

APROSMICTUS INSIGNISSIMUS, *Gould.*

Beautiful King-Parrot.

Aprosmictus insignissimus, Gould, P. Z. S. 1875, p. 314.

I WISH it were in my power to write a complete history of the splendid Parrot figured in the accompanying Plate. All that is at present known is that it was shot, in 1874, a few miles north of the village of Dalby, on the Darling Downs, in Queensland. My first knowledge of its existence was through a life-sized sketch from the hands of the son of Mr. Waller. Since then the actual specimen has been forwarded to me by Mr. Coxen, who has purchased it for the infant museum of Brisbane.

Those ornithologists who have paid attention to the Parrots of Australia, either in a state of nature or in the cabinet, will at once perceive the affinity of this bird with the ordinary King-Parrot of the brushes of New South Wales (*Aprosmictus scapulatus*). In structure it is very similar to that bird, while in colour it greatly partakes of *Ptistes*. In their habits and local habitations, however, *Ptistes* and *Aprosmictus* widely differ. *Aprosmictus* is almost solely an inhabitant of the thick brush, while *Ptistes* is as exclusively a frequenter of the thinly timbered open plains; the former is dull, quiet, and slow in its movements, while the latter passes over the tops of the highest trees of the plains with a strong vigorous flight. Each of them has a well-developed os furcatorium, a bone not found in *Platycercus* and allied genera.

The King-Parrot has a stout bill, the lower half of which is black, the upper red; while in *Ptistes* both mandibles are highly coloured; the former has also a shorter and less ample wing than the latter. I mention this particularly to show the improbability of this bird being a *lusus*, or hybrid, between the birds above mentioned; and it may be that it is an accidental visitor from New Guinea.

The following is a repetition of what is published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1875:—

“Head emerald green, excepting the centre of the crown and a patch on the nape, these parts being scarlet, the green forming a narrow frontal line between the nostrils and the crown; round the hind neck a narrow collar of emerald green; back, including the mantle and scapulars, deep grass-green, each feather obscurely edged with darker colour; lower back and rump shining blue; upper tail-coverts bright grass-green; all the tail-feathers above deep grass-green, with indistinct narrow bars of darker colour on every one of them; the underside of the tail uniform purplish black; wings green, with a broad longitudinal patch of yellow, many of these feathers edged with scarlet, this mark being very indistinct and similar to that seen in the male of *Ptistes*; under wing-coverts greenish blue; inner lining of quills purplish black like the lower surface of the tail; under surface of body scarlet, with dashes of bright green on the flanks; under tail-coverts green, fringed with scarlet; both mandibles of the bill bright orange-red; legs blackish. Total length $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing 9, tail $7\frac{3}{4}$, tarsus $\frac{7}{8}$.

It is pretty evident that this specimen had not quite completed its fully adult livery. If it had done so, the green feathers on the back of the head would have been red.

In conclusion I must thank the authorities of the Brisbane Museum for the extreme courtesy which induced them to send so valuable a bird to England for the purpose of this work. I have thus been enabled to give a life-size illustration of this remarkable and interesting species.