PICA BOTTANENSIS, *Delessert.*

Bootan Magpie.

Pica bottanensis, Deless. Rev. Zool. 1840, p. 100.—Id. Voy. dans l'Inde, pt. 2. p. 30.—Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xii. p. 985, vol. xv. p. 25.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 91.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 314.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. ii. p. 551.

—— *megaloptera*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 193.

—— *butanensis*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 383.

—— *tibetana*, Hodgs. Ann. Nat. Hist., vol. iii. new ser. p. 203?

Of the various Magpies forming the genus *Pica*, there are four or five which bear a striking resemblance to each other, and are unquestionably very nearly allied; and there are two others which every ornithologist, however sceptical he may be as to the value of minute specific differences, must admit possess well-defined characteristics, namely, the *Pica Mauritanica* of North Africa and the *P. Bottanensis* of India. Both these birds have not a trace of the white mark across the rump, and both have so much less white on their primaries that during flight their expanded wings present a very different appearance from those of the other members of the genus; the Bootan Magpie is moreover distinguished by having a shorter and more rounded tail. Examples of this interesting bird may be seen in the collections at the British and India Museums.

Mr. Blyth has placed his *Pica megaloptera* in the rank of a synonym of this species, and Mr. Moore considers that the *P. Tibetana* of Mr. Hodgson is also identical with it; but, for my own part, I am inclined to doubt this being the case, as, upon examining the type specimen from which Mr. Hodgson took his description, and which still exists (though in a bad state of preservation) in the India Museum, I observe that it differs from the Magpie of Bootan in having a much less amount of white on the primaries, the dark colouring of the tip occupying not less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches of their length, while in the Bootan birds it scarcely exceeds $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. I have therefore placed a mark of doubt after the reference to Mr. Hodgson's bird, as it may prove to be a distinct species, and beg to call the attention of ornithologists to the difference I have pointed out. Time, and the acquisition of a greater number of examples will determine whether there be more than one species of these black-backed Magpies inhabiting the high lands of India.

Like the other members of the genus, the sexes of this species do not differ in colouring. No account of their habits and economy has been placed on record; but in these respects they doubtless closely assimilate to their allies.

Crown of the head black, slightly glossed with green; remainder of the head, neck, back, breast, lesser wing-coverts, rump, upper and under tail-coverts, and thighs black; scapularies, abdomen, and flanks white; greater wing-coverts and spurious wing oil-green; basal portion of the outer webs of the primaries oil-green, the apical portion of these webs and the tips of both webs dark olive; inner webs white, broadly margined on the apical portion with dark olive; secondaries dull black on the internal web, and deep steel-blue on the outer, a few of them margined at the base with yellowish green; tertiaries glossed with green and blue; two central tail-feathers bronzy green nearly to the end, when that colour passes into rich purple, then blue, and lastly bluish green; the lateral feathers are similarly coloured on their outer webs and at the tip of their inner webs, the basal portion of the latter being black, glossed with blue; irides blackish brown; bill, feet, and legs black.

The Plate represents the bird as nearly the natural size as may be; if there be any difference, it is a trifle less.