

On the 28th of June 1859, in the absence of Mr. G. R. Gray from London, I exhibited to the meeting of the Zoological Society, held in the evening of that day, some specimens of both sexes of this singular bird which had just arrived, and took the opportunity of remarking that, while I considered Mr. Gray right in giving it a new generic appellation, the family to which Mr. Wallace had assigned it was not, in my opinion, the right one. This beautiful bird is not indeed a Bird of Paradise if we regard the *Paradisea apoda* and *P. Papuana* as typical examples of that group; it is in fact very closely allied to *Ptiloris*, so nearly so, indeed, as scarcely to be separable from that form; for on comparing it with the well-known Rifle-bird of Australia, *Ptiloris paradisea*, it will be seen that they are very similar both in their structure and in the disposition of their markings: the same great difference in the outward appearance of the sexes also occurs in both. Second only in interest to the discovery of this bird, would be an account of its habits and manners; and I trust Mr. Wallace will ere long enlighten us on these points. In the absence of this information, I would venture an opinion that it is partially a creeper in its habits; but whether it frequents the boles of the larger trees or the faces of rocky precipices is uncertain; neither do we know in what way the males display the plumes which spring out at right angles from the outer part of the shoulder: that the bird has the power of erecting and depressing them at will is without doubt. In the female they are entirely absent.

The male may be thus described:—

“On the basal half of the upper mandible a series of erected tuft-like feathers of a pale sandy buff, blending on the forehead into the delicate velvety dove-coloured feathers of the crown and occiput; sides of the head, back of the neck, and upper surface light brown, becoming darker and having a velvety appearance on the back and scapularies; each of these feathers has also a very narrow edging of a lighter hue; wings light brown, fading into buffy white, with a silvery gloss at the tips of the primaries and secondaries; shafts of the primaries white; the two lengthened plumes springing from each shoulder snowy white; tail brown with white shafts, and becoming of a silvery light brown at the tip; throat, neck, chest, and projecting side-plumes fine emerald-green, becoming very brilliant on the tips of the plumes; under surface brown, the feathers of the breast bordered with brilliant green, giving it a scaled appearance; flanks washed with the same colour, but less brilliant; thighs light brown; bill brownish horn-colour; feet yellow.

The female has the tuft on the upper mandible and the crown of the head the same as in the male, and is entirely devoid of the green colouring and lengthened plumes both of the breast and wings, her entire plumage being brown, without ornamentation of any kind.

The Plate represents one male of the natural size, and a second male and a female considerably reduced.