

SAXICOLA MONTANA, *Gould.*

Mountain Stone-Chat.

Two specimens of this very fine Wheatear, brought to England, with some other rare birds, by Major W. E. Hay, are now in my collection. The labels attached to them are simply inscribed Thibet; and as, unfortunately, that gentleman is no longer among us, I am unable to ascertain the precise locality in which they were killed. Their nearest ally is the *Saxicola atrogularis*; but they differ from that bird in their much larger size and in the colouring of the under surface of the wings, which is snow-white, except at the shoulder, which, with the axillaries, is of the deepest black.

I consider this species to be not only the very finest of the Indian *Saxicolæ*, but second to none of the form inhabiting other countries. It is doubtless very sprightly in all its actions, and the plumage of specimens fresh from moulting must be very beautiful, before the feathers have become abraded by contact with the stony sides of the cavities among the rocks, to which these birds resort, like our own Wheatear, for the purpose of breeding.

I regret that no information whatever has been recorded respecting its habits and economy.

The *Saxicola montana* is rendered most conspicuous by the strong contrast of the black under wing-coverts and axillæ with the snow-white of the bases of the primaries and secondaries.

Across the forehead and over each eye a narrow line of white; crown of the head pale cinnamon-brown, passing into the deeper isabelline brown of the back and scapularies; lores, chin, throat, under wing-coverts, axillaries, wing-coverts, and apical half of the tail jet black; a line of white along the outermost scapularies separates those feathers from the black of the wing-coverts; lower part of the back, upper tail-coverts, and basal portion of the tail-feathers white; breast delicate isabelline brown, fading into buffy white on the abdomen and under tail-coverts; primaries and secondaries blackish brown on their outer webs, the inner webs being white at the base and light brown for the remainder of their length; irides dark brown; bill and feet black.

Total length $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; bill $\frac{7}{8}$; wing 4; tail $2\frac{7}{8}$; tarsi 1.

The figures are of the natural size; the supposed female taken from an Afghan specimen.