

TROPIDORHYNCHUS BUCEROIDES.

Helmeted Honey-eater.

Philedon buceroides, Swains. Anim. in Menag., p. 325.

Tropidorhynchus buceroides, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 125, *Tropidorhynchus*, sp. 2.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av. p. 390, *Tropidorhynchus*, sp. 9.

Nothing is more evident than that every peculiar kind of vegetation is accompanied by a corresponding peculiarity of animal life; be that life mammal, bird or insect. In no country are the trees and general vegetation of so peculiar and so marked a character as in Australia; in proof of which I may cite as instances in point, the *Eucalypti* and *Banksiæ*. These trees are frequented by a numerous family of birds called Honey-eaters, among the species of which a general similarity of structure reigns, but certain differences in form occur, corresponding in a great measure with the different botanical groups among which they obtain their subsistence; thus, the large *Eucalypti* are tenanted by the members of the genera *Anthochaera*, *Entomyza*, and *Tropidorhynchus*, while the smaller species are resorted to by the *Ptilotes*, *Glyciphilæ*, *Melithreptes*, &c., and the *Banksiæ* afford shelter and food to *Acanthogenys* and the true *Meliphagæ*. All these birds have lengthened tongues with filamentous brush-like tips, extremely small stomachs, and live partly on the pollen and honey which they extract from the flower-cups and partly on the insects attracted by the nectar.

The bird here represented belongs to a genus the members of which are widely dispersed over Australia wherever the *Eucalypti* abound. It may be regarded as the representative on the north coast of the *Tropidorhynchus corniculatus* of the southern part of the country, for it was in the Cape York Peninsula that it was obtained; not, however, by Mr. MacGillivray, who, I believe, mistook it for the common species, and did not procure examples; which is much to be regretted, since the bird is so extremely rare in our collections that I beg to direct attention to it, in the hope that, should any other expeditions visit the northern shores of Australia, so fine a species might not be overlooked.

The *Tropidorhynchus Buceroides* differs very considerably from the *T. corniculatus* and every other Australian species; these differences, which will be readily seen by reference to the accompanying Plate, consist in its much larger size, in the great elevation of the culmen, and in the crown of the head being clothed with feathers.

Feathers of the crown and nape brown, with pale greyish or silvery edges; all the upper surface, wings and tail light brown; feathers of the under surface lighter brown with a silky lustre, those of the throat with darker centres; face leaden-black; bill black; feet blackish-brown.

The figure is of the natural size. The beautiful plant is the *Stenocarpus Cunninghamsi*.