NECTARINIA SATURATA.

Black-breasted Sun-bird.

Cinnyris saturata, Hodgs. Ind. Rev. 1837, p. 273.—Id. Gray, Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 82.

Nectarinia saturata, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xii. p. 276.—Id. Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. xx. p. 316.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 224.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 405, *Nectarinia*, sp. 14.

Cinnyris Assamensis, McClell. Proc. Zool. Soc., part. vii. (1839) p. 167.

Nectarinia Hodgsonii, Jard. Nat. Lib. Nect., pp. 240–269, pl. 29.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 98, *Nectarinia*, sp. 66.—Id. Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 59.

Æthopyga saturata, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil. i. p. 103 (note).—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East-Ind. Comp., vol. ii. p. 735.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. i. p. 367.

This Sun-bird is another of the ornithological gems which must tend to enhance the interest which attaches to the productions of the great Himalayan range of mountains; for, although it is not decorated with the rich scarlet hue of *N. Gouldiæ* and *N. ignicauda*, this deficiency is amply compensated by the deep maroon-colour of the back, and the rich steel-blue of the crown, throat, rump, and upper tail-feathers, with the contrast they present to the black of the chest, the deep brown of the primaries, and the olive-green of the lengthened flank-plumes; besides which, its adornment is rendered still more complete by the addition of a faint line of yellow across the rump, separating the maroon of the back from the steel-blue of the upper tail-coverts; this mark, however, is so slight that too little of it is apparent to break the harmony of the general colouring. The present bird is in every respect a true *Æthopyga*, notwithstanding that it differs from the other species in colour. The specific term *saturata*, although the oldest, is not the only one that has been assigned to it, McClelland having called it *Assamensis*, and Sir W. Jardine *Hodgsonii*.

It appears to be a law among the *Nectariniæ* for the females to be dull green and destitute of any markings to relieve their uniformity; while the males, as will be seen on reference to the several illustrations, are as constantly clothed in some rich livery, have a much more elegant contour, and much longer tails.

The *N. saturata* appears to prefer regions of an equable temperature; for it neither ascends to the bleak elevations of the ranges, nor descends to the heated forests of the Terrai, which skirt the vast chain of mountains known as the Himalayas. Mr. Moore states that it inhabits Bhotan, and Dr. Jerdon that it extends its range into Assam and Sikhim, where he found it abundant at an elevation of from three to 5000 feet.

The male has the crown of the head, and nape, and a narrow stripe down each side of the throat brilliant violet-blue; lores, ear-coverts, sides of the neck, wings, rump, throat, and centre of the belly black; back and wing-coverts deep maroon-red; across the rump a faint line of yellow; upper tail-coverts and basal portion of the two centre tail-feathers fine glossy steel-blue; wings brown; apical portion of the two central and the lateral tail-feathers dull black; lengthened flank-feathers, lower part of the abdomen, and under tail-coverts very pale olive-green; irides brown; bill black; legs brown.

The female is dull olive-green on the upper surface, with the throat and breast greyish olive; abdomen and under tail-coverts greenish yellow.

The figures represent the two sexes, of the natural size. The plant is the *Luvunga scandens*.