

PHONYGAMA PURPUREOVIOLACEA, Meyer.

Purple-and-Violet Manucode.

Phonygama purpureoviolacea, Meyer, in Madarász, Zeitsch. ges. Orn. ii. p. 375, taf. xv. (1885).

THE species of *Phonygama* from South-eastern New Guinea are difficult to determine, as the changes to which the metallic colours are subject under the influences of abrasion or wearing of the feathers are at present indistinctly understood. The species from North-western New Guinea is *Phonygama keraudreni*, and we have ourselves described from Southern New Guinea two species of the genus, *P. hunsteini* and *P. jamesii*. With these we have compared a series of *P. purpureoviolacea* procured by Mr. H. O. Forbes in the Astrolabe Mountains, as well as an example obtained by Mr. Hunstein himself in the Horseshoe range.

P. hunsteini is much larger than any of the Astrolabe specimens; its colour is a dull purple with scarcely any gloss, and the colour of the head and crest-feathers is metallic oily green, of diminished lustre. It will probably be found that *P. hunsteini* is an inhabitant of one of the islands off the coast, and not of New Guinea itself. No information, beyond that it had come, like other birds in the collection, from East Cape in South-eastern New Guinea, was given with the type specimen of *P. hunsteini*; but it is quite possible that the real habitat is Normanby Island, where Mr. Hunstein also collected. At any rate the species appears distinct from *P. jamesii* and *P. purpureoviolacea*, of which it could only be a worn and bleached individual, and even then the larger size is not accounted for.

The series before us at the present moment leaves very little doubt that the *Phonygama* recently described by Dr. Meyer, and figured by us in the accompanying Plate, is distinct from *P. keraudreni* and *P. hunsteini*; but it is apparently the same as *Phonygama jamesii*, a species described by us in 1877 from Aleya, in South-eastern New Guinea. The chief difference between these two species is, that *P. purpureoviolacea* is more purple above and steel-blue below, and *P. jamesii* is metallic green above and steel-green below. But between these extremes of colour every transition is found in the series now before us; and it should be noted that the type specimen of *P. jamesii* is moulting, and that the old feathers of the wing are very dull purple, while the new ones are bright purplish blue externally. In fine, without asserting dogmatically that *P. jamesii* and *P. purpureoviolacea* are the same, we have very little doubt in our own minds that they are, and that the steel-blue and green shades become gradually faded into purple or purplish blue.

The figures in the Plate represent an adult bird in two positions, drawn from a specimen procured by Mr. Hunstein in the Horseshoe range, and now in the British Museum.

[R. B. S.]