PALÆORNIS CALTHROPÆ, *Layard.*

Mrs. Layard's Parrakeet.

Palæornis Calthropæ, Layard, J. A. S. B., xviii. p. 800.—Souancé, Iconogr. Perroq., pl. xliv.—Blyth, Cat. B. Mus. A. S. B., p. 340.—Layard, Ann. N. H., (2) xiii. p. 263.—Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool., 1854, p. 263.—Gray, List Psittac. Brit. Mus., p. 22.—Schl. Mus. P. B., Psittac. p. 83.—Finsch, Papag., ii. p. 53.—Holdsw. P. Z. S., 1872, p. 426.—Hume, Str. F., 1874, p. 18.—Legge, Ibis, 1874, p. 14.
——— *Girronieri*, J. & E. Verr. Rev. et Mag. de Zool., 1853, p. 195.
——— *viridicollis*, Cass. Pr. Philad. Acad., 1853, p. 373.

This Parrakeet was originally discovered by Mr. E. L. Layard, who writes as follows concerning it:—"My first acquaintance with this lovely bird was at Kandy, where I killed a male and female at one shot, from a flock flying over my head. I took them for the common *P. torquatus* until I picked them up; and then great was my delight to find such an elegant new species. It proves to be the common Parrakeet of the hilly zone; and I have traced it in all parts of it. It feeds on berries, and seeks them on the very summits of the trees. When a flock is occupied in feeding, every bird is as silent as the grave; and so difficult are they then to be distinguished, that, though I have sometimes marked a flock into a tree, I have stood for ten minutes and could not perceive a single bird, though aided by the keen eyes of my fidus Achates, Muttu, and perhaps three or four natives: suddenly, with one consent, away would go the whole flock with a scream which almost deafened one. The natives tell me it breeds in hollow trees, and lays two white roundish eggs."

Mr. Holdsworth, in his well-known 'Catalogue of Ceylonese Birds,' observes:—"It was first obtained by Layard in Kandy, where it is frequently numerous, and it is said to be generally distributed over the hills. Although recorded by Kelaart from Nuwara Elliya, I suspect this beautiful bird is only a rare visitor to that cool region, as I have never seen a Parrot of any kind at that elevation, and I have always been on the look-out for this species in particular."

More recently Mr. Vincent Legge has sent the following note to 'The Ibis:'—

"Layard's Parrakeet is more abundant in the Morowa-Korle and the Leori-King forests than anywhere else in the island, and, like most of the Ceylon birds, ranges down to a lower elevation *here* than in other parts. I found it a few months ago in great numbers in the intermediate valleys of the Gindurah river at a height of only 200 or 300 feet above the sea. They are very fond of thick groves in the forests, and in the morning, when feeding on their favourite fruits and berries, are very tame; towards evening they become very restless, and are constantly on the wing, settling in little flocks on the tops of the highest trees."

Head blue-grey, deeper and slightly more purple on the sides of the same and ear-coverts, which shade off again into black on the cheeks; forehead and sides of face, including lores and feathers round the eye, bright green; round the hind neck a collar of bright emerald green; back yellowish grey; lower back and rump dull purplish blue, the tail much deeper, each feather yellowish green towards the tip of the inner web; wings bright grass-green, the least ones washed with purplish blue, the outermost ones and the greater series dark green, the primary coverts especially deeply coloured; quills blackish, the primaries dark indigo-blue on outer web, bordered externally with green, the secondaries brighter green, like the greater wing-coverts; entire under surface of body bright green, including the under wing-coverts, the greater series of the latter dark grey, like inner lining of wing; under surface of tail yellowish.

Mr. Hume, who has a large series, writes as follows:—"The adults of both sexes are nearly alike; but in the male the upper mandible is bright red, pale yellowish horny towards the tip, where it is abraded. The lower mandible is a pale brown or reddish brown, yellowish horny towards the margins where abraded. In the adult female the upper mandible is invariably black, or nearly so, the lower mandible similar to that of the male, but duskier and darker. In the female, also, the narrow frontal band, lores, and orbital region are a duller and paler green than in the male. The young of both sexes entirely want the black mandibular stripe, and all the grey or blue-grey which characterizes the heads of the adults in both sexes; the whole head is green, the cap defined by an indistinct brighter green collar. The upper mandible in *both* sexes in the young is *red*, at any rate if Mr. Vincent Legge and others have correctly sexed the specimens of young they sent me, as I entertain no doubt they have."

The figures are of the size of life.