

able to learn anything authentic about them, called them 'Passaros de Sol' (or Birds of the Sun); while the learned Dutchmen, who wrote in Latin, called them 'Avis paradiseus' (or Paradise-bird). John van Linschoten gives these names in 1598, and tells us that no one has seen these birds alive; for they live in the air, always turning towards the sun, and never lighting on the earth till they die; for they have neither feet nor wings, as, he adds, may be seen by the birds carried to India, and sometimes to Holland; but being very costly they are rarely seen in Europe. More than a hundred years later Mr. William Funnel, who accompanied Dampier, and wrote an account of the voyage, saw specimens at Amboyna, and was told that they came to Banda to eat nutmegs, which intoxicated them, and made them fall down senseless, when they were killed by ants. Down to 1760, when Linnæus named the largest species *Paradisea apoda* (the footless Paradise-bird), no perfect specimen had been seen in Europe, and absolutely nothing was known about them. And even now, a hundred years later, most books state that they migrate annually to Ternate, Banda, and Amboyna, whereas the fact is that they are as completely unknown in these islands in a wild state as they are in England." I may remark that Edwards had probably a complete specimen in 1750, as he mentions the figures in the older authors, such as Willughby, and says, "As none of these were satisfactory to me, I have given this figure and description of a *perfect bird*, which may more than answer the purposes of so many;" and again:—"It hath legs and feet of a moderate proportion and strength for its bigness, shaped much like those of Pyes or Jays, of a dark brown colour, armed with claws of middling strength."

Dr. Wallace continues:—"The Great Bird of Paradise is very active and vigorous, and seems to be in constant motion all day long. It is very abundant, small flocks of females and young males being constantly met with; and though the full-plumaged birds are less plentiful, their loud cries, which are heard daily, show that they also are very numerous. Their note is 'Wauk-wauk-wauk-wok-wok-wok,' and is so loud and shrill as to be heard at a great distance, and to form the most prominent and characteristic animal-sound in the Aru Islands. The mode of nidification is unknown; but the natives told me that the nest was made of leaves placed on an ants' nest, or on some projecting limb of a very lofty tree, and believe that it contains only one young bird. The egg is quite unknown, and the natives declared they had never seen it; and a very high reward offered for one by a Dutch official did not meet with success. They moult about January or February; and in May, when they are in full plumage, the males assemble early in the morning to exhibit themselves. This habit enables the natives to obtain specimens with comparative ease. As soon as they find that the birds have fixed upon a tree on which to assemble, they build a little shelter of palm leaves in a convenient place among the branches; and the hunter ensconces himself in it before daylight, armed with his bow and a number of arrows terminating in a round knob. A boy waits at the foot of the tree; and when the birds come at sunrise, and a sufficient number have assembled, and have begun to dance, the hunter shoots with his blunt arrow so strongly as to stun the bird, which drops down, and is secured and killed by the boy without its plumage being injured by a drop of blood. The rest take no notice, and fall one after another till some of them take the alarm."

The descriptions are taken from my 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum':—

"*Adult male*. General colour above maroon-brown, including the entire back and wings; head and neck clothed in compressed thick-set feathers of a straw-yellow colour, velvety in texture; round the eye a narrow line of black; forehead, lores, cheeks, throat, and fore neck dark metallic green, all the plumes close-set and velvety, the forehead, lores, and chin having a velvety black appearance under certain lights, and forming as it were a mask; breast deep purplish brown, shading gradually into maroon-brown on the abdomen and under tail-coverts; under wing-coverts and inner lining of wings maroon-brown; tail maroon-brown like the back, the two centre feathers enormously elongated into two wire-like shafts about 30 inches long; from the flanks spring two enormous tufts of beautiful plumes, bright yellow for two-thirds of their length, and then shading into chocolate-brown; the shafts produced at the tips of the feathers and white, the plumes towards their extremities very lax, the webs separate and very distinct; at the base of these side-tufts are several rigid plumes of bright yellow, some of which end in blood-red, giving the appearance of being streaked with blood-red; bill lead-colour, inclining to greenish white at the tip; legs and feet flesh-colour. Total length 18 inches, culmen 1.6, wing 9.35, tail 7.2, tarsus 2.2.

"*Adult female*. General colour all over maroon-brown, deepening to purplish chestnut on the head, neck, and chest; plumes of the head close-set and velvety, and the nape somewhat tinged with straw-yellow; flank-plumes lax and elongated, maroon-brown like the breast and abdomen; two centre tail-feathers rather pointed. Total length 15.3 inches, culmen 1.45, wing 7.5, tail 6.4, tarsus 1.85."

The only known egg of this Paradise-bird exists in the Dresden Museum, and has been described by Dr. A. B. Meyer. It has a peculiar reddish colour all over, marked with blotches of darker rufous or chestnut-brown, with a few large spots of black near the larger end. Length 1.55 inches, diam. 1.1. The figure by Dr. von Madarász in the 'Zeitschrift' represents the egg as much too small.

The figures are taken from specimens in the British Museum, formerly in the Gould Collection.