

PARUS VENUSTULUS, Swinh.

White-naped Tit.

Parus venustus, Swinh. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1870, p. 133.

THERE would appear to be no end to the species of Tits; for wherever the naturalist may travel over the surface of the Old World and the northern portions of the New, he finds the woods tenanted by some one or more species of this extensive family of birds. It is true, there are none in Australia or in New Zealand, neither, so far as I am aware, are there any in Polynesia or South America. In Australia the *Falcunculi* (of which, however, there are only two species) appear to take the place of the *Parus*.

For the discovery of this new species in China we are indebted to the researches of Mr. Swinhoe; and the brief notice which I have taken the liberty of extracting from the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1870 is all he has placed on record respecting it.

"This charming species occurred throughout the precipitous mountain-gorges between which the great river Yangtze runs, from Kweifoo, in Szechuen, to Ichang, in Hoopih. I found it at the latter place, in company with *Parus minor*. It is a very active little bird, and has quite a peculiar, sibilant note. Its yellow belly recalls to mind the *Parus monticolus* of the Himalayas; but it is destitute of the black mesial stripe. I could scarcely believe at first that it was a distinct species, as in Formosa we find the *P. insperatus*, which is little more than a race of the *P. monticolus*; and I expected that a black and yellow Tit from Central China would be either that or the Himalayan bird.

"Head, throat, breast, neck, and back deep black, glossed with bluish purple; cheeks, sides of the neck, the edges of the central occipital feathers, a large spot on the centre of the nape, and the tips of some of the upper dorsal feathers white, with a faint wash of yellow on the white of the nuchal and dorsal plumes; lower part of the back, rump, and scapularies fine bluish grey, tinged with yellowish green; wing-coverts and tertiaries deep black; the lesser coverts largely tipped with white, the greater and tertiaries with light greenish yellow; quills dark hair-brown; secondaries margined with yellowish green, and slightly tipped with white; primaries yellowish green at their basal margins, then narrowly edged with white and tipped with whitey-brown; upper tail-coverts deep black, faintly tipped with green; tail black, deeper and richer on the basal half, edged with greenish grey on the apical portion, and tipped with yellowish; the fifth rectrix white on the central edge, increasing externally to the first or outermost, which has the greater part of the outer web white; under surface fine sulphur-yellow, becoming olivaceous on the sides and flanks; axillaries and carpal edge yellowish white; inferior edges of the inner webs of the quills white; bill indigo-black; irides blackish brown; legs, toes, and claws deep lead-colour."

The figures are of the natural size.