PALUMBUS ELPHINSTONEI.

Elphinstone's Wood Pigeon.

Ptilinopus Elphinstonii, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc. part ii. p. 149. Columba Elphinstonii, Jerd. Ill. Ind. Orn. pl. xlviii.—Blyth, Drafts of a Faun. Ind. Columbidæ, p. 22. Carpophaga Elphinstoni, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 469, Carpophaga, sp. 27. Columba Elphinstonei, Fras. Zool. Typ. pl. 59. Palumbus Elphinstonei, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 233.

Specimens of this fine Pigeon having been procured in various parts of India, we may fairly conclude that it is very generally dispersed over the Peninsula; Mr. Layard and other travellers have also found it in the island of Ceylon; the Cingalese examples, however, differ from those obtained on the continent in having a more rufous style of colouring, and, if I mistake not, in being of a somewhat smaller size; yet I cannot regard such slight differences as specific, but merely as indicative of a local variation, such as we know to occur among other species.

Of its habits and economy, little is at present known, but they doubtless very much resemble those of its near ally the common Wood Pigeon of Europe, *Palumbus torquatus*.

Colonel Sykes, who gave the name of *Elphinstonii* to this species, in honour of the Honourable Mount-Stuart Elphinstone, formerly Governor of Bombay, states in his valuable "Catalogue of the Birds observed in the Dukhun" above referred to, that it "is rare, and only met with in the dense woods of the Ghauts. It is not gregarious, flies with great rapidity, and feeds upon stony fruits. The sexes are alike in plumage. The lateral skin of the toes is very much developed."

"This handsome Pigeon," says Mr. Jerdon, "I have only hitherto found in the dense woods on the summit of the Neelgherries; but as Colonel Sykes found it in the woods of the western Ghauts, I have no doubt that hereafter it will be ascertained to inhabit all the higher parts of that range of mountains. It is found singly or in small parties of four or five. It generally keeps in the woods, living on various fruits and berries, but it occasionally descends to the ground to procure seeds and shelled mollusks (Bulimi), the remains of which I have frequently found in its crop. I am unacquainted with its call or nidification, though it certainly breeds on the Neelgherries."

Head, neck and under surface dark ashy grey, with the fore part of the neck and breast glossed with green; feathers at the back of the neck black, tipped with white, forming a nuchal mark; upper surface chestnut-brown, glossed with purple and green; primaries and tail dull black; irides yellow; bill red at the base, yellow at the tip; feet crimson.

The Plate represents the bird of the natural size, from a sketch suggested by Mr. Wolf.