

TRICHOGLOSSUS PORPHYROCEPHALUS, *Diet.*

Porphyry-crowned Lorikeet.

Psittacus purpurea, Diet., Phil. Mag. 1832, vol. xi. p. 387.

Psittacus purpureus, Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., vol. x. p. 747.

Trichoglossus porphyrocephalus, Diet., Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. xvii. p. 553.

Psittacula Florentis, Bourj. de St. Hil., Supp. Le Vaill. Hist. des Perr., pl. 84.

Kow-ar, Aborigines of Western Australia.

THIS handsome little Lorikeet was first brought before the notice of the scientific world by Mr. Dietrichsen at the Meeting of the Linnean Society, held on the 20th of March 1832; some confusion, however, exists as to the name then proposed for it. In a report of the Meeting published in the "Philosophical Magazine" for the same year it is called *Psittacus purpurea*; but in the seventeenth volume of the "Linnean Transactions" it is correctly placed in the genus *Trichoglossus*, with the far more appropriate specific appellation of *porphyrocephalus*, which I therefore retain.

Although the Porphyry-crowned Lorikeet has been thus long described, it is still very rarely to be seen in collections, a fact which may be accounted for by the circumstance of its being an inhabitant of those parts of Australia with which we have hitherto had little intercourse.

It is not found in New South Wales, and I do not recollect ever having seen it in collections from any of the eastern parts. It is abundant in South Australia, is equally numerous in the white-gum forests of Swan River, and in all probability is dispersed over the whole of the intermediate country. It is the only species of the genus I have seen from Western Australia, a circumstance which cannot be accounted for, since the face of the country is covered with trees of a similar character.

Most of the specimens I collected were shot during the months of June and July in the neighbourhood of Adelaide, and some of them in the town itself. It appears to arrive in this district at the flowering season of the *Eucalypti*, in company with *Trichoglossus Swainsonii*, *concinus* and *pusillus*, all of which may frequently be seen on the same tree at one time: the incessant clamour kept up by multitudes of these birds baffles description; the notes of the larger species are, however, distinguishable by their superiority in harshness and loudness; they feed together in perfect amity, and it is not unusual to see two or three species on the same branch. They are all so remarkably tame, that any number of shots may be fired amongst them without causing the slightest alarm to any but those that are actually wounded. Although strictly gregarious, they appear to be always mated in pairs, which accompany each other in their various movements among the branches. The whole of one species frequently leave the tree simultaneously, rushing off with amazing quickness in search of other trees laden with newly-expanded flowers, among which they dash and commence feeding with the utmost eagerness, clinging and creeping among the branches in every possible attitude. As this tribe of birds depends solely for its subsistence upon the flowers of the gum-trees, their presence in any locality would be vainly sought for at any season when those trees are not in blossom.

The sexes are precisely alike in size and in the colour of their plumage.

Forehead, lores and ear-coverts yellow, intermingled with scarlet; crown of the head deep purple; back of the head and neck yellowish green; wing-coverts and rump grass-green; shoulder light blue; under surface of the wing crimson; primaries blackish brown, margined externally with deep green, the extreme edge being greenish yellow; tail green above, golden beneath; throat and under surface greenish grey, passing into golden green on the flanks and under tail-coverts; bill black; irides in some dark brown, in others light reddish brown, with a narrow ring of orange round the pupil; feet bluish flesh-colour.

The figures are of the natural size.