

## MYZOMELA SCLATERI, *Forbes.*

### Sclater's Honey-eater.

*Myzomela sclateri*, Forbes, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1879, p. 265, pl. 25, fig. 2.—Sclat. *ibid.* p. 448.—Reichenow et Schal. Journ. f. Orn. 1880, p. 198.—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, xvi. p. 72, no. 8 (1880).—Id. Orn. della Papuasias &c. ii. p. 298 (1881).

THIS elegant little bird is another of the interesting discoveries made by that well-known collector the Rev. George Brown in New Britain and the neighbouring islands. It was discovered by him on the island of Palakuru, a small island in mid-channel between New Britain and Duke-of-York Island. It was first described by Mr. W. A. Forbes, in his excellent Synopsis of the Meliphagine genus *Myzomela* (published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1879), where he describes the single male bird at that time known. "At first," writes Mr. Forbes, "I had some doubts as to this individual being adult; but now, from the absence of red feathers on any other part, and from the singularly bright and shining colour of those on the throat, I have little doubt that it has very nearly or quite attained its full plumage. *Myzomela sclateri* hardly admits of being compared with any other species of the group, the entirely dark upperside and the red being confined to the throat rendering it quite unlike any species yet known to us."

In May of the same year Dr. Sclater received a further collection from Mr. Brown, which contained a male and a female of this new *Myzomela*, and amply demonstrated its distinctness from any other known species of the genus. It belongs to the section of the genus where the species have the undersurface either whitish or greyish-olive, and, further, to the division of black-fronted species comprising *M. vulnerata*, *M. jugularis*, and *M. lafargii*; but from all of these it may be told by its blackish head.

The following description is translated from Mr. Forbes's essay above mentioned:—

*Adult male.* Upper surface of the body, with the wings and tail, dusky blackish, the head darker; the feathers of the lower back yellow at the tip; quills, wing-coverts, and tail-feathers externally edged with olive-yellow; throat bright crimson; undersurface of body greyish yellow, the throat rather duller; under wing-coverts and inner margin of quills white; bill black; feet dusky.

Total length about 4·5 inches, wing 3·65, tail 1·7, bill 0·6, tarsus 0·55.

The *adult female* is described by Mr. Sclater as follows:—Upper surface dark olive; crown of head, wings, and tail blackish, the latter externally edged with olive; underneath greyish yellow; the throat slightly tinged with crimson.

I have been indebted to Dr. Sclater for the loan of male and female birds, from which the life-sized figures in the Plate have been drawn, representing two males and a female.