

## HALCYON QUADRICOLOR.

### Four-coloured Kingfisher.

*Cyanalcyon quadricolor*, Oustalet, Le Naturaliste, 1880, p. 323.

THIS beautiful species was discovered by Mr. Bruijn's hunters on the west coast of New Guinea, and appears to be a very distinct bird. Count Salvadori has, indeed, suggested to me that it may be the young of *Halcyon nigrocyanea*; but this I do not think likely to be the case. Mr. Sharpe examined the type specimen in the Paris Museum, and assures me that the bird is adult, and quite distinct from the last-named species. Both Professor Schlegel, in his *Revue of the Kingfishers in the Leyden Museum*, and Count Salvadori, in his '*Ornitologia della Papuasia*,' record specimens of *H. nigrocyanea*, which they consider to be immature, as being rufous or rufous-brown underneath; but I can scarcely think that there can be much similarity between these young birds and the specimen figured in my Plate.

Dr. Oustalet describes the present bird as follows:—

"Some months ago I had occasion to draw attention to the presence of a new species of *Talegallus* (*Talegallus* or rather *Æpypodius bruijnii*) among a collection of birds killed by Mr. Bruijn's hunters on the west coast of New Guinea and in the neighbouring islands. In this same collection, which was acquired by the Paris Museum, was a beautiful Kingfisher of moderate size belonging to the small group which is known by the name of *Cyanalcyon*, and much recalling by its proportions, and by the coloration of the upper part of the body, of its beak, its feet, throat, and breast, the species coming from the north-west coast of New Guinea, which was described by Mr. Wallace in 1862 under the name of *Halcyon nigrocyanea* (*Proc. Zool. Soc.* 1862, p. 165, pl. xix.). The individual before me has, like the bird figured by Mr. Wallace, the bill black, with a little white in the middle of the lower mandible near its base; the feet black; the upper part of the head dark blue, passing into ultramarine on the nape and towards the eyebrows, and contrasting strongly with the black colour which occupies the middle of the back and the two large black spots which cover the cheeks, the feathers below the eye, and the sides of the throat. The wings are of a dark blue, with the scapular feathers of a bright blue; the under wing-coverts black, crossed by a white band; the tail is blue above, black below; the upper tail-coverts of a clear and intense cobalt-blue; the throat pure white, bordered below by a broad blue band. But the abdominal region presents an entirely different coloration: in fact, in the female which was figured in the '*Proceedings*,' the belly is of a pure white, with black flanks; here, on the contrary, the belly is of a very pronounced cinnamon-rufous, with some black and blue feathers on the sides, and this rufous colour is separated from the blue band by a somewhat narrow but well-defined line of white. We may not attribute this difference in colour to a difference in sex, because, according to Mr. Bruijn's indications, in which one can place confidence, the individual acquired by the Museum is a female like Mr. Wallace's type. We know, moreover, as a natural fact that the male of *Halcyon nigrocyanea* has the belly azure-blue. In short, although I find in Schlegel's '*Catalogue des Martins Pêcheurs du Musée des Pays-Bas*' (Revision, 1874, p. 31) this note—'A young male killed on the 7th May 1870, at Andai, by Von Rosenberg, is remarkable for having the blue of the under surface replaced by rufous brown,' I certainly cannot consider the individual before me as being young. It has, in fact, the dress of a perfectly adult bird, with the colours pure and brilliant, and does not show any sign of spots, or of the grey or rufous bars which are the sign of immaturity. I propose, therefore, to make it the type of a new species, to be called *Cyanalcyon quadricolor*, to draw attention to the four colours (blue, white, rufous, and black) which are spread over its plumage."

During a recent visit to Paris, Mr. J. G. Keulemans painted me a picture of the type specimen in the Paris Museum, which has been reproduced by Mr. Hart in the accompanying Plate. The principal figure is life-size.

[R. B. S.]