

PTERIDOPHORA ALBERTI, Meyer.

King of Saxony's Bird of Paradise.

Pteridophora alberti, Meyer, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, iv. p. xi (1894).—Id. Abhandl. k. zool. Mus. Dresden, 1894-95, no. 5, pp. 1-7, Taf. 1 (1895).—Rothschild, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, iv. p. xxi (1895).

THIS marvellous Bird of Paradise does not require to be exactly compared with any other genus of the *Paradiseidæ*, for it is recognizable from any of them at a glance. It is, indeed, distinct from every form of bird in the world by reason of the two long streamers on the head, with their enamelled and flag-like appendages.

Dr. A. B. Meyer, in his original account of the species, has given a note by Dr. Heller on the structure of these curious enamel-like processes, and an epitome of Dr. Heller's observations will be found in the Introduction to the present work, under the heading of the genus *Pteridophora*. The structure of these enamel-like appendages is of the same class as the ornamental metallic or wax-like structure to be found in the crowns of the Curl-crested Toucan (*Pteroglossus beaulharnaisi*) and Cuming's Bush-Cuckoo (*Lepidogrammus cumingi*), the hackles of Sonnerat's Jungel-fowl (*Gallus sonnerati*), the tips to the secondaries of the Wax-wing (*Ampelis garrulus*), the breast-feathers of the African Open-bill Stork (*Anastomus lamelligerus*), and other birds.

It will be noticed that the shaft of the elongated crest-plumes is only feathered on one side, and that the enamel flag-like appendages appear blue on their outer aspect, and are internally brown. Each of these decorative streamers is inserted in a muscular sheath on the side of the head, and we may thus believe that the bird is able to erect or depress them at will.

The home of this wonderful bird is New Guinea, and the first specimens were received from the Amberno Mountains, which lie to the eastward of Geelvink Bay, in the north-west of the great Papuan island.

Adult male. General colour above velvety black, the feathers on the mantle and upper back elongated and apparently forming a shield; the lower back, rump, and upper tail-coverts olive-brown, the latter a little darker; lesser wing-coverts like the back, the median and greater coverts with a shaft-streak of ochreous buff; bastard-wing and primary-coverts black; quills black, edged with ochreous brown, and distinguished by broad ochreous-buff bases to the feathers, extending for some distance up the inner webs; the innermost secondaries uniform black; tail black; head velvety black like the back, with two long streamers on each side of the crown, consisting of quadrangular enamelled plates of blue above, brown below, only found on one web of the feather; sides of face and throat velvety black like the crown, the feathers on the sides of the fore-neck elongated and apparently forming a small shield; remainder of under surface of body pale yellow, becoming lighter and more isabelline on the abdomen and sides of body; thighs dusky grey; under wing-coverts and axillaries pale ochraceous buff like the quill-lining. Total length 8 inches, culmen 0.8, wing 4.85, tail 2.9, tarsus 1.3.

The description and figure in the Plate are taken from a specimen from the Amberno River, presented to the British Museum by the Hon. Walter Rothschild.