## PALÆORNIS COLUMBOÏDES, Vig.

## Blue-winged Parrakeet.

Palæornis columboïdes, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. v. p. 274.—Lear, Ill. Psitt., pl. 31.—Bourj. St. Hil. Coll. de Perr., pls. 3 and 3 a.—Jerd. Madras Journ., vol. xi. p. 209. pl. 3.—Ib. Ill. Ind. Orn., pl. 18.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 410, Palæornis, sp. 9.—Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, vol. xvi. p. 475, and vol. xix. p. 204.—Ib. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 5.—Bonap. Rev. Zool. 1854, p. 152.—De Souancé, Rev. Zool. 1856, p. 158.—Horsf. Cat. of Birds in Mus. East. Ind. Comp., vol. ii. p. 614.

Psittacus melanorhynchus, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., Part ii. p. 96 (female). Blue-winged Parrakeet, Jerdon.

Psittacus (Conurus) Himalayanus, Less. in Belanger's Voy. aux Ind. Orient., p. 239.

That this is a beautiful and extremely elegant species of Parrakeet, no one I think can gainsay, for it is as graceful in its contour as it is chaste and delicate in its colouring. However beautiful well-prepared skins may be, they are poor indeed when compared with the hues of the fresh-moulted bird, in which both harmony and contrasts combine to render them in every way pleasing; the colours, moreover, are very unusual among the feathered race, vinous grey, verditer-green, black and scarlet being seldom found in such close proximity as in the upper parts of the male of the bird figured on the accompanying Plate.

The native country of the *Palæornis Columboïdes* is India proper, and it does not, I believe, even visit the southern slopes of the Himalayas, but confines itself to the range of hills which stretch along the western side of the Peninsula, and are known by the name of the Ghauts and Neilgherries. Vigors had the honour of first naming this lovely bird, and Colonel Sykes that of making us acquainted with the female, which, however, deceived by the black colouring of the bill, he regarded as distinct, and characterized in the "Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society" as *Palæornis melanorhynchus*. In all probability both sexes have the black bill at an early period of their existence; and I think it likely that the male does not acquire the red bill or the delicate colouring of the plumage until after its second year. It is a species that bears confinement remarkably well, and at the moment I am writing, fine examples of both sexes are living in the rich Menagerie of the Zoological Society of London.

Mr. Jerdon informs us that he "first procured this elegantly coloured Parrakeet at Trichoor, and afterwards in various other localities on the west coast, and on the sides of the Neilgherries, up to a height of 5000 feet. It probably extends for some distance along the range of the Western Ghauts. It keeps entirely to the depths of the forests, and only frequents the loftiest trees. Its flight is very rapid and elegant, and it associates in small flocks. Its cry, though similar in character to the harsh call of the Common Parrakeet, is much more mellow, subdued, and agreeable. It feeds on fruit and berries of various kinds."

Face, space around the eye, and a narrow line across the forehead grass-green, the band across the forehead changing posteriorly to bluish green; chin and collar surrounding the neck black, succeeded by a second collar of verditer-green; crown, nape, and sides of the head, back of the neck, upper part of the back, breast, and abdomen vinous grey; lower part of the back glaucous green, changing to grass-green on the upper tail-coverts; vent and thighs washed with green; wings deep green, the coverts narrowly fringed with yellow; primaries brownish black, all but the external one broadly margined with blue, the extreme edge being pale or grass-green; two central tail-feathers blue, blending into the pale yellow of their tips; lateral tail-feathers light grass-green on their external webs, and gamboge-yellow on the inner ones; under surface of the tail rich wax-yellow; upper mandible scarlet, under one paler; irides straw-yellow; feet mealy grey.

Colonel Sykes, when describing his *P. melanorhynchus*, says, "This bird has the aspect of *P. Columboïdes*, but differs in the black bill, broad black collar, pale green-yellow beneath instead of dove-colour, and in the want of the metallic green narrow collar and bluish rump," which characteristics are now known to pertain to the female or young male.

The Plate represents a male and a female, or young male, of the natural size. The plant is the Dendro-bium MacCarthiæ.

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