

MALURUS AMABILIS, *Gould.*

Lovely Wren.

Malurus amabilis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1850, p. 277.—Ib. MacGill. Voy. of Rattlesnake, vol. ii. p. 357.

ALL the members of the genus *Malurus* that have yet been discovered are natives of Australia, and of the eleven species with which we are now acquainted the present yields to none of them either in the elegance of its form or in the beauty of its plumage. The great stronghold of the members of the genus is the southern rather than the northern portion of the continent; indeed, until the discovery of the present species the *Malurus Browni* was the only one known to inhabit the northern coast. The officers of Her Majesty's Surveying Ship Rattlesnake so well employed their time in collecting the natural productions of the Cape York district, that they added very considerably to our knowledge of the fauna of that part of the continent. A single and somewhat imperfect specimen of this bird, bearing the words "Cape York, 1849," was transmitted by the late Captain Owen Stanley to the Zoological Society of London, and it is from this specimen that my figure was taken. It is most nearly allied to the *Malurus Lamberti*, but differs from that bird in its larger bill, in the deeper and more uniform blue of the cheeks and crown, in the darker colouring of the thighs, and in the much greater extent of the white on the tips and margins of the outer tail-feathers.

The female figure in the accompanying Plate is taken from an example of that sex of *M. Lamberti*, which I feel assured the female of *M. amabilis* will be found to closely resemble whenever it is our good fortune to have examples transmitted to us; and that this desideratum may soon be obtained, as well as additional skins of the male, is much to be wished. When the Cape York Peninsula is closely explored, not only this, but many other interesting species will reward the collector, and the fauna will probably be found to partake of that of the adjacent island of New Guinea, as well as of forms peculiar to New South Wales.

Head, ear-coverts and centre of the back delicate violet-blue; lores, throat, breast, crescent across the upper part of the back and the rump deep bluish-black; scapularies chestnut; wings brown, the secondaries slightly margined with white; abdomen white, very slightly tinged with buff on the flanks; tail dull greenish-blue, the four lateral feathers margined externally and largely tipped with white; hinder part of the thighs black; bill black; irides and feet dark brown.

The figures are of the natural size.