

65.
I had great difficulty, however, in supplying them with insect food, for in the Peninsular and Oriental steamers cockroaches were scarce, and it was only by setting traps in the store-rooms, and by hunting every hour of the night in the fore-castle, that I could secure a few dozen of these creatures, scarcely enough for a single meal. At Malta, where I stayed a fortnight, I got plenty of cockroaches from a bakehouse, and when I left took with me several biscuit-tins full, as provision for the voyage home. We steamer where their large cage could be accommodated was exposed to a strong current of air down a hatchway which stood open day and night, yet the birds never seemed to feel the cold. During the night in the Zoological Gardens for one, and two years, often displaying their brilliant plumes to the admiration of the spectators. It is evident, therefore, that the Paradise-birds require air and exercise rather than heat; and I feel sure that if a good-sized conservatory could be devoted to them, or if they could be turned loose in the tropical department of the Crystal Palace, or the Great Palm House at Kew, they would live in this country for many years."

The late Mr. A. D. Bartlett contributed the following note to Mr. Elliot's monograph:—"When the two Birds of Paradise first arrived at the Gardens, in April 1862, their plumes were quite short, only about five inches long. The birds had moulted, and the new feathers were growing in a thick bunch on each side below their wings. They appeared in good health, and were active and lively. I soon ascertained how fond they were of meal-worms and other insects; and they fed freely upon fruit, boiled rice, &c.; a little cooked flesh was also acceptable to them. Their mode of hopping about from perch to perch and clinging to the bars or wires of the cage reminded one of a Jay or Jackdaw. They were fond of a bath, and were very careful in dressing and drying their fine plumes; these were about two months in growing to full perfection; and it was a charming sight to see them when in full plumage. When uttering their loud call the body was bent forward, the wings spread open and raised up, frequently over their heads, meeting the plumes, which were spread in the most graceful manner, every feather vibrating in a way that almost dazzled the sight. During this display the bird would become greatly excited, and sometimes turn almost under the perch or branch, the head and neck being bent so low down. At this period we found they would not agree, but attacked each other; and we were therefore obliged to keep them separated by a wire division. They hopped about like Jays or Jackdaws, never ran like Starlings or Magpies, and when on the ground raised the points of the plumes so that they should not touch the earth. They soon became very tame, and would take food from the hand; and the sight of a meal-worm would bring them down from the perch immediately. The moult was extremely rapid, the fine plumes being thrown off in a few days; and these appeared to grow all at the same time in a bunch. It is therefore certain that these birds, after they attain the adult plumage, lose it only during the annual moult, like the Peacock and many other richly ornamented birds."

The following descriptions are taken from my third volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds':—

Adult male. A narrow frontal band, lores, cheeks, and throat velvety green, slightly metallic, the forehead and chin, as well as a spot at the base of the lower mandible, appearing velvety black; crown of head and hind-neck, as well as the sides of the latter, converging towards the lower throat, bright golden straw-colour, all the plumes velvety in texture; mantle and scapulars dull ochraceous straw-colour, all the feathers ruddy at the base; wing-coverts maroon-brown, the least ones washed with ochraceous straw-colour, the median and greater series tipped with golden straw-colour, forming a double bar across the wing-quills, which are maroon-brown, as also the lower back, rump, upper tail-coverts, and tail, the two centre tail-feathers produced into two long thread-like shafts about 18 inches in length; under surface of body from the throat downwards to the under tail-coverts maroon-brown; from the flanks are developed two large tufts of plumes, bright yellow for their basal half, white for the terminal half, at the base of the flank-tufts a few rigid blood-red plumes; under wing-coverts and inner lining of quills maroon-brown, like the breast: bill leaden grey; feet black. Total length 14·5 inches, culmen 1·35, wing 7·3, tail 6·2, tarsus 2.

Adult female. Wants the long flank-plumes and the metallic green about the forehead and throat which are seen in the male. General colour above, including the wings and tail, maroon-brown; head, sides of face, and throat maroon-brown, darker than the back, the hind-neck and mantle dull ochraceous straw-colour, with which also the wing-coverts are washed; the whole of the under surface, from the throat downwards, silky white; thighs pale maroon-brown, the sides of the breast and flanks also slightly washed