NILTAVA SUNDARA, *Hodgs.*

Sundara Niltava.

Niltava Sundara, Hodgs. Ind. Rev. 1837, p. 650.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 264.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 174.—Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds, presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 92.
——— *sordida*, Hodgs.—Gray, Zool. Misc. p. 84.
Smallest Shamah, of Europeans (Capt. Boys).

Judging from the many examples of this bird I have observed in large collections from Upper India, and from the information communicated to me by Mr. Grace, the present species would seem to be far more numerous than the *Niltava Grandis*, to have a wider range, and to be more generally diffused. It is also said to be much quicker in its actions, more busy among the foliage, and to frequent alike the higher and lower branches of the trees; its food consists of insects generally, to which berries and fruits are occasionally added.

The great stronghold of this beautiful species may be said to be the temperate and warmer regions of the southern slopes of the Himalaya; the countries of Nepaul and Bhotan are those from which I have received specimens: many beautiful examples were obtained at Bumourie and Bhurthal by Captain Boys; and Mr. Blyth states that it also inhabits Assam.

The male bird, as will be seen by the accompanying Plate, is very beautiful, and must, both on that account and from the liveliness of its actions, be a most conspicuous and attractive object among the trees; on the other hand, nothing can be more quiet and unobtrusive than the colouring of the female, which, indeed, offers so strong a contrast, that were it not for the beautiful liliaceous markings of the sides of the neck, I should hesitate before pronouncing them to be the two sexes of one and the same species; the party-coloured males of the year however at once set the matter at rest.

The male has the crown of the head, shoulders, rump, a narrow mark on either side of the neck and the margins of the basal three-fourths of the tail-feathers beautiful lazuline-blue; remainder of the upper surface, wings and tail blackish blue; throat black; forehead and lores deep velvety black; breast, abdomen and under surface of the shoulder tawny buff; bill black; feet dark brown.

The female has the forehead, lores and throat pale reddish brown, all the upper surface olive-brown; tail reddish brown; on either side of the neck a small liliaceous mark; on the breast a crescent of greyish white; and all the under surface pale greyish brown.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.