HEMICERCUS CORDATUS, *Jerdon.*

(Heart-spotted Woodpecker.)

Hemicercus cordatus, Jerd. Madr. Journ. xi. p. 211 (1840).—Id. Ill. Ind. Orn. pl. xl. (1847).—Gray, Gen. B. ii. p. 437 (1845).—Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. v. p. 175 (1863).—Gray, Handl. B. ii. p. 191, no. 8669 (1870).

Micropicus canente, Malh. Monogr. Picid. i. p. 190, pl. 42. fig. 2 (1861).

Hemicercus canente, Jerdon, B. Ind. i. p. 280 (1862).

Picus canente, var. *occidentalis*, Sundev. Consp. Av. Picin. p. 11 (1866).

The Heart-spotted Woodpecker of Southern India, on which the late Dr. Jerdon bestowed the name of *cordatus*, cannot be considered more than a small race of the true *H. canente* of Burmah and Tenasserim, as has been remarked by Mr. Hume, whose words I quote below. The character of the dimensions, however, appears to be very constant, so that at present it is well to keep them distinct. Dr. Jerdon writes :—" This curious little Woodpecker is found in the forests of Malabar, above and below the Ghâts. I have lately found it in forests in the Chanda district, south-east of Nagpore."

It is evident to me, as, indeed, it must be to every ornithologist, that both sexes are represented in the accompanying plate ; but none of the specimens in my collection has the sex marked, and it is impossible for me to say which is the male and which the female. From what I know of other Woodpeckers, I should say that the female is the bird with the spotted crown ; and this Dr. Jerdon assigned to the hen bird, and that excellent ornithologist Professor Sundevall also concurs in this determination. But I must here draw attention to the note on this subject recently published by Mr. Hume, which explains the matter fully, and needs no comment of mine, as it is a question which can only be settled by observers in the East :—

" Our Indian *H. cordatus*, Jerdon, is apparently little else than a diminutive race of this species, with less white upon the wing and more marked white spotting on the forehead and crown of the male. In our Indian bird a fine male has the wing 3·75 ; bill at front 0·75 ; tarsus about 0·6.

" A similar *H. canente* has the wing 3·9 ; bill at front 0·9 ; tarsus 0·75. And here it may be as well to draw attention to the fact that in the Indian bird Dr. Jerdon says that the male has the forehead and top of the head light whitish yellow, and the female differs from the male in having the forehead and head black with minute whitish spots. Now I cannot speak with certainty as to the Indian birds, because, though I have a large series chiefly from the Malabar coast, the majority are not from reliable collectors ; but in regard to the present species (*H. canente*), Mr. Davison has recently carefully sexed some twenty specimens, in all of which the adult males had the head black with minute white specks, while the female had the cap yellowish white, thus exactly reversing what Jerdon records of the Indian birds. Jerdon certainly knew the birds thoroughly, and must have shot scores, and it is just possible that this very curious difference between these two nearly allied races may exist ; but I think that probably this has been a mere slip of the pen.

" As to *H. canente* there is no possible doubt. Besides these adults we procured several young males, some quite similar to the females, and others showing the black feathers superseding the yellow in the crown."

The following description is that of a pair of birds in my collection from Malabar :—

Adult male (?).—Crown of head creamy white ; the occiput and nape, which are crested, as well as a line drawn from the base of the bill enclosing the eye and the ear-coverts, black. The adjoining plumes of the sinciput creamy white with black centres ; interscapulary plumes creamy white, spotted with black, the mantle nearly concealed by the overhanging scapular feathers, which are black ; lower back greyish black, the feathers tipped with deep black ; rump creamy white ; upper tail coverts black, some of them creamy white at base and tipped with the latter colour also ; wing-coverts creamy white, the median series with broad subterminal spot of black, the greater series black with a narrow ending of creamy white ; quills black, the innermost secondaries creamy white with concealed spots of black as well as a broad subterminal bar of the same ; tail black ; cheeks, sides of neck, and entire throat creamy white with a strong yellow tinge ; rest of under surface greyish washed with olive, and inclining to blackish on the lower flanks, vent, and under tail-coverts ; under wing-coverts creamy white. Total length 5·2 inches, culmen 0·8, wing 3·45, tail 1·7, tarsus 0·7.

Female (?).—Similar in most respects to the male, but having the forehead and crown black, very minutely dotted with white. Total length 5·4 inches, culmen 0·95, wing 3·7, tail 1·6, tarsus 0·75.

Dr. Jerdon further remarks that " on the centre of the back is a brush of dark sap-green bristly feathers smeared with a viscid secretion from the gland beneath."

The figures, which are life-sized, are drawn from the foregoing examples.