SIBIA MELANOLEUCA, *Tickell.*

Black-and-White Sibia.

Sibia melanoleuca, Tickell, MSS., undè
Sibia melanoleuca, Blyth, Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xviiii. p. 413 (1859).—Gray, Handlist of Birds, i. p. 273, no. 4002 (1869).—Hume and Davidson, Stray Feathers, 1878, p. 293.
Sibia picata, Tickell, Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xxviii. p. 451.—Walden, Ibis, 1866, p. 355.
Malacias melanoleucus, Hume, Stray Feathers, 1879, p. 97.

This elegant bird was discovered by the late Colonel Tickell on the plateau of Mooleyit, in Tenasserim, at an altitude of 6600 feet. It was first described by Mr. Blyth in the Asiatic Society's Journal for 1859; and immediately afterwards Colonel Tickell himself contributed a second description of the same bird under the name of *Sibia picata*, which of course cannot be allowed to stand. Colonel Tickell says that "it was evidently exceedingly rare, or confined to elevated peaks; a pair only seen, of which the male was secured. Lively and restless, with a prattling whistle like *S. capistrata*. Incessantly hopping and flitting about the stunted trees found at that altitude (6600 feet)."

Mr. Davison writes:—"This pretty Sibia was common about the higher parts of Mooleyit, especially where the jungle was open. I found it very partial to the trees about the 'Sahans,' or camping-grounds. Its note resembles that of *Sibia capistrata*, and is a single long-drawn clear-sounding whistle, sounding like '*whee-e-e e-oo*,' the '*whee*' being very much prolonged, the '*oo*' short and abrupt. When I was at Mooleyit, the birds were breeding, and consequently were always found in pairs. Their food consists quite as much of small berries as it does of insects, which latter they capture amongst the smaller branches and the foliage of the tree-tops, in which they are always moving about. They never descend to the ground or even amongst brushwood. I never saw them sitting sunning themselves on a bare branch, or catching insects on the wing. They have a habit of rapidly expanding and closing their tail as they move about, but without erecting it as a *Leucocerca* does. They are not at all shy birds; and there is not the slightest difficulty in approaching and shooting them."

Mr. Hume has added to the above note of Mr. Davison a capital description of the species, which I herewith copy:—"The legs and feet varied from a very dark reddish brown to a dark purplish brown or brownish black; bill black; irides lake. The lores, forehead, crown, occiput, nape, cheeks, ear-coverts, and point of the chin glossy black, with a faint greenish reflection, only the ear-coverts, in some specimens, with a slightly browner tinge; the rest of the chin, throat, breast, abdomen, and entire lower parts, including wing-lining, axillaries, and lower tail-coverts, snowy white, a little pencilled with brownish grey in most specimens towards the sides of the breast; the entire back, scapulars, and lesser and median wing-coverts a deep, somewhat chocolate-brown; rump and upper tail-coverts a dull, somewhat greyer brown; quills and greater-coverts hair-brown; the tertiaries and some of the later secondaries, towards their tips, with a more or less decided chocolate tinge; all the feathers margined on the outer webs with black, which on the quills has distinct though not conspicuous greenish reflections; tail brown; the central tail-feathers paler, and with a sort of paler chocolate tinge; the central pair narrowly, and each succeeding pair (the tail is very much graduated) more and more broadly tipped with pure white, and all the feathers fringed darker; in some almost blackish on their outer webs just towards the base."

The Plate represents a male and female of the size of life. The figures are drawn from the typical pair kindly lent me by Captain Wardlaw Ramsay, to whom I beg to tend my warmest acknowledgments.

[R. B. S.]