

POMATORHINUS RUFICEPS, *Hartl.*

Chestnut-crowned Pomatorhinus.

Pomatorhinus ruficeps, Hartl. in Cabanis' Journ. für Orn., vol. i. p. 21.—Ib. Mag. de Zool. 1852, p. 316.

At the period of my visit to South Australia (1838) the colony was in its infancy, and the city of Adelaide a chaotic jumble of sheds and mud huts, with trees growing here and there in the newly marked-out streets and squares. Among these trees Parrakeets of various kinds, and Honey-eaters still more numerous, were busily occupied in search of food or otherwise engaged; the former principally among the *Eucalypti*, while the latter paid their devoirs to the *Banksiæ*: here and there also might be seen groups of newly-arrived emigrants, both English and Irish, who had chosen this distant country for their future home; groups of Germans, too, whose fatherland no longer offered opportunities for enterprise, were dotted about the country busily engaged in constructing their little villages and getting their gardens under cultivation. It was one of these German emigrants, whose name I have heard, but which I now forget, who, inspired by the works of nature with which he was so profusely surrounded, employed some of his leisure hours in collecting the novel ornithological forms which came under his notice and transmitting them to the Museum at Bremen. Among the birds so collected and transmitted was the present new and very beautiful *Pomatorhinus*, the discovery of which has both surprised and gratified me: to me, indeed, as the author of the "Birds of Australia," it is of especial interest; and not the less so from the singular circumstance that it should have escaped the researches of Sir George Grey, Captain Sturt, and every other person who has attended to ornithological science since the establishment of the colony; a very fine species it certainly is, and so precisely does it accord in form with the other Australian members of the genus, that, had it been shown me without its habitat being mentioned, I should undoubtedly have named Australia as the country to which it belonged. Dr. Hartlaub of Bremen, to whom among many other favours I am indebted for the loan of the specimen from which my figure is taken, has given a description of this species, and assigned it the specific appellation of *ruficeps* in the first volume of Cabanis' "Journal für Ornithologie" above quoted, with the following remarks, which I beg to transcribe:—

"Of this fine and typical species the Bremen Collection received two examples, scarcely differing in colour, in a collection of South Australian birds sent from Adelaide. It is remarkable that the bird escaped the researches of Mr. Gould and his collectors, and one cannot help imagining that it must have recently arrived from some part of the interior of the country, and accompanied other stragglers towards the coast.

"In size and colour *P. ruficeps* is more nearly allied to *P. superciliosus* than to any other, but it differs from that species in the brown-red colour of the head, in the white bars on the wings, and in the black mark which separates the reddish-brown of the flanks from the white of the breast. In our two specimens the sexes have not been ascertained; one of them is rather less brilliantly coloured than the other."

Crown of the head and nape chestnut- or brown-red, bounded below by a conspicuous line of white; lores blackish-brown; behind the eye and ear-coverts brown; upper part of the back and wing-coverts grey, each feather with a dark brown centre, giving those parts a mottled appearance; lower part of the back and rump pure dark grey; greater and lesser wing-coverts and secondaries tipped with white; throat, breast and centre of the abdomen white; flanks reddish-brown, separated from the white of the abdomen by a stripe of black; under tail-coverts brown, spotted with greyish-white; four central tail-feathers dark brown, indistinctly rayed with black; the three outer feathers on each side brown, largely tipped with pure white; bill and feet blackish horn-colour, the base of the mandibles lighter.

The figures are of the size of life.