

EPIMACHUS ELLIOTI, *Ward.*

Elliot's Promerops.

Epimachus ellioti, Ward, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1873, p. 743.—Elliot, Monogr. Parad. pl. 20.—Beccari, Annali Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 710.—Salvad. op. cit. ix. p. 190.—Sharpe, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. iii. p. 163.

I AM fortunate in possessing the unique type of this splendid bird, which has been placed in the genus *Epimachus* by Mr. Edwin Ward, the original describer, and allowed to remain there by Mr. Elliot and Mr. Bowdler Sharpe, both of whom have recently monographed the Birds of Paradise. I retain it in the genus *Epimachus*, but with some hesitation; for it differs considerably in its structure from *E. speciosus*, the only other representative of the genus. I would point out the difference existing in the sharply ending tail-feathers of the present bird, and still more the very different shape of the beautiful flank-plumes. In *E. speciosus* they form gracefully falling plumes illuminated by a subterminal metallic band; but in *E. ellioti* there are three series of plumes on the flanks, alike in colour, but differing in size. Whether these differences are generic will remain for subsequent writers to decide, when perfect specimens of both sexes of *Epimachus ellioti* reach Europe. The style of coloration of the present bird is also very distinct, *E. speciosus* showing none of the beautiful velvety texture which strikes the observer at the first glance on beholding *E. ellioti*.

At present we are in ignorance as to the habitat of the latter bird. A single skin came into the possession of Mr. Ward, by whom it was described; and it afterwards passed into my hands, after being figured in Mr. Elliot's Monograph of the Paradise-birds. Dr. Beccari, though he tried hard to discover the species during his expedition to the Papuan Islands, did not succeed in discovering its home; but he believes that it will ultimately be found to inhabit the mountains of Waigiou. One may be almost certain that the same locality which possesses this brilliant species will also produce other interesting birds new to science.

The following is Mr. Elliot's description of the typical specimen :—

“Top of head rich amethyst; occiput and sides of neck also amethyst, changing in certain lights to a rich light greenish gloss; back, wings, upper tail-coverts, and tail brilliant violet-purple; the wings and the tail also marbled with a dark amethyst hue, like watered silk, changing according to the light; throat and upper portion of breast deep maroon colour, with purple reflections; a narrow reddish purple band crosses the lower part of the breast; sides of the breast, flanks, and rest of underparts dark green, the flank-feathers much elongated, and stretching beyond the wings; beneath the shoulder of the wing spring two rows of plumes, which are greenish at the base, graduating into deep purple, and terminating in a brilliant metallic blue, very much narrower on the upper row than the lower one. The plumage of the entire bird is very velvety in texture, and, with the exception of the metallic parts, appears black in ordinary lights; bill black, rich orange-yellow at the gape.”

The principal figure in the Plate represents the species of nearly the size of life, and is drawn from the type specimen in my collection.