

CICINNURUS REGIUS.

King Bird of Paradise.

The supposed King of the greater Birds of Paradise, Edwards, Birds, iii. pl. 3 (1750).

Le Petit Oiseau de Paradis, Briss. Orn. ii. p. 136 (1760).

Paradisea Regia, Linn. S. N. i. p. 166 (1766).—Shaw, Gen. Zool. vii. pt. ii. p. 497, pl. 67 (1809).—Less. Voy. Coq. i. p. 658, Atlas, pl. 26 (1826).—Wagler, Syst. Av. *Paradisea*, sp. 7 (1829).—Gray, Gen. B. ii. p. 323 (1847).—Schl. Hand-l. Dierk. i. p. 332, Atlas, pl. 4. fig. 46 (1857).—Gray, Hand-l. B. ii. p. 16 (1870).—Schl. M. P.-B. *Coraces*, p. 88 (1867).—Wall. Malay Arch. ii. p. 132 (1869).—Schl. N. T. D. iv. pp. 17, 49 (1873).—Wagner, Zool. Gart. 1873, p. 10.

Le Manucode, Buff. Hist. Nat. Ois. iii. p. 163, pl. 13.—Id. Pl. Enl. iii. pl. 496 (1774).—Vieill. Ois. Dor. (Oiseaux de Paradis) ii. p. 16, pl. 5 (1802).—Levaill. Ois. Parad. i. pls. 7, 8 (1806).

Le Roi des Oiseaux de Paradis, Sonn. Voy. N. Guin. i. p. 156, pl. 95 (1776).

King Paradise-bird, Lath. Gen. Syn. i. p. 475 (1782).

Cicinnurus regius, Vieill. Gal. Ois. i. p. 146, pl. 96 (1825).—Bp. Consp. i. p. 413 (1850).—Elliot, Monogr. Parad. pl. 16 (1873).—Salvad. & d'Albert. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genoa, 1875, p. 832.

Cicinnurus spiniturus, Less. Ois. Parad. Synopsis, p. 14 (1835).—Id. Hist. N. Ois. Parad. p. 182, pls. 16, 17, 18 (1835).

ALTHOUGH one of the smallest of the Paradise-birds, the present species yields to none in the beauty of its plumage or the elegance of its form; while its wire-like caudal plumes are just as remarkable in structure as any of the fantastic decorations which adorn the larger kinds. Its range is, for a Bird of Paradise, rather extended. It seems to be found all over New Guinea, as it has been met with in the Bays of Lobo and Triton and, more recently, in the south-eastern part of the island, at Mount Epa, by Signor d'Albertis. A large number of specimens were collected in Salwatti by the Dutch travellers Bernstein and Von Rosenberg, as well as on the opposite coast of New Guinea, at Sorong &c. Von Rosenberg procured it in the island of Jobie, and also in the islands of Woxam and Wonoumbai of the Aru group. It is from the last-named islands and from Mysol that the largest number of specimens have come to this country, from the collections of Mr. Wallace and, more recently, of Mr. Cockerell. Notwithstanding the fact that specimens from all the above localities have been pronounced identical, I am in possession of facts which induce me to believe in the existence of, at least, two species of King Birds of Paradise.

As regards the habits of the *Cicinnurus* in Aru, it is impossible to do better than to quote the admirable account given by Mr. Wallace in his 'Malay Archipelago.' He says, "The first two or three days of our stay here were very wet, and I obtained but few insects or birds; but at length, when I was beginning to despair, my boy Baderoon returned one day with a specimen which repaid me for months of delay and expectation. It was a small bird, a little less than the Thrush. Merely in arrangement of colours and texture of plumage, this little bird was a gem of the first water; yet these comprised only half its strange beauty. Springing from each side of the breast, and ordinarily lying concealed under the wings, were little tufts of greyish feathers about two inches long and each terminated by a broad band of intense emerald-green. These plumes can be raised at the will of the bird, and spread out into a pair of elegant fans when the wings are elevated. But this is not the only ornament. The two middle feathers of the tail are in the form of slender wires about five inches long and which diverge in a beautiful curve. Almost half an inch of the end of this wire is webbed on the outer side only, and coloured of a fine metallic green; and being curved spirally inwards, they form a pair of elegant glittering buttons, hanging five inches below the body, and at the same distance apart. These two ornaments, the breast-fans and the spiral-tipped tail-wires, are altogether unique, not occurring on any other species of the eight thousand different birds that are known to exist upon the earth, and, combined with the most exquisite beauty of plumage, render this one of the most perfectly lovely of the many lovely productions of nature. My transports of admiration and delight quite amused my Aru hosts, who saw nothing more in 'Burong raja' than we do in the Robin or Goldfinch. Thus one of my objects in coming to the far east was accomplished. I had obtained a specimen of the King Bird of Paradise, which had been described by Linnæus from skins preserved in a mutilated state by the natives. I knew how few Europeans had ever beheld the perfect little organism I now gazed upon, and how very imperfectly it was still known in Europe. The emotions excited in the mind of a naturalist who has long desired to see the actual thing which he has hitherto known only by description, drawing, or badly preserved external covering, especially when that thing is of surpassing rarity and beauty, require the poetic faculty fully to express them. After the first