

AILURÆDUS MELANOTIS.

Black-cheeked Cat-bird.

Ptilonorhynchus melanotis, Gray, P. Z. S. 1858, p. 181.—Id. Cat. Mamm. & Birds N. Guin. p. 37.—Von Rosenb. J. f. O. 1864, p. 122.—Schl. Mus. P. B. Coraces, p. 118.—Gray, Handl. B. i. p. 294.—Schl. N. T. D. iv. p. 51.

Ælurædus melanotis, Elliot, Monogr. Paradiseidæ, pl. 35.

THE discovery of this genuine and unmistakable Cat-bird in the Papuan Islands, forms part of the evidence that the latter are Australian, and not Indian, in their geographical affinity.

The *Ailurædus melanotis* of the Aru Islands is the largest of the five species of this genus now known to us: the nearest ally is the *A. arfakianus* of the mainland of New Guinea, and by some may be considered the same species; Mr. Meyer, however, has separated them; and I have followed him and given figures of both. Whatever they may ultimately prove to be, it will be seen that the mainland bird differs materially both in the colour and form of its markings. The newly discovered species at Rockingham Bay, in Queensland, is also nearly allied, but is at once separated by its much smaller size, and less developed markings on the tips of the secondaries, a feature so prominent in the Aru bird as to remind us very forcibly of the round marks so abundantly dispersed over the whole upper surface in *Chlamydodera maculata*. These marks, both in form and colour, are not the usual tippings of such feathers, but are rounder and more sharply defined; in colour they will be found deeply tinted with yellowish grey, affording a strong contrast to the pure white ends of the tail-feathers. These facts in my mind tend to confirm the alliance between the members of the genus *Ailurædus* and *Chlamydodera*, while the length and greater development of the mantle in most of the species shows an alliance to many of the Birds of Paradise. Mr. Wallace did not fail to obtain specimens of the present bird during his visit to the Aru Islands; neither was Mr. Cockerell less active in this respect: from these two sources our cabinets are now well supplied. The Dutch travellers, Baron von Rosenberg and Mr. Hoedt, have also forwarded a large series to the Leiden Museum, from the islands of Wokan, Trangan, and Maykor, all belonging to the Aru group. Nothing whatever has been written about its habits.

Male.—Bill fleshy white; crown of the head, nape, and mantle black, with longitudinal spots of buffy brown occupying the centre of each feather; lores grey; ears black, separated from the back of the head by a narrow line of buffy white; throat greyish white, mottled with dark brown; all the undersurface dull greenish yellow, each feather having darker tips and a hair-like stripe of white down the centre; the breast generally darker than the belly and flanks, the latter being strongly suffused with green; all the upper surface lively grass-green; the tips of all the secondaries greyish white, all the tail-feathers tipped with pure white, the outermost ones largely, while in the two centre ones the white marks are almost obsolete; legs and toes bluish black.

Total length $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, bill $1\frac{3}{8}$, wing $6\frac{1}{2}$, tail $4\frac{3}{4}$, tarsus 2.

The sexes are much alike in colour; but the female is decidedly the smallest.