PICA LEUCOPTERA, *Gould.*

White-winged Magpie.

Pica leucoptera, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Jan. 28, 1862.

For a knowledge of this very fine species of Magpie I have to thank my friends the Messrs. Verreaux of Paris, who were so good as to forward a specimen to me for the purpose of its being figured in the present work. In a letter I have received from M. Jules Verreaux, that gentleman states that the bird was sent to him by M. Taczanowski of Warsaw, who had received it from Oriental Siberia, where he informed him it was not more rare than the Common Magpie is with us. Unfortunately, only three examples were procured —the person who shot them believing them to be identical with our well-known bird; he observed, however, that the eggs, though very similar, were larger than those of the *Pica caudata*.

Before naming and figuring this fine bird, I carefully compared it with all the Old-World species of this form, and found that it differs from the *Pica caudata* in having a much longer tail, a pure-white mark across the lower part of the back, and white primaries, and from *P. Bactriana*, its most near ally, in having a smaller bill and the whole of the inner webs of the primaries pure white, their tips showing most conspicuously when the wings are closed (a feature not observable in any other known species)—and hence the specific name of *leucoptera* I have applied to it. However trifling these differences may appear, they are regarded by the ornithologist with much interest, as we find that they are constant; that is, that the European bird never assumes characters intermediate between its own and those of the Asia bird on the east, that of Africa (*P. Mauritanica*) on the south: the species in all these countries are different; and, further, if we compare the Magpies of the northern portions of America with those of the Old World, we find that these again are different, and constitute two well-marked species—the *Pica Hudsonica* and *P. flavirostris*. Ornithologists, therefore, have no alternative but to regard them as so many species; for no characters will apply to the whole of them.

Head, neck, breast, lower part of the abdomen, under and upper tail-coverts, and thighs deep black; scapularies, a broad band across the lower part of the back, abdomen and flanks pure white; greater wing-coverts bronzy green; primaries pure white, except their outer webs, which are olive-brown; secondaries blue, with a stripe of bronzy green down their outer webs; the greater part of their inner webs are black, as are also the under surface of the shoulder and the axillaries; two centre tail-feathers and the outer webs of the four next on each side beautiful green for about four-fifths of their length, when they become of a fiery purple, then deep blue, and lastly bluish green, these rainbow-like hues forming a rich zone towards the end of the tail; inner webs of all the lateral feathers black, the exterior web of the outermost green; irides, bill, legs, and feet glossy black.

The front figure represents the bird of the natural size.