

bag, and consequently its tail- and wing-feathers were very much crushed and injured. I tried to explain to him, and to others that came with him, that I wanted them as perfect as possible, and that they should either kill them or keep them on a perch with a string to their leg. As they were now apparently satisfied that all was fair, and that I had no ulterior designs upon them, six others took away goods, some for one bird, some for more, and one for as many as six. They said they had to go a long way for them, and that they would come back as soon as they caught any. At intervals of a few days or a week some of them would return, bringing me one or more birds; but though they did not bring any more in bags, there was not much improvement in their condition. As they caught them a long way off in the forest, they would scarcely ever come with one, but would tie it by the legs to a stick, and put it in their house till they caught another. The poor creature would make violent efforts to escape, would get among the ashes, or hang suspended by the leg till the limb was swollen or half-putrefied, and sometimes die of starvation and worry. One had its beautiful head all defiled by pitch from a dammar torch; another had been so long dead that its stomach was turning green. Luckily, however, the skin and plumage of these birds is so firm and strong that they bear washing and cleaning better than almost any other sort; and I was generally able to clean them so well that they did not perceptibly differ from those I had shot myself. Some few were brought me the same day they were caught; and I had an opportunity of examining them in all their beauty and vivacity. As soon as I found they were generally brought alive, I set one of my men to make a large bamboo cage, with troughs for food and water, hoping to be able to keep some of them. I got the natives to bring me branches of a fruit they were very fond of; and I was pleased to find they ate it greedily, and would also take any number of live grasshoppers I gave them, stripping off the legs and wings, and then swallowing them. They drank plenty of water, and were in constant motion, jumping about the cage from perch to perch, clinging to the top and sides, and rarely resting a moment the first day till night-fall. The second day they were always less active, although they would eat as freely as before; and on the morning of the third day they were almost always found dead at the bottom of the cage, without any apparent cause. Some of them ate boiled rice, as well as fruits and insects; but, after trying many in succession, not one out of ten lived more than three days. The second or third day they would be dull, and in several cases they were seized with convulsions and fell off the perch, dying a few hours afterwards. I tried immature as well as full-plumaged birds, but with no better success, and at length gave it up as a hopeless task, and confined my attention to preserving specimens in as good a condition as possible.

“The Red Birds of Paradise are not shot with blunt arrows, as in the Aru Islands and some parts of New Guinea, but are snared in a very ingenious manner. A large climbing Arum bears a red reticulated fruit, of which the birds are very fond. The hunters fasten this fruit on a stout forked stick, and provide themselves with a fine but strong cord. They then seek out some tree in the forest on which these birds are accustomed to perch, and, climbing up it, fasten the stick to a branch, and arrange the cord in a noose so ingeniously that, when the bird comes to eat the fruit, its legs are caught; and by pulling the end of the cord, which hangs down to the ground, it comes free from the branch and brings down the bird. Sometimes, when food is abundant elsewhere, the hunter sits from morning till night under his tree, with the cord in his hand, and even for two or three whole days in succession, without even getting a bite; while, on the other hand, if very lucky, he may get two or three birds in a day. There are only eight or ten men in Bessir who practise this art, which is unknown anywhere else in the island.”

*Male.*—Fore part of the head, chin, cheeks, and throat rich metallic grass-green, appearing black upon the chin. Over each eye the feathers are raised, forming two short tufts. Back of head orange-yellow. All the feathers of the head are short, velvety, and closely pressed together, and project over the bill, above and below, hiding the nostrils. Upper part of back, scapulars, shoulders, upper part of breast and rump orange-yellow. Wings, tail, back, and entire underparts dark chestnut-brown, darkest on the breast, where it is almost a blackish brown. From each side beneath the wings springs a mass of deep red plumes, which glisten like glass, as is seen in the upper part of the plumage of *Cicinnurus regius*, becoming white towards the ends on both webs and shafts, the former widely separated and hair-like. From the lower part of the back fall two very long and webless shafts, black and twisted, which descend on either side of the tail in graceful double curves, and, like the side plumes, constitute very conspicuous appendages.

*Female.*—Fore part of head, chin, cheeks, and throat very dark chestnut-brown. Back of head, and upper part of breast yellow. Upper part of back or mantle dark ochre-yellow. Entire rest of plumage, including wings and tail, dark brownish chestnut. Bill horn-colour. Feet and tarsi black.

*Hab.* Waigiou (*Wallace*); islands of Ghemien and Batanta (*Bernstein*).