

PARUS CINEREUS, Vieill.

Ash-coloured Tit.

- La Mésange grise à joue blanche*, Le Vaill. Ois. d'Afrique, tom. iii. p. 117. fig. 2. pl. 139. fig. 1.
- Parus cinereus*, Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 506.—Cabanis, Mus. Hein., p. 92.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 103.—Ib. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 466.—Jard. Cont. to Orn. 1852, p. 49.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 229, *Parus*, sp. 12.—Layard, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 2nd ser. vol. xii. p. 267.—Horsf. Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 370.
- *atriceps*, Horsf. Linn. Trans., vol. xiii. p. 160.—Temm. Pl. Col. 287. fig. 2.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 192, *Parus*, sp. 16.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vii. p. 257.—Franklin in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., Part I. p. 119.—Sykes in Ibid., Part II. p. 92.—McClell. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VII. p. 162.—Jerdon in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 7.—Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xiii. p. 943.
- *nipalensis*, Hodgs. Ind. Rev. 1838, p. 31.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 72.—Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 459, and xii. p. 182.
- *schistinotus*, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 83.
- *major*, var. β , Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vii. p. 247.
- Ramgaungra*, in Bengalee, Dr. F. Buchanan Hamilton.
- Glate-wingko* of the Javanese, Dr. Horsfield.

THE Ash-coloured Tit is so different from all the other members of its genus, and has its distinctive characteristics so well defined, that it cannot be mistaken for any other known species. Its nearest allies are the *Parus minor* of China and the *P. major* of Europe; the three species beautifully representing each other in the countries they respectively inhabit.

Mr. Blyth, in his "Catalogue of the Birds contained in the Museum of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta," gives the Himalayas, Central and Southern India, Ceylon, and Java as the habitats of the present species, to which I may add the Valley of Cashmere, as I possess a specimen collected therein by Lord Arthur Hay. It is evident, then, that the bird enjoys a most extensive range. I may remark that all the specimens from Java which have come under my notice are considerably smaller than those from India and Ceylon, but their markings and coloration are so extremely similar, that to regard them as mere local varieties will, in my opinion, be the most philosophic and proper view. Specimens of a Tit collected by Mr. Wallace on the far distant southern island of Lombok also resemble the Javanese specimens so closely, the only difference being a lesser amount of black on the breast, that I cannot but consider them as referable to the same species.

This bird is figured in the drawings of the late Hon. F. J. Shore, as having been procured at Dheru, Nov. 5, 1828.

No perceptible difference occurs in the colouring of the sexes of the *P. cinereus*; but, as is the case with its western prototype, the *Parus major* of Europe, the female is a trifle smaller than her mate.

Dr. Francis Buchanan Hamilton informs us that "in Northern India this bird inhabits bamboo groves, forms its nest in hollow trees, and lives on insects."

"In Southern India," remarks Mr. Jerdon, "I have only seen this bird on the Neilgherries, where it is common in the woods, associating in small families, and feeding on various insects and seeds, to obtain which it occasionally resorts to the gardens. I have seen it once or twice only along the range of Northern Ghauts, but it probably is to be found all along the range of Western Ghauts."

Mr. Layard states that "this Tit is not uncommon in the island of Ceylon: its habits resemble those of our own well-known bird, hunting in small parties, and flitting from tree to tree."

Crown of the head, nape, throat, broad band down each side of the neck, centre of the chest, and an irregular mark down the centre of the abdomen glossy bluish black; cheeks and ear-coverts white; back and scapularies ashy grey, assuming a creamy tint where it meets the black of the nape, and becoming of a more blue-grey on the rump; wing-coverts black, tipped with creamy white, and so broadly margined with blue-grey that the black is not seen when the wing is closed; primaries and secondaries slaty black, the former narrowly edged at the base with blue-grey, and towards the extremity with greyish white, the latter broadly margined and tipped with greyish white; sides of the chest, flanks, and abdomen dull creamy white, washed with blue towards the vent; under surface of the shoulder white; four central tail-feathers dull black margined with blue-grey; the two next on each side dull black, margined with blue-grey and tipped with white; the next on each side white, deeply forked with black at the base, the outer one entirely white; bill bluish black; irides dark brown; feet blackish blue.

The figures are the size of life. The plant is the *Liriodendron grandiflora* of Roxburgh, copied from one of the numerous drawings of plants contained in the Library of the Honourable East India Company.