

## MERULA CASTANEA, *Gould.*

### Chestnut-coloured Merula.

- Merula castanea*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. part iii. p. 185.—Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng. vol. xvi. p. 149.—  
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 castaneus*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 219. pl. 56.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm.  
and Birds presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 81.
- Geocichla castanea*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 268.
- Turdus rubrocanus*, Hodgs. Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 82.
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THIS very fine species of *Merula* I had the pleasure of characterizing in the “Proceedings of the Zoological Society” for the year 1835; nine years later, in 1844, it received from Mr. Hodgson the name of *rubrocanus*. In the rich chestnut colouring of its back and under surface, this species stands conspicuously alone among the members of the Indian *Merulidæ*. It is a bird of considerable dimensions, and is doubtless bold and spirited in its actions when seen in its native woods. Its true habitat is the sub-Himalayan range, along the face of which it appears to extend from Nepal to Afghanistan: most of the specimens sent to this country are from Darjiling; but there are examples at the East India House which are said to have been procured by Mr. Pearson in Afghanistan; personally, however, I have never seen one from the latter country.

The sexes present the usual difference in colour and size, the female being somewhat smaller than the male, and her colouring much less bright and contrasted; her wings also are brown instead of black, the chestnut colour of her back and under surface paler, and the band on the neck less clearly defined.

The male has the head, cheeks, and nape ashy grey; at the back of the neck a broad semi-collar of light greyish brown; throat and fore part of the chest buffy white; all the upper and under surface chestnut-red, deepest on the upper part of the back; wings and tail blackish brown; feathers of the lower part of the abdomen and under tail-coverts blackish brown, with a broad stripe of white down the centre of each; the bill, eyelash, and feet appear to have been fine yellow.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size.