PALÆORNIS DERBIANUS, Fraser.

The Earl of Derby's Parrakeet.

Palæornis Derbianus, Fras. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XVIII. p. 245, Aves, pl. xxv.

The specific name given to the fine bird represented on the accompanying Plate, cannot fail to assist in perpetuating the name of a nobleman who for so many years devoted his attention and his wealth to the promotion of the science of Ornithology, and it has been a source of much pleasure to me to be enabled to figure this fine Parrakeet from the original and unique specimen now in the Derby Museum at Liverpool. As to whence this bird came, or any details as to its history, nothing is known. It lived for some time in the Earl of Derby's menagerie at Knowsley, and died in as fine a state of plumage as I should suppose the bird could ever attain in a state of nature. The individual in question is beautifully preserved, and is as highly prized as any other of the many rarities bequeathed by the Noble Earl to the town of Liverpool.

The examination of this fine bird has caused me much thought and perplexity. It is apparently adult, and, as I have before stated, in as fine a state of plumage as possible; yet, judging from analogy, we should under these circumstances expect to find that, like the rest of the genus, it would have a red bill, instead of which it is black, a feature usually characteristic of young and in some instances the female birds of this genus.

The species most nearly allied to the present bird is the *Palæornis barbatus*; but when compared with the *P. Derbianus*, that species is very diminutive in size, and has the vinous colouring confined to the breast, while in *P. Derbianus* this tint pervades the whole of the under surface.

That this noble bird is a native of the East there can be but little doubt, and I therefore give it a place in the present work, in the hope that, by calling attention to the subject, its habitat and other particulars respecting it may be ascertained and made known to us.

Forehead, a narrow stripe from the nostrils to the eye, and the lower half of the cheeks deep velvety black; fore part of the crown and round the eyes verditer-green, passing into light violet-blue on the occiput and ear-coverts; upper surface, thighs, vent, and under tail-coverts grass-green, washed with yellow on the centre of the wing; tail green, with dark shafts, and with a wash of verditer-blue on the margins of their outer webs, the blue increasing so much on the apical two-thirds of the two central feathers as to be there the prevailing tint; line commencing behind the ears and extending down the sides of the neck, and the whole of the breast, abdomen, and flanks light rosy or vinous purple; under surface of the tail-feathers greenish yellow with lighter tips; bill black; irides pale straw-yellow; feet mealy grey.

The measurements of this species are as follow:—Total length, 20 inches; bill, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch; wing, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches; tail, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

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The figure is about the size of life.