

hardens gradually, and the black shaft is sometimes found with a feathery spatule at the end. It appears to me to be improbable that each succeeding moult of the black whalebone-like plumes should be accompanied by a feathery tip to the latter.

Dr. Wallace's account of the habits of this species is still the only full one that has been published, and I give some extracts below. Since he travelled in the Malay Archipelago, a specimen has been successfully kept in confinement, and one lived for some time in the Zoological Gardens, having been brought home by Mr. Kettlewell during the cruise of the 'Marchesa.'

The following are Dr. Wallace's notes:—

"When I first arrived I was surprised at being told that there were no Paradise-birds at Muka, although there were plenty at Bessir, a place where the natives caught them and prepared the skins. I assured the people I had heard the cry of these birds close to the village; but they would not believe that I could know their cry. However, the very first time I went into the forest I not only heard but saw them, and was convinced there were plenty about; but they were very shy, and it was some time before we got any. My hunter first shot a female; and I one day got very close to a fine male. He was, as I expected, the rare red species, *Paradisaea rubra*, which alone inhabits this island and is found nowhere else. He was quite low down, running along a bough searching for insects, almost like a Woodpecker; and the long black riband-like filaments in his tail hung down in the most graceful double curve imaginable. I covered him with my gun, and was going to use the barrel, which had a very small charge of powder and No. 8 shot, so as not to injure his plumage; but the gun missed fire, and he was off in an instant among the thickest jungle. Another day we saw no less than eight fine males at different times, and fired four times at them; but though other birds at the same distance almost always dropped, these all got away, and I began to think we were never to get this magnificent species. At length the fruit ripened on the fig-tree close to my house, and many birds came to feed on it; and one morning, as I was taking my coffee, a male Paradise-bird was seen to settle on its top. I seized my gun, ran under the tree, and, gazing up, could see it flying across from branch to branch, seizing a fruit here and another there; and then, before I could get a sufficient aim to shoot at such a height (for it was one of the loftiest trees of the tropics), it was away into the forest. They now visited the tree every morning; but they stayed so short a time, their motions were so rapid, and it was so difficult to see them, owing to the lower trees which impeded the view, that it was only after several days' watching, and one or two misses, that I brought down my bird—a male in the most magnificent plumage. . . . I had only shot two *Paradisaeas* on my tree when they ceased visiting it, either owing to the fruit becoming scarce, or that they were wise enough to know there was danger. We continued to hear and see them in the forest, but after a month had not succeeded in shooting any more; and as my chief object in visiting Waigiou was to get these birds, I determined to go to Bessir, where there are a number of Papuans who catch and preserve them. I hired a small outrigger boat for this journey, and left one of my men to guard my house and goods. . . . My first business was to send for the men who were accustomed to catch the Birds of Paradise. Several came; and I showed them my hatchets, beads, knives, and handkerchiefs, and explained to them as well as I could by signs the price I would give for fresh-killed specimens. It is the universal custom to pay for everything in advance; but only one man ventured to take goods to the value of two birds. The rest were suspicious, and wanted to see the result of the first bargain with the strange white man, the only one who had ever come to their island. After three days my man brought me the first bird—a very fine specimen, and alive, but tied up in a small bag, and consequently its tail- and wing-feathers were very much crushed and injured. I tried to explain to him, and to others that came with him, that I wanted them as perfect as possible, and that they should either kill them or keep them on a perch with a string to their leg. As they were now apparently satisfied that all was fair, and that I had no ulterior designs upon them, six others took away goods, some for one bird, some for more, and one for as many as six. They said they had to go a long way for them, and that they would come back as soon as they caught any. At intervals of a few days or a week some of them would return, bringing me one or more birds; but though they did not bring any more in bags, there was not much improvement in their condition. As they caught them a long way off in the forest, they would scarcely ever come with one, but would tie it by the legs to a stick, and put it in their house till they caught another."

The figures in the Plate represent an adult male in two positions, and are drawn from specimens formerly in the Gould collection.