

XANTHOMELUS AUREUS.

Golden Bird of Paradise.

- Golden Bird of Paradise*, Edwards, Nat. Hist. Birds, iii. p. 112 (1750).
Oriolus aureus, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 163 (1766).—Gray, Gen. of B. i. p. 232 (1845).—Id. Hand-list B. i. p. 293 (1869).
Paradisea aurea, Lath. Ind. Orn. ii. p. 195 (1790).
Le Paradis orangé, Audeb. et Vieill. Ois. Dor. ii. p. 26, pls. 11, 12 (1802).
Le Lorient de Paradis, Levaill. Hist. Nat. Ois. Parad. i. pls. 18, 19 (1806).
Paradisea aurantia, Shaw, Gen. Zool. vii. p. 499, pl. 68 (1809).
Lophorhina aurantia, Stephens, Gen. Zool. xiv. p. 76 (1826).
Sericulus aurantiacus, Less. Traité, p. 339 (1831).—Id. Ois. Parad. Syn. p. 20 (1835).—Id. H. N. Ois. Parad. p. 201, pls. 25, 25 bis, 25 ter (1835).
Sericulus aureus, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av. i. p. 349 (1850).—Gray, P. Z. S. 1861, p. 435.—Wall. Ibis, 1861, p. 287.—Id. P. Z. S. 1862, p. 160.—Id. Malay Arch. ii. p. 257 (1869).—Schl. Mus. P.-B. Coraces, p. 98 (1867).—Sclater, Ibis, 1876, p. 248.
Xanthomelus aureus, Bonap. Comptes Rendus, xxxviii. p. 538 (1854).—Elliot, Ibis, 1872, p. 112.—Id. Monogr. Parad. pl. 15 (1873).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 783 (1875).—Id. *op. cit.* ix. p. 192 (1876).—Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iii. p. 186 (1877).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. x. p. 152 (1877).
Sericulus xanthogaster, Schlegel, Nederl. Tijdsch. Dierk. v. p. 50 (1871).—Salvad. Ibis, 1876, p. 267.—Id. Atti R. Accad. Torino, xi. p. 688 (1876).
Chlamydodera xanthogastra, Elliot, Ibis, 1872, p. 113.—Id. Monogr. Parad. pl. xxxiii. (1873).—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 697.

It will be seen that this remarkable Bird of Paradise was described and figured by Edwards more than one hundred and twenty years ago; and yet it is only within the last five years that we have been able to get perfect examples for our European collections. It may readily be imagined that the dried skins prepared by the natives afforded us but a very faint idea of its beauty; and therefore it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my obligation to my friend Count Salvadori, who, during his visit to this country, was so kind as to bring with him some lovely specimens for my use in the present work; and I must record *en passant* my appreciation of the zeal shown by his countrymen in the scientific explorations recently made by Italian naturalists in New Guinea. It must be remembered that the present species was one of the few Birds of Paradise which Mr. Wallace was unable to obtain in a perfect state; and it had also baffled the endeavours of the Dutch naturalists to obtain the bird in the adult plumage.

The Golden Bird of Paradise is an interesting species in every way. Ornithologists who have studied Mr. Elliot's 'Monograph of the Paradisiidæ' will remember that he has included in that family the Bower-birds, and on one of his plates he figured a species as belonging to the latter group under the name of *Chlamydodera xanthogastra*. This bird had been previously described as a *Sericulus* by Prof. Schlegel, from specimens sent to the Leiden Museum from North-western New Guinea by Baron von Rosenberg; so that Mr. Elliot was but following Dr. Schlegel in assigning it a place among the Bower-birds; and there was nothing in the habitat of the species to render it unlikely that it would prove to be a *Chlamydodera*, as the latter genus is found all over many parts of Australia, and one species at least, *C. cerviniventris*, is very common in South-eastern New Guinea. It was therefore with considerable surprise that ornithologists must have regarded a communication from Count Salvadori to 'The Ibis,' stating that he had come to the conclusion that *Sericulus xanthogaster* of Schlegel was nothing more than the young of *Xanthomelus aureus*. Having looked carefully into the matter myself, I have not the least doubt that Count Salvadori is perfectly right in his conclusions.

In his third volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds' Mr. Bowdler Sharpe has not admitted the Bower-birds into the family Paradisiidæ, in that respect differing from Mr. Elliot; but he places *Xanthomelus* among the true Paradise-birds, leading from them to the Orioles. A further knowledge of the habits of the species is very desirable and can alone determine whether it should be placed among the Bower-birds.