MERULA ALBOCINCTA.

White-collared Merula.

Turdus albocinctus et *albicollis*, Royle, Ill. Himalayan Bot., tab. 8. fig. 3.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 219.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 81.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 274.

Merula albocincta, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 148.—Ib. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 162.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 197.

Turdus collaris, Sorel, Rev. Zool. 1840, p. 2.

Merula nivicollis, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 83.

The late Dr. Forbes Royle, who by his writings on botany and natural history and many other acquirements distinguished himself as one of the most valuable of the servants of the Honourable East India Company, had the pleasure of first naming this interesting Ouzel, Thrush, or Blackbird—whichever British ornithologists may think proper to apply to it as a trivial name. Dr. Royle (for what reason cannot now be known) gave it two distinctive appellations, *Turdus albocinctus* and *T. albicollis*; it is also the *Merula nivicollis* of Mr. Hodgson, and the *Turdus collaris* of Sorel; all these specific names are equally applicable to it; but it is to be regretted that our systems should have been burdened with four appellations where one would surely have been sufficient.

It must, I think, be admitted that the present bird and *M. castanea* are two most intimately allied species, so much so that it has almost induced me to believe that they are identical; and I throw out this hint to direct the attention of ornithologists to the point, especially those resident in India, rather than aver that such is the case. In their relative admeasurements the two birds are as nearly alike as possible.

Like the *M. castanea*, the *M. albocincta* is a native of Nepal and the more western parts of the Himalayan range, but does not ascend either to the cold region of the snow-line, nor, I believe, descend to the hot forests of the Terai.

The female has all the markings of the male, but her colouring is much less bright and defined; the crown of her head, her back, wings, and tail are brown, while the collar and throat are brownish white.

The male has the head, cheeks, nape, the entire plumage of the upper and under surface, the wings and tail brownish black; throat buffy white slightly striated with brown; lower part of the neck and breast buffy white; round the back of the neck a collar of buffy white stained with brownish grey posteriorly; bill and eyelash orange-yellow; the legs appear to have been the same, but duller.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size.