of a soft membrane covering a large cavity; tibiæ with scales not divided.

"Two species, *H. diodon* and *H. bidentatus*.

"The other subgenus, in which this new species must be placed, must be characterized:—Two slender indistinct teeth; the nostrils round, very small, and bored in the nasal bones; the first wing-feathers with very distinct emarginations, the fourth the longest; tibiæ with whole and divided scales.

"I give this subgenus the name of *Spiziapteryx*, and the species I have named

* See Proc. Zool. Soc. 1851, p. 42.



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