

PARADISORNIS RUDOLPHI, *Finsch*

73.

Prince Rudolph's Bird of Paradise.

Paradisornis rudolphi, Finsch, Zeitschr. ges. Orn. ii. p. 385, Taf. xx. (1885).—Finsch and Meyer, op. cit. iii. p. 29 (1886).—Finsch, Ibis, 1886, p. 252, pl. vii.—Sharpe, Nature, 1886, p. 340.—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, xi. p. 509 (1886).—Ramsay, Pr. Linn. Soc. N. S. W. (2) ii. p. 25 (1887).—Salvad. Agg. Orn. Papuasias, pt. ii. p. 163 (1890).

THIS wonderful bird is an inhabitant of South-eastern New Guinea, and it is not saying too much to state that, among all the extraordinary birds which inhabit the earth, this is one of the most striking. Accustomed as naturalists have been to the fantastic coloration of the Birds of Paradise, with their long flowing yellow or red plumes, no one could have expected that a bird existed which had blue streamers, as we find to be the case in the present bird.

The original examples were obtained in the Horseshoe range of mountains by the late Mr. Karl Hunstein, and they were described in a joint paper by Dr. Otto Finsch and Dr. A. B. Meyer, the genus *Paradisornis* being characterized by the last-named ornithologist, while the species was dedicated to the late Crown Prince of Austria by Dr. Finsch. Mr. H. O. Forbes afterwards met with this fine species in the Sogeri district of the Owen Stanley Mountains, but he only obtained females, and this was the case subsequently with other collectors. The late Mr. Hugh Romilly's collection at the Colonial Exhibition in South Kensington contained a couple of specimens of the present species, which were afterwards given by him to the British Museum, where they still remain: they were likewise female birds, and the male is up to the present moment unrepresented in the National Collection.

The following descriptions are taken from the papers of Drs. Finsch and Meyer, above referred to:—

"*Male*. Front and sides of the head, neck, and shoulders satiny black, with a dark yellowish-green metallic sheen, which disappears behind; eyelashes long, white, silky; behind the eye a naked spot; back of head and nape cherry-brown; back greenish blue mixed with black. Wings above blue, in front brighter, the lesser and middle coverts edged with bright blue, as also the tertiaries on the inner webs; inner webs of the wings black. Breast-shield with long feathers, blackish, in certain lights alternately glancing bluish and greenish, towards the belly terminating in a well-defined broad blue cross band, and on the sides passing into the ultramarine of the ornamental plumes; belly shining satiny black. Under wing-coverts brownish mixed with dark grey; axillaries exteriorly brownish, interiorly bluish green; under surface of wings blackish grey, with brighter inner edgings on the primaries and bluish on the secondaries. The ornamental plumes are divided into two portions: the larger outer ones are rather rigid, and on the underside are bright ultramarine blue at their bases and pass into lilac; on their uppersides, *i. e.* on the hinder sides, they are shining brown; the shafts of these feathers above at their bases are white, with the end half brown, below they are entirely bright brown. The smaller inner ornamental plumes, which are in part strongly curved inwards, are bright blue at their base, in the middle portion ultramarine or cobalt-blue, passing towards the apices into bright greenish blue; upon the smaller ornamental plumes lie as coverts a row of shortened chestnut-brown feathers strongly curved, and upon part of them another row of black feathers. Tail blue above, with brighter edgings, and dirty greenish at the base; below it is uniform bright blue: two lengthened middle tail-feathers carry at their bases brownish webs on a white shaft; at the end of the other tail-feathers these webs disappear almost entirely, and then again gradually increase to a breadth of half a centimetre the two together; the spatula-shaped tips are about 7 millim. in diameter; the colour of these feathers is above black, changing to violet; below black, with a light blue spot at the tip; the shafts are black both above and below. Bill yellowish white; feet (in dried skin) brownish horn-colour; iris (according to Hunstein's information) brown.

"*Female*. Flank-feathers loose and lengthened, on their inner sides greenish blue; belly rusty reddish with dark cross bands; the feathers on their undersides bluish green; tail beneath with lightly marked shadings, which disappear towards the end of the tail; thighs black; feathers of the upper back long, loose, satiny black, beneath greenish blue; side-feathers of the hinder neck lengthened and erectile."

The figure of the adult male is taken from a drawing made by Mr. J. G. Keulemans from the typical specimen, when the latter was sent to England by Dr. Meyer to be figured in the 'Ibis.' Dr. Meyer has very kindly supervised Mr. Hart's figures for me, and made several corrections of details, so that I hope that this Plate gives a more correct idea of the bird than any of those previously published. The typical male specimen is in the Dresden Museum, and the figure of the female has been taken from one of the examples in the British Museum.