

PARADISEA RAGGIANA, *Sclater*.

Marquis de Raggi's Bird of Paradise.

Paradisea raggiana, Sclater, P. Z. S. 1873, pp. 559, 697.—Elliot, Monogr. Paradis. pl. 3 (1873).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, vii. p. 829 (1875).—D'Albertis, P. Z. S. 1875, p. 532.

TAKING it all in all, I consider this the grandest Paradise-bird that has been discovered since Wallace sent home the startling and singular *Semioptera*. That so large and splendid a species should have remained totally unknown up to the period of Signor d'Albertis's visit to the southern parts of New Guinea serves to show the probability that other treasures remain for future explorers in this great unknown land. When the rumour first spread abroad that a second red-plumed Bird of Paradise existed, suspicions arose that these two birds were merely varieties of *P. rubra*, than which there could be nothing more fallacious, since it not only differs from that species, but belongs to another section of the Paradiseidæ, of which *P. papuana* and *P. apoda* are examples.

That the *Paradisea raggiana* holds a place in the south of New Guinea, as the *P. papuana* does in the north, is very evident. It is also quite certain that it is a bird equally common in all the parts yet visited by Signor d'Albertis, Captain Moresby, and other travellers; naturalists therefore need not fear that our collections will long remain without examples. In a note from Signor d'Albertis, addressed to the Secretary of the Zoological Society of London, published in the 'Proceedings' for 1875, is perhaps the best description of this bird yet received. He says:—"I was rather fortunate in my excursion into the mountains; for I found *Paradisea raggiana*, and obtained some beautiful specimens in full dress. In its voice, movements, and attitudes it perfectly resembles the other species of the genus. It feeds on fruit; and I could find no trace of insects in the seven individuals which I prepared. It inhabits the dense forest, and is generally found near the ravines—perhaps because the trees on the fruit of which it feeds prefer the neighbourhood of water. The female is always smaller in size than the male; and I find this sex less abundant, because, as I believe, it is the season of incubation. The female is more like the same sex of *P. apoda* than that of *P. papuana*. The young male is like the female, but often recognizable by having distinguishable traces of the yellow collar which in the old male divides the green of the throat from the breast-feathers. The irides are of a rather bright yellow, and the feet lead-colour with a reddish tinge. The long flank-feathers in individuals recently killed have a very bright tint, which they lose in a few days—even in a few hours. The two middle tail-feathers are filiform, as those of *P. apoda* and *P. papuana*, and in no stage of development resemble those of *P. rubra*. These two feathers are not so long as in *P. apoda*, and about equal to those of *P. papuana*. Like its sister species, *P. raggiana* is an inquisitive bird, and often approaches from branch to branch within a few yards of the hunter, and remains motionless for some seconds to observe its pursuer, stretching out its neck, flapping its wings, and emitting a peculiar cry, upon the sound of which other individuals come forward to join it. When one is wounded and cries out, many others come forward as if to protect it, and approach quite near, descending to the lowest boughs. The adult males frequent the tops of the highest trees, as Mr. Wallace observed in the other species, and as I also remarked in my former expedition. As regards the nidification I have as yet obtained no information." Specimens of all ages and both sexes were procured. Would that this enterprising traveller could set our minds at rest by letting us know something of the nidification, colouring of the eggs, &c.

The following description is from a perfect specimen of a male in the possession of Mr. Stone:—

Total length from bill to tail 14 inches, wing 7, tail 6, tarsi 2½.

Bill pale blue; feet lead-colour with a pinky tint; forehead and throat beautiful green, almost metallic; crown, sides, and neck fine orange-yellow; this fine yellow also extends across the throat, separating the green from the rich maroon of the chest (which is very intense); all the upper and under surface reddish brown, with a distinct mark of yellow on the shoulders; long flank-feathers splendid blood-red, becoming brown towards the ends, the extremities of which are dirty white; the two long filamentous feathers narrow, and terminating in a spatula like that of *P. papuana* in form. Count Salvadori describes the female as being "smaller than the male; of a vinaceous chestnut-colour, paler below; the sinciput, sides of head, fore part of neck, and breast deep chestnut; occiput and hinder neck, as well as the sides of the latter, yellowish. The entire green colour of the forehead and throat is wanting, as well as the pale yellowish straw-coloured ring under the throat, the yellow band across the wing, and the ornaments of the tail and flanks.

The figures in the accompanying Plate are both males, that in the foreground being the size of life.