HALCYON GULARIS.

Manilla Kingfisher.

Grand Martin-pêcheur de Madagascar, Buff. Pl. Enl. 232.

Alcedo smyrnensis var. β, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 456.—Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part i. p. 286.

— gularis, Kuhl and Swind., Buff. Fig. Av. Coll. Nom. Syst., 1820, p. 4.

— rufirostris, Meyen, Beitr., iii. p. 94.

smyrnensis, Kittl. Kupf. Vög., p. 10. t. 14. 2. 232.

Halcyon ruficollis, Swains. in Lard. Cycl. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 335.

Alcedo melanoptera, Temm. Tabl. Méth., p. 75.

- smyrnensis var. albogularis, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng. 1843, p. 998.—Id. 1844, p. 394.

Halcyon gularis, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 79, Halcyon, sp. 13.—Kaup, Fam. Eisv., p. 8.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 155, Halcyon, sp. 21.

Entomothera gularis, Reich. Handb., i. p. 13. 34. t. 401. 3082.

Entomobia gularis, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil ii. p. 155.

A superficial view of this Kingfisher would lead to the supposition that it is a mere variety of the Halcyon fusca so generally spread over India; but if a careful examination and comparison of the two birds be made, they will be found to differ very materially, and to constitute two really distinct species. It is not only by the lesser amount of white on its throat that the Manilla bird is to be distinguished from its Indian ally, but other differences are also observable: in the first place, the entire plumage is of a much richer hue, particularly the blue of the wings, which is truly beautiful; in the next, there is a much larger mark of black on the centre of the wing, and a greater amount of this colour on the tips of the primaries, so that, when the wing is outspread, the white which occupies the base of the primaries is much more circumscribed, and the white itself is much purer and more conspicuous; the under surface, too, is wholly chestnut, with the exception of that part of the throat termed the chin.

The only country from which I have seen or received specimens is the rich island of Manilla, where it doubtless takes the place of the Halcyon fusca of India.

The sexes offer no perceptible difference either in colour or markings, in which respect they assimilate to the Indian and many other Halcyons; their habits and economy, too, are said to be very similar, sometimes feeding upon fish and lizards, and at others upon crabs and various crustaceans, to which insects are frequently added.

Head, cheeks, back and sides of the neck, throat, under coverts of the wings, and the whole of the under surface of the body rich reddish chestnut, darkest on the head and back of the neck; back and scapularies dull green washed with verditer blue; lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts fine verditer blue; wing-coverts deep black, a few of those near the shoulder dark green; spurious wing greenish blue; basal portion of the primaries greenish blue on their outer webs and white on their inner, the apical portion of both webs black; secondaries greenish blue on their outer webs, their inner webs being green next the shaft and black on the margin; tail bluish green above, black beneath; chin white; irides hazel; bill, legs and feet deep orange-red.

The Plate represents both sexes, coloured as accurately as possible. The plant is the Tamarindus officinalis.