

AMBLYORNIS INORNATA.

Gardener Bower-bird.

Ptilorhynchus inornatus, Schleg. Tijdsch. Dierk. vol. iv. p. 51 (1871).

Amblyornis inornata, Elliot, Ibis, 1872, p. 114.—Id. Monogr. Paradis. pl. xxxviii. (1873).—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 697.—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genov. vii. p. 780 (1875).—Id. op. cit. ix. p. 193 (1876-77).—Beccari, tom. cit. p. 352, tav. viii.—Salvad. op. cit. x. p. 151 (1877).

It was not until Baron Von Rosenberg penetrated into the interior of North-western New Guinea that the present species became known to science. It was first described by Professor Schlegel, who received specimens direct from the Baron, under the name of *Ptilorhynchus inornatus*. Shortly afterwards Mr. Elliot, when preparing his Monograph of the Paradiseidae, pointed out that, in addition to the similarity of the sexes, the plumes which hide the nostril in *Ptilorhynchus* were wanting in the new species; and he therefore separated it under the name of *Amblyornis*.

The Malays call the bird "Gardener," from the floral decorations he gives to his bower and the lawn before it.

The following abstract of the article published by Dr. Beccari appeared in the 'Gardeners' Chronicle' for March 16th, 1878, from which I transcribe it:—

"The *Amblyornis inornata*, or, as I propose to name it, the Bird gardener, is a Bird of Paradise of the dimensions of a Turtledove. The specific name '*inornata*' well suggests its very simple dress. It has none of the ornaments common to the members of its family, its feathers being of several shades of brown, and showing no sexual differences.

"It was shot some years ago by the hunters of Mynheer von Rosenberg. The first descriptions of its powers of building (the constructions were called 'nests') were given by the hunters of Mynheer Bruijn. They endeavoured to bring one of the nests to Ternate; but it was found impossible to do this, both by reason of its great size and the difficulty of transporting it.

"I have fortunately been able to examine these constructions at the remote places where they are erected. On June 20, 1875, I left Andai for Hatam, on Mount Arfak. I had been forced to stay a day at Warmendi to give rest to my porters. At this time only five men were with me; some were suffering from fever, and the remaining porters declined to proceed. We had been on our way since early morning; and at 1 o'clock we intended to proceed to the village of Hatam, the end of our journey.

"We were on a projecting spur of Mount Arfak. The virgin forest was very beautiful. Scarcely a ray of sunshine penetrated the branches. The ground was almost destitute of vegetation. A little track way proved that the inhabitants were at no great distance. A limpid fountain had evidently been frequented. I found here a new *Balanophora*, like a small orange or a small fungus. I was distracted by the songs and the screams of new birds; and every turn in the path showed me something new and surprising. I had just killed a small new marsupial (*Phascogale dorsalis*, Pet. and Doria) that balanced itself on the stem of a great tree like a squirrel; and turning round, I suddenly stood before the most remarkable specimen of the industry of an animal. It was a hut or bower close to a small meadow enamelled with flowers. The whole was on a diminutive scale. I immediately recognized the famous nests described by the hunters of Bruijn. I did not suspect, however, then that they had any thing to do with the constructions of the *Chlamydoræ*. After well observing the whole, I gave strict orders to my hunters not to destroy the little building. That, however, was an unnecessary caution, since the Papuans take great care never to disturb these nests or bowers, even if they are in their way. The birds had evidently enjoyed the greatest quiet until we happened, unfortunately for them, to come near them. We had reached the height of about 4800 feet; and after half an hour's walk we were at our journey's end.

"*The Nest*.—I had now full employment in the preparation of my treasure; and I gave orders to my people not to shoot many of the birds. The nest I had seen first was the nearest one to my halting-place. One morning I took colours, brushes, pencils, and gun, and went to the spot. I there made the sketch which I now publish (fig. 56, p. 333). While I was there neither host nor hostess were at home. I could not wait for them. My hunters saw them entering and going out, when they watched their movements to shoot