GARRULAX DELESSERTI, Jerd.

Delessert's Garrulax.

Crateropus Delesserti, Jerd. Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. x. p. 256.—Id. Ind. Orn., pl. xiii.

griseiceps, Deless. Rev. Zool. 1840, p. 101.—Id. Souv. d'un Voy, dans l'Inde, tom. i. pt. ii. p. 29.

Garrulax Delesserti, Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 37.

Like the Garrulax gularis, this species is rarely to be found in the museums of Europe—a circumstance somewhat surprising, since it inhabits a country which has long been known to Europeans and from which numerous collections have from time to time been sent. It appears to evince a preference for hills of moderate elevation to living in the neighbouring dense forests, and, like the Pomatorhini, moves about in small troops, composed probably of the brood of the year and their parents. I believe that it is more shy and retiring than the members of the genus Pomatorhinus, whose habit it is to show themselves in the more open glades of the forest, and to attract attention by their peculiar actions. Its food doubtless consists of worms, insects, and probably of animals of a higher order. Neither Mr. Jerdon nor Viscount Walden, who shot it on the Coonoor Ghaut of the Neilgherries, have given us any account of its habits.

In his 'Birds of India' Mr. Jerdon says:—"This is a somewhat rare bird. I first saw it in the possession of M. Delessert, who got it in the slopes of the Neilgherries; and I afterwards procured it in the same locality at an elevation of about 3000 feet. I also saw it several times in the Wynaad, associating in large flocks, wandering about the underwood and bamboos, and occasionally uttering a chorus of peculiar, but clear, chattering notes."

I suspect that the sexes are very similar in plumage; but even this has not been stated; and it is much to be regretted that so little has been recorded respecting the bird, its habits, and economy.

Head and nape dark greyish brown, inclining to black; upper surface generally dark reddish brown, becoming brighter or more rufous on the rump and upper tail-coverts, and darker on the primaries and secondaries; tail very dark or blackish brown; chin, throat, neck, and breast white, gradually blending into the grey of the upper part of the abdomen and flanks; lower part of the abdomen, vent, thighs, and under tail-coverts deep rusty red; upper mandible dark brown; under mandible yellow; irides dull red; legs flesh-colour.

The figures are of the natural size; the plant is the Sphærostema propinguum.