NECTARINIA ZEYLONICA.

Ceylonese Sun-bird.

Certhia zeylonica, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 188.—Id. Gmel. edit., tom. i. p. 482.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 285.
——— *Philippensis olivacea*, Briss. Orn., tom. iii. p. 623, pl. xxxiv. fig. 4.
Ceylonese creeper, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. ii. p. 712.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 203.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 227.
Nectarinia zeylonica, Jard. Nat. Lib. Nect., pp. 213 and 261, pl. 20.—Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xii. p. 976.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 226.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 98, *Nectarinia*, sp. 47.—Tytler in Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., 2nd ser. vol. xiii. 1854, p. 373.
Cinnyris zeylonica, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 409, *Cinnyris*, sp. 46.
——— *ceylonica*, Sundev. in Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. xviii. p. 256.
Cynnyris zeylonica, Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 594.
——— *sola*, Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 597.—Jerd. Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xii. p. 226.
Cinnyris nigralbus, Less.
——— *lepida*, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc. part ii. 1832, p. 98.
Certhia dubia, Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 204?
——— *quadricolor*, Scop. in Sonn. Voy., tab. 30?
Leptocoma Zeylonica, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil i. p. 104.—Horsf. & Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East-Ind. Comp. vol. ii. p. 740.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. i. p. 368.
Sukkur Khora, Hindoos.
Maee Chungee, Bengalese.

As indicated by the length of the list of synonyms given above, this little Sun-bird has received a more than ordinary degree of attention both from ornithologists and travellers—a circumstance which is due to the fact of its being very generally diffused over that portion of India which has been resorted to by Europeans, and particularly by natives of the British Islands. It is to India what the Ruby-throated Humming-bird is to the United States of America, and, like the latter, in its own country is a favourite with all, from the polished Hindoo to the delicate lady who has followed her husband from Albion's soil to the gorgeous East; in a word, it is the Sun-bird *par excellence*, and the one which, from the brilliancy of its hues and a fancied resemblance in its actions and a part of its economy to those of the *Trochilidæ*, has given rise to the assertion that there are Humming-birds in India, whereas it is only in the New World and the adjacent islands that those lovely ornithological gems are to be found.

Mr. Jerdon states that the *N. Zeylonica* "is spread throughout India from the extreme south to Bengal, not reaching the Himalayas. It is rare in Central India, is apparently not found in the North-west Provinces, extends through Dacca to Assam, is exceedingly abundant in Madras, more so, I think, than in Lower Bengal, and appears to be more numerous in the Carnatic than in any other part of the peninsula. In that district it may be seen in almost every garden, flitting about from flower to flower, its brilliant hues every now and then displayed to the eye as it catches their reflexion by the sun.

"It does not change its plumage at the breeding-season, the males always retaining their brilliant plumage. The eggs are usually two in number, of a pale greenish tinge with dusky spots."

"This bird," says Mr. Blyth, "is very abundant in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, and appears also to be the commonest species of the genus in peninsular India; but I have never seen it in collections from the Himalaya, nor is it included among the Nepalese species by Mr. Hodgson. It utters a weak shrill chant, delivered in the same key as the song of the British *Accentor modularis*, and frequently emits a low weak chirp that recalls to mind the analogous note of *A. regulus*, or *Certhia familiaris*. The natives in the neighbourhood of Calcutta take them with bird-lime, and, after plucking out the wing-primaries to prevent their fluttering, tie them to a stick and carry rows of them about for sale. They may be kept alive for several days on sugar and water, and I have heard one sing that had had no other diet for some days; but raspberry or other fruit-jam is a better kind of food on which to keep these nectar-feeding birds. The *Nectariniæ*, however, by no means confine themselves to a regimen of this kind; and I have taken so large a spider from the stomach of *N. asiatica*, that I wondered how it could have been swallowed.

"According to Mr. Walter Elliot, the present species 'builds a hanging nest with an entrance near the top, opening downwards;' and such is the form of a beautiful fabric before me, which I am assured is the production of this bird. It is attached, nearly throughout its length, to a small thorny twig, and is of an elongated pear shape, composed chiefly of soft vegetable fibres, very densely and neatly interwoven; on the outside are some coarser strips of grass, leaves, scalings of bark, &c.; but the substance and internal lining