NILTAVA GRANDIS.

Grand Niltava.

Chaitaris grandis, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 189.
Niltava grandis, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 264.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 174.
Bainopus irenoïdes, Hodgs.—Gray, Zool. Misc. p. 84.
——— *grandis*, Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds, presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 91.

Of the three species of the genus *Niltava* known to ornithologists, the present, as its name implies, is the largest, if not the most richly coloured. The southern slopes of the Himalayas, but especially those of the eastern portion of this great range of mountains, appear to be its natural habitat. The rich forests of Nepaul, Sikim and Bhotan, are localities in which it has been found; and many of the specimens in my collection have "Darjeeling" marked on the labels attached to them, to indicate where they were procured. Mr. Grace informs me that it is mostly met with at an elevation of from eight to ten thousand feet, that it is nowhere very numerous, and that it is generally seen in pairs, and rarely in company with other birds. Its food, according to Mr. Hodgson, consists of various kinds of insects, which are procured both among the foliage and on the ground, but never taken on the wing; pulpy berries and hard seeds are also partaken of in the winter.

In this species, as in the other members of this limited genus, the plumage of the female is very different from that of the male: the outward form of the two sexes is, however, as is generally the case, in perfect unison, and it is no less remarkable than it is interesting to observe in both, the beautiful mark of rich blue which adorns each side of the neck; again, following a universal law which prevails among birds, wherever the sexes differ in plumage, the young males of the first year assimilate so closely to the female, that dissection must be resorted to, to distinguish them.

The male has the crown of the head, a large mark on each side of the neck, the shoulders and the rump brilliant lazuline-blue; remainder of the upper surface-wings and tail black glossed with deep blue; forehead, lores, cheeks, chin and breast deep black; abdomen purplish black, becoming paler towards the vent, which is bluish black; under surface of the wings and tail black; bill black; legs dusky black.

The female has the forehead and cheeks reddish brown; back of the head and neck greyish olive; remainder of the upper surface-wings and tail brown, becoming of a deeper or rufous hue on the primaries and tail-feathers; throat sandy buff; on either side of the neck a narrow mark of liliaceous blue; all the under surface tawny.

The young, just after leaving the nest, are characterized by the general plumage being brown, with all the feathers of the head and body marked with longitudinal tear-shaped spots of chestnut similar to those observed in many of the Saxicoline birds.

The accompanying Plate represents two adult males and a female of the natural size.