MYIOPHONUS (ARRENGA) BLIGHI, *Holdsw.*

Bligh's Whistling Thrush.

Arrenga Blighi, Holdsworth, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1872, p. 444, pl. xix.

This very well-marked species is an interesting addition to the group of birds included in the genus *Myiophonus* or Whistling Thrushes, of which six species were previously known. They have each a somewhat restricted habitat, being found respectively in Java and Sumatra, the Himalayas, China, Formosa, Java, and Southern and Western India; and the subject of our present notice is peculiar to the Island of Ceylon.

The Whistling Thrushes have been separated by some ornithologists into two groups, to one of which, containing four species all having the bill yellow, the generic name *Myiophonus* has been restricted, whilst the others, distinguished by having a black bill, have received subgeneric rank under the name of *Arrenga*. It is doubtful, however, whether this distinctive character is of sufficient importance to make the separation desirable. Bligh's Whistling Thrush belongs to the black-billed group, and is remarkable for being very much smaller than any of the other recognized forms.

Little is known of the habits of this bird; but so far as they have been observed, they agree generally with those of the other *Myiophoni*. It has only been met with on the hills, at an elevation of from 4000 to 6000 feet, where it frequents dense jungle in the neighbourhood of watercourses, appearing for a few moments perhaps close to some foaming torrent, or occasionally alighting on a rock in mid-stream. It is very impatient of observation, and when intruded on gives utterance to a peculiarly long-drawn plaintive but loud whistling note; at the same time the body is dipped and the tail slightly raised. It soon seeks shelter under the thick jungle-foliage. The natural note of this Thrush, when undisturbed, is very beautiful, and so closely resembles a soft human whistle as to deceive any but practised ears. This bird is probably not very rare in the localities it frequents; but it is far more commonly heard than seen, and the type specimens (here represented of the natural size) are the only ones known to have been brought from the island.

The species was described by Mr. Holdsworth in his Catalogue of Ceylonese birds, published by the Zoological Society of London in 1872, and was named after his friend Mr. Samuel Bligh, who first observed and obtained a specimen of it.

I trust that I duly appreciate the great kindness of Mr. Holdsworth in intrusting to my care this typical and unique species of a Ceylonese bird belonging to a group claiming considerable intimacy with *Petrocincla*.

The figures are of the size of life.