PERICROCOTUS FLAMMEUS.

Orange Pericrocotus.

Muscicapa flammea, Forst. Zool. Ind., p. 25. pl. 15.—Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 942.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 474.—Penn. Ind. Zool., p. 43. pl. ix.—Temm. Pl. Col. 263. figs. 1, 2.—Vieill. 2nde édit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxi. p. 483.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 817. pl. 193. fig. 1.

subflava, Vieill. 2nde édit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxi. p. 483.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 817?

Phænicornis flammeus, Swains. Zool. Ill. 2nd ser. pl. 52.—Jerd. Ill. Ind. Orn., pl. xi.—Ib. Madr. Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. x. p. 244.

elegans, M'Clell. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part vii. p. 156, male.

Flammeus Flycatcher, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. iii. p. 338; and Supp., p. 171.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. vi. p. 173.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. x. p. 372.

La Mésange de la côte de Malabar, Sonn. Voy. aux Ind. Orient, &c., tom. ii. p. 204. pl. 114. fig. 1.

Pericrocotus flammeus, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 282, Pericrocotus, sp. 2.—Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xv. p. 309.—Ib. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 192.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 357, Pericrocotus, sp. 10.—Horsf. Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 142.—Layard in Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 2nd ser. vol. xiii. p. 127.

Phari Bulal Chusm of the Hindoos, Jerdon.

In all probability the present is the oldest known species of this peculiar group of birds: the foregoing list of synonyms will have prepared the reader for hearing that such is the case, as well as for learning that it is one of the commonest species in our museums; both of which are doubtless due to the circumstance of its being a native of that part of India with which we have been longest and best acquainted, namely, Madras, the southern portion of the country generally, and the Island of Ceylon. In point of size it is much smaller than *P. speciosus*; in its colouring also it is less brilliant than that species: indeed its hue is not so bright as that of any of its allies, the prevailing tint being orange-red instead of fiery scarlet. I possess two well-marked varieties of this bird: I say varieties, because I cannot consider the difference they exhibit of sufficient importance to be regarded as specific. The variation alluded to, consists in the specimens from the western part of the Indian Peninsula having longer and more hooked bills than those collected in the neighbourhood of Madras and in the Island of Ceylon.

The usual diversity of colouring is observable in the sexes, the female being yellow in those parts of her plumage which are red in the male.

"This handsome bird," says Mr. Jerdon, "is a denizen of all the large forests of Southern India. I have seen it in Travancore, Malabar, the Whynaad, and the forest skirting the Neilgherries on their eastern face, but not in the Carnatic or Deccan, there being no forests in those districts, except here and there on the slopes, and at the base of the eastern ghauts; and in the places where I have traversed those hills, I have looked in vain for it. Towards the north of the peninsula, in the jungles of Goomsoor, its place is occupied by *P. speciosus* and *P. brevirostris* of Vigors, which two species appear to extend through Central India to the Himalayas. The *P. flammeus*, though often to be seen in the more open and cleared spaces of the jungles, is never, that I have observed, met with away from the woods. It ascends the sides of mountain ranges to a considerable height, and, I fancied, was more numerous in the elevated region of Whynaad than in most other localities. I saw it, though rarely, in woods on the summit of the Neilgherries, but only on their northern face. It is a tolerably common and abundant species in its appropriate haunts, and, from its bright and showy colours, attracts the notice of most travellers through the lofty forests of Western India. It keeps chiefly to the tops of high trees, where it may be seen usually in small flocks, frisking about, picking an insect off a branch or leaf, or occasionally catching one in the air. The males keep up a continual whistling call. Its food seems to consist chiefly of coleopterous insects."

Mr. Layard informs us that the *Pericrocotus flammeus* "is common in Ceylon, inhabiting high jungle. It does not, however, extend further into the northern province than Vavoniavlancolom, where it is entirely replaced by *Pericrocotus peregrinus*, which is, however, mingled with it in all localities. In habits the two species are similar, hunting about trees for small insects and larvæ, but never descending to bushes. It always appears in flocks, and when one bird flies off to another tree, the whole party follow in succession."

The male has the entire head and neck, back, wings, two central tail-feathers, and the basal portion of the lateral ones, deep glossy black; all the under surface of the body, under surface of the shoulders, a large patch in the centre of the wing, an oblong mark near the tip of the external web of four of the secondaries, the lower part of the back, rump and upper tail-coverts, and apical three-fourths of the lateral tail-feathers, orange-scarlet; bill and feet black; irides dark brown.

The female has the forehead, face, wing-marks, under surface of the body and shoulders, and the extremities of the lateral tail-feathers, fine rich yellow; occiput, back of the neck, and upper surface dark grey; rump and upper tail-coverts wax-yellow; bill and feet black; irides blackish-brown.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size. The plant is a species of Uvularia.