

There can be no question that the earliest allusion to the species is that of Valentyn, who was evidently a very careful observer; and on comparing the descriptions given in the work of this old traveller with the accounts of the older authors, it is evident that the latter are derived from the observations of Valentyn.

Although the present species has been said to occur in the island of Waigiou, all the evidence of recent years tends to prove that it is strictly an inhabitant of North-western New Guinea, and it is probably confined to the Arfak Mountains. Here it has been actually obtained by D'Albertis and Beccari, to whom we owe an account of its habits. Beccari writes:—"The *Epimachi* have been separated from the other Birds of Paradise; but I think this is paradoxical. The form and the length of the beak of *Epimachus maximus* is most variable; the young males and females are found with the beak only half the length of that of the adult males and females. This fact made me think at first that I had found the female of *E. ellioti*; but I was mistaken. An *Epimachus* seems to be found at Waigiou, and will probably be *E. ellioti*; but I was not able to return there as I had intended. *Epimachus maximus* and *Astrapia gularis* are only found on the highest and most difficult peaks of Mount Arfak, nearly always above 6000 feet elevation. Specimens in dark plumage are common enough; but those which have attained perfect plumage are rare, perhaps because they take some years to acquire it. Both of them live on the fruits of certain Pandanaceæ, and especially on those of the *Freyinetiæ*, which are epiphytous on the trunks of trees."

Mr. Wallace never obtained perfect skins of this species, on which he has published the following note:—"This splendid bird inhabits the mountains of New Guinea, in the same district with the Superb (*Lophorina atra*) and the Six-shafted (*Parotia sexpennis*) Paradise-birds, and, I was informed, is sometimes found in the ranges near the coast. I was several times assured by different natives that this bird makes its nest in a hole underground, or under rocks, always choosing a place with two apertures, so that it may enter at one and go out at the other. This is very unlike what we should suppose to be the habits of the bird; but it is not easy to conceive how the story originated if it is not true; and all travellers know that native accounts of the habits of animals, however strange they may seem, almost invariably turn out to be correct."

The descriptions are taken from the 'Catalogue of Birds.'

*Adult male.* Above velvety black, with metallic feathers of coppery green on the head, middle of the back, and rump; lores and feathers on the side of the head metallic like the crown; entire under surface of body velvety black, with a purplish-brown gloss on the sides of the body; on each side of the breast springs a tuft of sickle-shaped plumes in the shape of a fan, velvety black, tipped with a broad band of steel-blue, before which is a narrow subterminal band of purplish blue; flank-feathers long and drooping, the outer ones broadly tipped with metallic bronzy-green, before which is a double subterminal band of velvety black and purplish blue; wings velvety black, with a gloss of steel-blue; tail-feathers black, all but the three outermost feathers washed with steel-blue, the two centre ones entirely of this colour: bill and legs black; iris dark brick-red (*Beccari*). Total length 26 inches, culmen 2·85, wing 7·2, tail 16·7.

*Female.* Upper part of head brownish red; rest of upper parts olive-brown, becoming slightly rufous on the rump and upper tail-coverts; secondaries reddish brown, edged with rufous; primaries dark brown, edge of outer web rufous; cheeks, throat, and upper part of breast brownish black; underparts white, narrowly barred with black; tail light brown, with a rufous tinge: bill long and slender, much curved, and, with the feet and tarsi, jet-black.

Count Salvadori, who has examined a large series of this bird, states that the young birds are at first very much like the old female, and that the black plumage is obtained by a change of feather instead of by a moult. The first indication of the change is seen by a blackening of the tail-feathers. This dark appearance next extends to the wings and the back. The Count has not been able to trace the sequence of change of the black plumage, but he states that he has no doubt that the black dress is assumed by a change of pattern of feather rather than by a moult.

The Plate represents a male and female, nearly of the natural size. It is the same as that which appeared in Mr. Gould's 'Birds of New Guinea,' and the figures are taken from a fine pair formerly in his collection, and now in the British Museum.