

CRACTICUS QUOYII.

Quoy's Crow Shrike.

Barita Quoyi, Less. Zool. de la Coq., tom. i. p. 639. pl. 24.—Ib. Traité d'Orn., p. 345.
Mol-göl-ga, Aborigines of Port Essington.

WE have abundant evidence that New Guinea and the continent of Australia belong to one and the same group of islands, and that both countries are adorned with similar forms of botany and zoology. In some instances the same species are found to inhabit both countries, and of this fact the present bird is an example. M. Temminck, to whom I showed specimens killed in Australia, assured me that they were identical with those from New Guinea. The northern coast is the only portion of Australia in which this bird has been observed. It is tolerably abundant at Port Essington, where it inhabits the mangrove swamps generally, even those close to the settlement.

Mr. Gilbert states that it is one of the most shy and wary birds that can well be imagined; and that the nature of its usual haunts precludes in a great measure all chance of getting a sight of it. He has never met with it in any other situation than the darkest and thickest parts of the mangroves, where there is a great depth of mud, and where the roots of the trees are very thickly intertwined; it is among these roots that it is constantly seen searching for crabs. Its note is short and monotonous, and very like the name given to it by the aborigines, *Mol-göl-ga*, the second syllable being prolonged and forming the highest note; it also utters other sounds, some of them resembling those of the *Cracticus leuconotus*; at other times it frequently emits a note very similar to the cry of young birds for food.

The stomach is muscular, and the food consists of crabs, and occasionally of coleoptera, neuroptera, and the larvæ of insects of various kinds.

The entire plumage black, each feather of the upper and under surface broadly margined with deep glossy green; irides dark reddish brown; bill very light ash-grey, passing into leaden grey at the base, and dark bluish grey on the culmen near the tip; legs and feet greenish grey.

The bill appears to vary very much in colour; being in some instances entirely ash-grey, except at the tip, where it is black; while in others the basal two-thirds is black and the tip grey: whether this difference is occasioned by age or sex has not yet been ascertained.

The figure represents a male of the natural size.