

PARADISEA DECORA, *Salvin & Godman.*

59.

Grey-chested Bird of Paradise.

*Paradisea decora*, Salvin & Godman, Ibis, 1883, pp. 131, 202, pl. viii.—Sharpe, in Gould's Birds of New Guinea, i. pl. 27 (1885).—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1886, pp. 507, 509.—Tristram, Ibis, 1889, p. 553.—Salvad. Aggiunte Orn. Papuasie, ii. p. 160 (1890).—De Vis, Ann. Rep. Brit. New Guinea, p. 61 (1890).—Id. Colonial Papers, no. 103, p. 113 (1890).—Id. Ibis, 1891, p. 37.—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. (2) x. p. 833 (1891).—Id. Aggiunte Orn. Papuasie, iii. p. 243 (1891).—Sharpe, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, iv. p. xiii (1894).—Hartert, Novit. Zool. ii. p. 61 (1895).—Rothschild, Novit. Zool. iii. p. 235 (1896).

*Paradisea susanna*, Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. Wales, viii. p. 21 (1883).—Salvad. Ibis, 1884, p. 354.

THIS beautiful species is an inhabitant of Fergusson Island, one of the D'Entrecasteaux group, where it was discovered by Mr. A. Goldie, a well-known botanical collector, who also obtained many fine species of birds on the mountains of South-eastern New Guinea. This Bird of Paradise, however, is the most splendid of his discoveries. It is found, he says, "in the mountains, at a considerable elevation above the sea, the first specimen obtained having been secured at the lowest point. The plumed males and the younger individuals were generally seen three or four together. Once heard, their call was unmistakable, being very like that of *P. raggiana*; but the plumed and wired birds, after giving their call a few times, added to it a peculiar shrill whistle. Their motions whilst calling were identical with those of *P. raggiana*; but, so far as we were able to observe, they had no particular tree for dancing in. The females were found alone.

"We neither saw nor heard *P. raggiana* on these islands; and the new bird is not found on the mainland. On showing it to the natives of Chad's Bay and China Straits along with a specimen of *P. raggiana*, they, in both cases, made us to understand that the latter is found in their country, whilst *P. decora* is not; but two or three of them in China Straits who had traded to the D'Entrecasteaux Islands made signs that the new bird was to be found there."

Since the species was discovered in Fergusson Island by Mr. Goldie it has been met with by several other collectors who have visited the locality. Mr. Basil Thomson obtained it on Mount Maybole in the north of the island, and believed that it was confined to that part only; but Mr. Albert Meek, who collected in Fergusson Island for the Hon. Walter Rothschild, found the species "not rare, but by no means very numerous on the hills of South Fergusson, from about 1500 feet upwards."

*P. decora* has red ornamental plumes like *P. raggiana*, but it is easily distinguished by the straw-coloured back, the absence of a yellow collar on the throat, the grey chest, and the patch of black plumes on each side of the abdomen.

The following is a description of the type specimens of *P. decora* in the British Museum:—

*Adult male.* General colour above golden straw-colour, a little deeper and more orange on the head and ear-coverts; wing-coverts light drab-brown, edged with golden straw-colour, the lesser and median coverts being entirely of the latter colour; bastard-wing, primary-coverts, and quills light reddish brown, externally drab or ashy brown, the inner secondaries washed externally with straw-yellow; tail-feathers pale reddish brown, washed with ashy, the two long centre feathers consisting of a black barless shaft; lores and base of forehead, cheeks, and throat metallic green, the upper throat, lores, and fore part of cheeks and throat appearing velvety black under certain lights; fore-neck and breast lilac-grey, shading off into vinaceous grey on the abdomen and under tail-coverts; the long flank-plumes rich crimson, the feathers with very few barbs or barbules at the ends, these being hoary whitish; on each side of the base of the long plumes a patch of slightly recurved black feathers with red bases; under wing-coverts pale vinaceous grey; quills ashy below, the quill-lining ruddy vinous: "iris yellow" (*A. Meek*). Total length 13 inches, culmen 1.35, wing 7, tail 5.5, tarsus 1.7.

*Adult female.* Wants the ornamental plumes of the male and has a greyer back, with the feathers edged with dull straw-yellow; the lores, cheeks, and throat, which are green in the male, are blackish brown in the female; the rest of the under surface of the body vinous brown, with dusky vermiculations or cross-bars