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PARROTS IN CAPTIVITY



W. T. Greene, M.A., M.D., F.Z.S., Etc..

Author of "The Amateur's Aviary of Foreign Birds."

Editor of "Notes on Cage Birds," &c.

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*Dr. Bone is favourably known to ornithologists by numerous contributions to our zoological periodicals, in which there is found the same genial spirit, and the same tone of good feeling, kindness, and reverence for the subject, which have made the present work..... The figures are, for the most part, highly satisfactory, and leaves us in wonder how they could be produced, in combination with the full and copious text, for so small a price.'—*Atkinson*.

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INTRODUCTION.

“DO PARROTS DRINK?”

TO be again asked the above question, after all we have written upon the subject, in the course of this work, and elsewhere, is, we must confess, not a little disappointing.

Nevertheless, to get out of temper and return a short answer would not be likely to mend matters, but, on the contrary, to harden the querist in his objectionable ways; so we reply, as meekly as we can, “They do.” “I have had my Parrot for thirty years, and it has never had a drop of water all the time,” persists our interlocutor, and we reply: “That only proves that your bird is possessed of an exceptionally strong constitution, and not that your method of management is correct.”

As a matter of fact we have seen all kinds of Parrots resorting to water in their native country, and drinking freely morning and evening; and we know that they traverse considerable distances for the purpose of quenching their thirst.

At the same time it must be remembered that in the regions they chiefly inhabit, the dew falls much more heavily than it does with us, and the Parrots are enabled to suck a considerable amount of moisture from the leaves of the trees they inhabit, or from the grass, among which many species seek their food on the ground; yet all these birds frequent the water-holes both for drinking and bathing, and should not be debarred from following in captivity a propensity that is not only not hurtful, but, on the contrary, is indispensable to their well being.

The deprivation of water acts injuriously on Parrots in many ways: in the first place it causes them to eat more of the “sop” with which their owners usually supply them, than they can digest; the result being dyspepsia, with

all its attendant horrors; or crop-binding, from over-distension of that organ with soft food.

Secondly, the absence of the natural amount of fluid in the system, and especially the deprivation of water for bathing often give rise to dryness and irritation of the skin, causing the natural process of moulting to become painful or impossible; as well as giving rise to the objectionable habit of self-mutilation, into which these birds are so liable to fall.

Thirdly, the practice of debarring Parrots from drinking must cause the poor creatures a great deal of unnecessary suffering, and on that account should be deprecated by every thoughtful person into whose custody one of them has chanced to pass.

We are glad to say that since we first called attention to the subject of giving water to captive Parrots, there has been a marked improvement in this respect in quarters where it had previously been the custom to keep them without a suitable supply of this indispensable fluid, for which "soft food," is not an efficient substitute; and we hope ere long to find the absurd superstition entirely exploded. Where it can have had its origin we are at a loss to imagine.

As far as we can gather it is peculiar to this country, and when the practice is mentioned to foreigners it excites a feeling of astonishment not unmingled with contempt; to which we have often heard expression given, coupled with remarks about insular intelligence, that were far from complimentary.

It is true that Parrots are not large drinkers, do not imbibe as much fluid in the course of twenty-four hours as a duck or a goose would do, but that is surely no reason for keeping them without water all the year round. They are small eaters too, and to force them to swallow, for the sake of the moisture it contains, several times as much food as their natural appetite would prompt them to partake of, is decidedly an unwise proceeding, for it is one calculated to shorten their lives, and not unfrequently does so.

To keep Parrots entirely without water is bad enough, but we were scarcely prepared for a further atrocity, which we have reason to believe is sometimes practised in their case by cruel and ignorant people.

Not long since we received a query from an unknown correspondent who said that he had had a Parrot (he did not name the species) for a long time, that it did not, or would not talk, and that he had been advised to split its tongue! being assured that if he did so, it would at once become a fluent speaker.

Being somewhat in doubt, apparently, as to the advisability or otherwise of the proceeding, he wrote for information, and we replied that if the bird would not talk when its tongue was in its natural condition, it most decidedly would not do so when that organ had been split in half; instancing a case in point of another correspondent who wrote to tell us of a jay he had had for some time, which had begun to talk nicely, when, acting on the advice of some one, he had split the poor creature's tongue, and it had never said a word afterwards.

Many people write to inquire how they are to teach their Parrots to speak: are they to be kept in the dark, starved, or pampered, or should they be placed where they will always see and hear people about them?

To this we reply, there is a great deal of difference in Parrots, even when belonging to the same species, with regard to the faculty of imitating human speech and domestic sounds. Some will pick up words and phrases they have heard but once and repeat them accurately, while others will keep on year after year without learning to say a single word. They vary in disposition and intelligence as much as children do, and no hard and fast rule can be laid down for teaching them.

Given, say a Grey Parrot of average intelligence and docility, the best way to teach him to speak, is to constantly repeat in his hearing the word or words it is wished he should learn, and with patience and perseverance he will in all probability do so after a longer or shorter course of training: then when he has acquired one sentence or word, begin to teach him another, and continue in the same way until his repertory becomes as extended as that of the famous bird for which a Cardinal once gave one hundred golden crowns, because it could repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed.

Some birds, however, will never learn to say anything, or at most but a word or two, and upon these the most patient teaching is simply thrown away; they are, in all probability females, and are as incapable of imitating articulate sounds as hen birds in general are of singing.

On the other hand, we have known some good talkers, especially among the greys, that proved their sex by laying eggs, just as we have now and then met with females that warbled nearly as well as their mates, or hens that crowed like Chanticleer: still these are exceptions to the rule that a talking or singing bird belongs to the masculine gender.

It is not necessary to keep a Parrot in the dark, or fasting, in order to teach it to speak, on the contrary the bird should be well fed, and supplied with everything to make it happy and comfortable; good food, hemp, maize,

oats, biscuit, a bit of apple, pear, or even a slice of carrot, water, for drinking and bathing, a good roomy cage, soft wood to gnaw, and coarse grit from which to pick small stones to aid its digestion.

If a bird thus fed and treated is placed in one room, and its teacher takes his or her stand in one adjoining, where he or she can be heard, but not seen by the Parrot, and the same words are as frequently as possible repeated during the day; the bird will soon pick them up, and gratify the owner by giving a distinct imitation of the sounds to which it listens all the more intently, that it does not know exactly from whence they proceed.

Do Parrots ever talk intelligently? that is to say, do they ever make intelligent use of their acquired vocabulary? We think so. Thus our lamented Goffin never screamed for "Potato!" except when he spied that esculent upon the table; and it was certainly something like intelligence that prompted another talented bird to say "Serve him right!" when his mistress, as much in sorrow as in anger, asked: "O Polly, why did you bite my boy?" for the urchin had been teasing the poor bird unmercifully, and had got no more than his deserts, when "Polly" suddenly nipped and drew blood from the offending finger.

Parrots, as a rule, are long-lived, and instances have been mentioned to us in which individual birds have lived in the same family for periods varying from forty to seventy and even eighty years, handed down from generation to generation as valued heir-looms; but for one of these veterans that one hears of, how many poor "Pollies" are hurried to an untimely end by the ignorance of their owners, and the consequent mismanagement of the poor creatures themselves?

We trust, however, that the readers of these pages have long ere this learned to treat their pets judiciously, because naturally, and are in no danger of relapsing into former errors respecting them, at the bidding of some friend imbued with antiquated notions, the shallowness of which has been exposed over and over again; but are nevertheless cropping up every now and then, and occasionally from the most unexpected quarters, for error dies hard, though its end is certain.

W. T. G.

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BARNARD'S PARRAKEET.

BARNARD'S OR THE BULLA BULLA PARRAKEET.

Psittacus Barnardi.

SYNONYMS: *Platycercus Barnardi*; *Barnardius typicus* etc.

FRENCH: *Perruche de Barnard.* GERMAN: *Barnard's Sittich.*

AUTHORS are pretty well agreed in bestowing upon this handsome Broadtail the specific name of Barnard, from a French naturalist of repute towards the close of the last century; Prince C. Bonaparte alone departing from the example of other writers by naming the bird in question *Barnardius typicus*, or the typical Barnard. It is even more scarce than Bauer, from which a glance at the plate will show the reader that it differs considerably; especially in having a deep crimson frontlet.

It is about the size of the last named bird, and equally hardy, but more amiable and engaging; it is also even of less frequent occurrence in captivity than Bauer's Parrakeet, and is consequently dearer; nor is there any instance on record, that the writer is aware of, of its having as yet re-produced itself in confinement.

The female is very like her mate, but her colours are much less bright than his, and she is perceptibly smaller.

None of the Broadtails make good talkers, and Barnard is no exception to this rule. Occasionally a male reared from the nest will learn to say, in a very small voice, a simple word or two, but generally his linguistic attainments are confined to the repetition of the word "Joey;" he very rarely reaching such an advanced standard of education as to say "Pretty Joey," though one such instance is on record; but the bird in question must have been exceptionally intelligent, and one cannot expect to meet with such a phenomenon every day; but they learn to whistle very prettily.

This Parrakeet is believed to feed, at least partially, on white ants but appears nevertheless to do very well indeed without any such delicacies in captivity; though possibly the fact that it has not yet nested in confinement, may be owing to the insufficiently stimulating nature of its enforced seed diet, and the connoisseur who is desirous of having aviary-bred Barnards in his collection would do well to try the effect of adding daily a few meal-worms, or a small handful of scoured gentles, or their pupæ, to the bill of fare.

In the Colonies this handsome bird is known by the name of the Bulla Bulla Parrakeet; why, it would be difficult to say, for it has little of the melodious vocalisation and imitative powers of the Lyre Bird (*Menura superba*), to which the natives of Australia have allotted the same designation.

There are few sights prettier than a large aviary well supplied with branches and a turfed floor and inhabited by a collection of Australian Broadtails, of which there are many species, nearly all of which are about the same size; the exceptions being the Pennant, Adelaide, Rosella, and Stanley. The two first are considerably larger than the species under consideration, while the Rosella, and especially the Stanley are smaller; the latter, indeed, not being much bigger than the Elegant Grass Parrakeet.

All the Broadtails get on very well together, and in fact some of the so-called species are only local varieties of each other; thus the Pennant and Adelaide Broadtails are very closely connected, and the same may be said of the Rosella and the *Palliceps*, commonly called the Mealy Rosella; while, notwithstanding the great difference in size, we believe Stanley's Parrakeet to be a very near relation indeed of *Platycercus eximius*, the Rosella, or Rosehill Parrakeet.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that *Eximius* and *Palliceps* have paired together in captivity, and produced fertile young ones that have had others equally capable of reproduction, and combining in their own persons the colours and markings of their parents, which they transmitted unchanged to their own progeny; thus, in our opinion at all events, establishing beyond possibility of dispute the generic identity of the two varieties.

Whether it would be possible to perpetuate this new variety, or whether, as in the case of the Golden and Amherst Pheasants; the progeny of successive generations would revert to one or other of the progenitorial types, and not continue the mixture of the two species, remains to be proved; but analogy would lead one to suppose that the former supposition would be the more likely of the two to be correct; unity and not confusion, being without question, the order of the day

in nature; notwithstanding all that has been said about accidental variation and natural selection.

But we are wandering from our Barnards, which, on the whole, we consider preferable, as inmates of the aviary, to Bauer's Parrakeets, though they are not more fitted than the latter for cage life; and should never be immured within the narrow limits of even the very largest cage that could be provided for their use indoors, in which they certainly would never attempt to breed; whatever chance there might be of their doing so in a large well-furnished aviary out of doors.

The Western Aviary at the Zoological Gardens, in the Regent's Park, is our *beau ideal* of what a Parrot aviary should be; but instead of dividing it into so many compartments, we should only make three; placing in the middle the larger species, the medium sized occupying one wing, and the pigmy parrots, such as the different species of love-birds, the third. It might be a noisy collection, but it would be a most interesting and delightful one; the only drawback, that it would be impossible to have any living plants in it: grass, however, would be possible, and, if renewed every season, a great improvement; but there should be an abundance of logs of wood, dead trees in fact with all their branches on; and in these, many of the prisoners would excavate themselves nests. Other nesting boxes, or rather logs, should of course be provided, and we are convinced that such an institution would, not only be quite self supporting, but actually pay well by the sale of the young stock that would certainly be obtained in such a place.

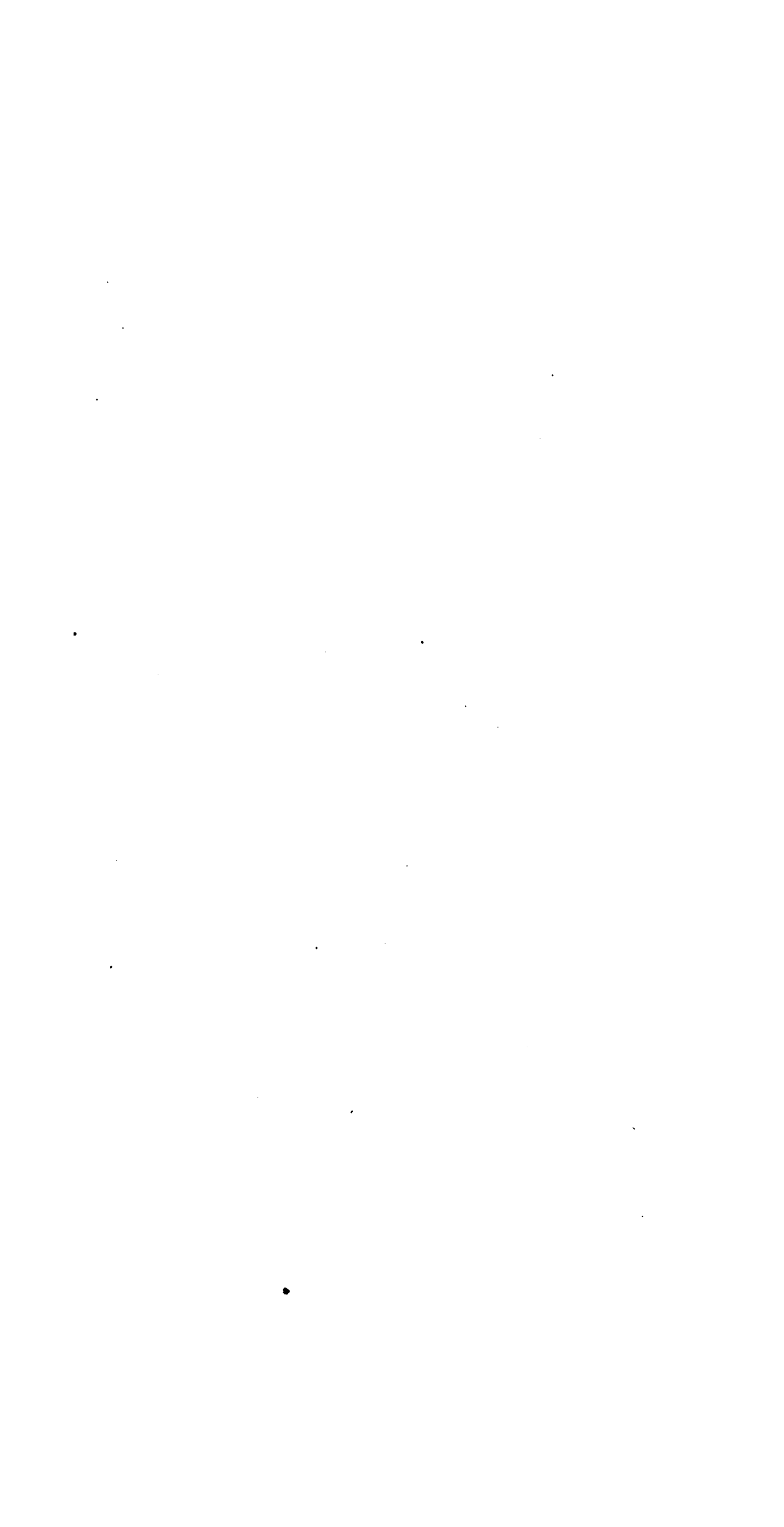
With the exception of the Lories, all Parrots are seed-eaters, and give very little trouble indeed in the matter of food, but a stream of water should be contrived to percolate through the aviary, and a rockery or two would add materially to its attractions.

The sparsely timbered forests of South Western Australia form the chief habitat of this species, which is not numerous, even there, and is consequently but seldom captured and imported, which is a fact to be deplored by connoisseurs; who, if they could obtain Barnard's at a more reasonable figure might not only breed them freely in their aviaries, but cross the three species, Bauer's, Barnard's, and the Australian Ring-neck; and determine, once for all, whether these birds were really three distinct species, or only local varieties of one.

If the cross-bred progeny proved to be capable of reproduction, the latter hypothesis would be established, but on the contrary if they were sterile, it would be proved beyond a doubt, that the birds were distinct. While the price, however, remains as high as it is, this desirable

consummation is not likely to be reached, and now that aviarists have lost one of their best friends, by the untimely death of Mr. A. H. Jamrach, who did so much to popularise the fancy for foreign birds, by bringing down the almost prohibitive prices of other dealers to more reasonable figures, as well as by the importation of new species and varieties, the solution of this and kindred problems is further off than ever.

Barnard's Parrakeet is also occasionally called the Falcon-breasted Parrakeet, and its designation of Bulla Bulla has also been applied to the Yellow-collared Broadtail, which is known to the colonists of Western Australia by the name of "Twenty-eight" Parrot, from the fancied resemblance of its cry to those words.





MASKED PARAKEET.

MASKED PARRAKEET.

Psittacus personatus.

SYNONYMS: *P. larvatus*; *Pyrrhulopsis personata*; *Platycercus personatus*.

FRENCH: *Perroquet masqué.* GERMAN: *Maskensittich.*

IT is a curious fact that each group of islands in the Pacific Ocean, nay even each little isolated rock that rears its verdant head above the watery wilderness, can boast of an avifauna peculiarly its own. Not to mention the great insular continent of Australia, and the islands composing the New Zealand group, we find New Caledonia, Phillip Island, the Fiji, Samoa and Tonga Islands each possessing Parrots, or Parrakeets of its own that are not to be met with elsewhere.

The Masked Parrakeet is a case in point: it is a native of the Fijian Archipelago, and is peculiar to it, nor does it appear to be very numerous even there. It is a strange-looking, but rather handsome bird, about the size of the King Parrot, but with a smaller head, and is very loosely feathered. The face and head are jet black, hence the specific name applied to it—"Masked"; the belly is orange, and the rest of the body green, but on the wings are numerous black and blue shades. The eyes are reddish yellow, and the legs, feet, and beak black.

Authors have bestowed upon this bird the various generic designations of *Aprosmictus*, *Coracopsis*, *Platycercus*, *Prosopaea*, *Psittacus*, and *Pyrrhulopsis*.

It is a quiet bird, seldom giving utterance to a little squeal not unlike that of *Pileatus*, and by no means disagreeable or distressing to the most sensitive ear. It is not particularly intelligent or interesting, and but for its handsome plumage and gentle habits is not one that we should care to keep. We have an idea, which needs to be confirmed by observation, that *Pyrrhulopsis splendens*, the Red Shining Parrakeet, is the female of the species under consideration; our reason

being the great similarity of these birds to the Eclecti, in which sub-family the females are, contrary to the usual custom among birds, more showily attired than their male companions; and the remarkable fact that no female of *P. personatus*, or male of *P. splendens*, has yet been recorded.

It is a pity both species, if species they be, are so scarce and consequently expensive; for were they to be met with more frequently in the bird market, they would soon be much cheaper, and experiments might be made in the way of breeding them; and if success were obtained in this direction, all doubt upon the subject of their specific identity or non-identity would be set at rest.

If amateurs cannot accomplish this, surely some Zoological Society might take the matter up, and earn the thanks of naturalists, by solving a problem that will probably not be determined without their aid.

Dr. Russ quotes the price of *P. personatus* at from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and sixty marks—the mark being about equivalent to an English shilling—and states that “the cost of *P. splendens* is so high that it is only accessible to Zoological Gardens, from which, however, we have not much to hope in the way of practical experiment.”

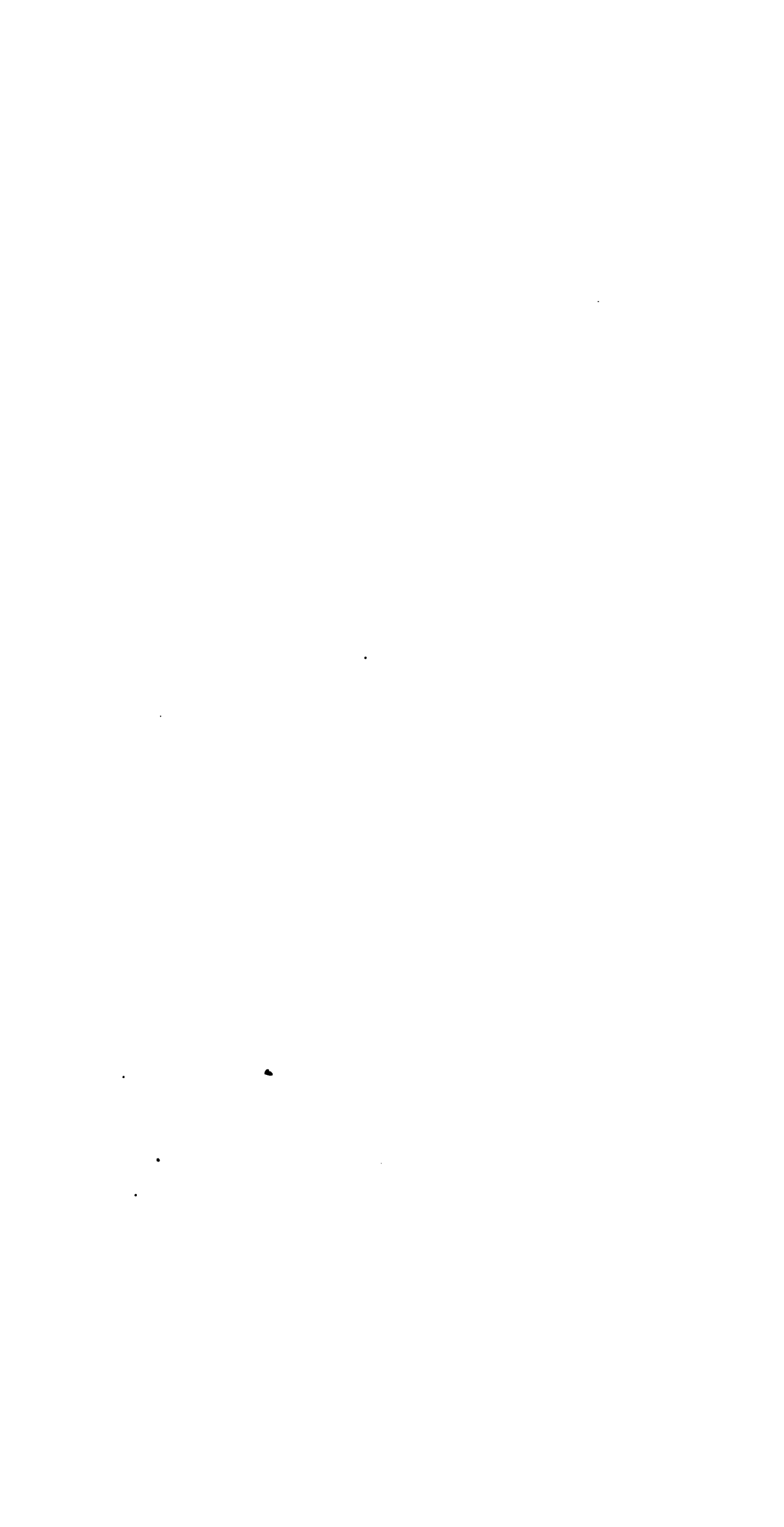
It is probable that the Amboina Parrot, described by Bechstein, is *P. splendens*. The old German author considered his bird to be a male, and gave the description of a supposed female; which we are unable to identify with any known variety or species. “In the female (of the Amboina Parrot) the head is green; the throat, the under part of the neck, and the breast, are the same, but having a reddish tint. The small tail coverts are dark green, edged with red; the tail itself is tinged with green. The beak is horn-brown, with a reddish tint above and below.”

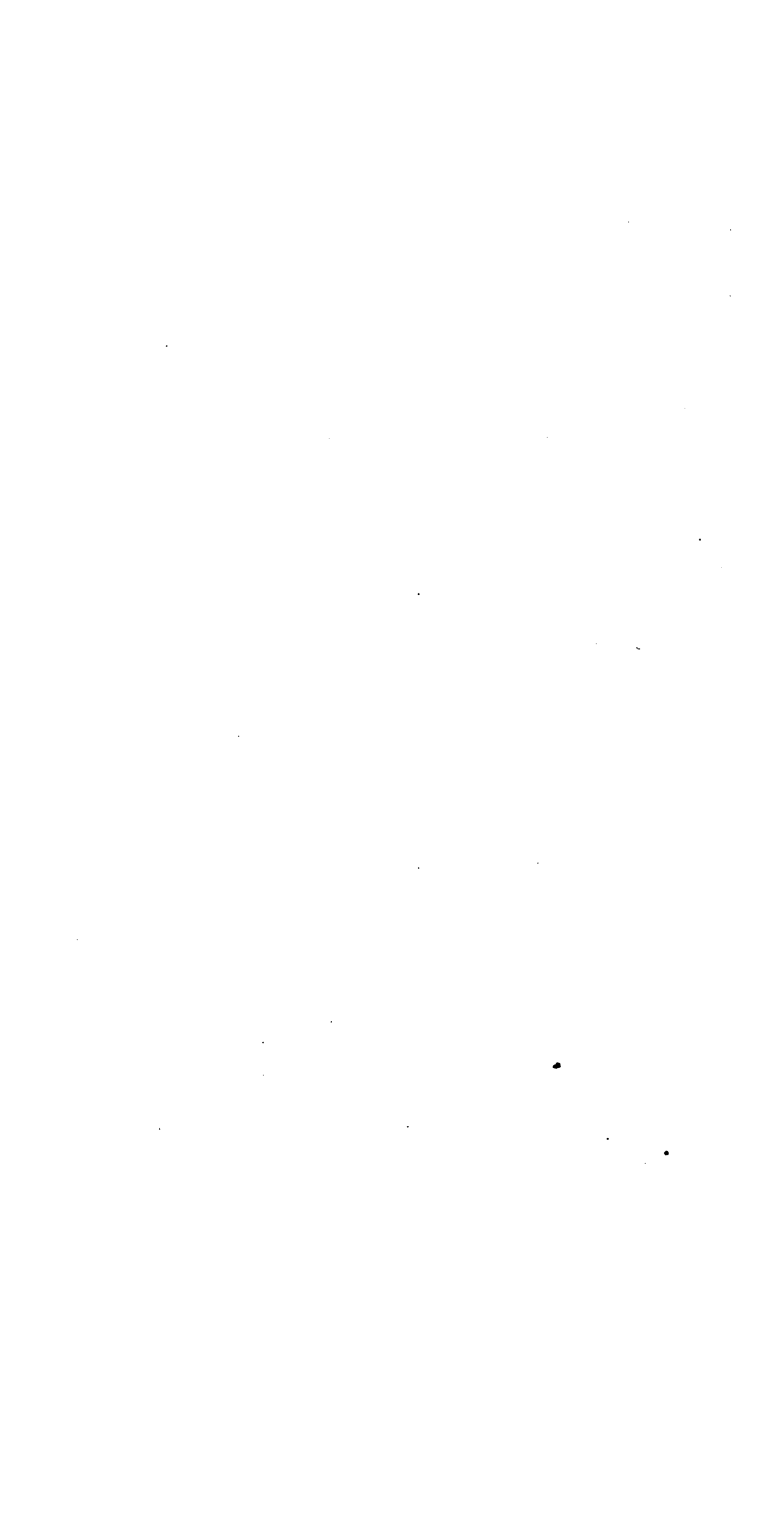
Either the above description refers to an immature male of *Aprosmictus scapulatus*, or it is that of some other species with which we are unacquainted.

P. personatus has large and broad wings, and is doubtless gifted with strong powers of flight; but the one specimen of the species we have had under observation, has, at some time or other, had one of its pinions broken, and is quite unable to fly. It is, as we have said, a quiet and silent bird, peaceable too, and not given to bite. It does not appear to be endowed with the capacity for destruction for which some of the preceding species are so notorious, and on that account, as well as on that of its good qualities already enumerated; we can recommend it to the notice of amateurs who like to let their pets out about the room, but at the same time have a reasonable objection to seeing their furniture wrecked; as both “Pilate” and “Pinto”

would wreck it, if they were not strictly watched and checked when about to indulge their mischievous propensities.

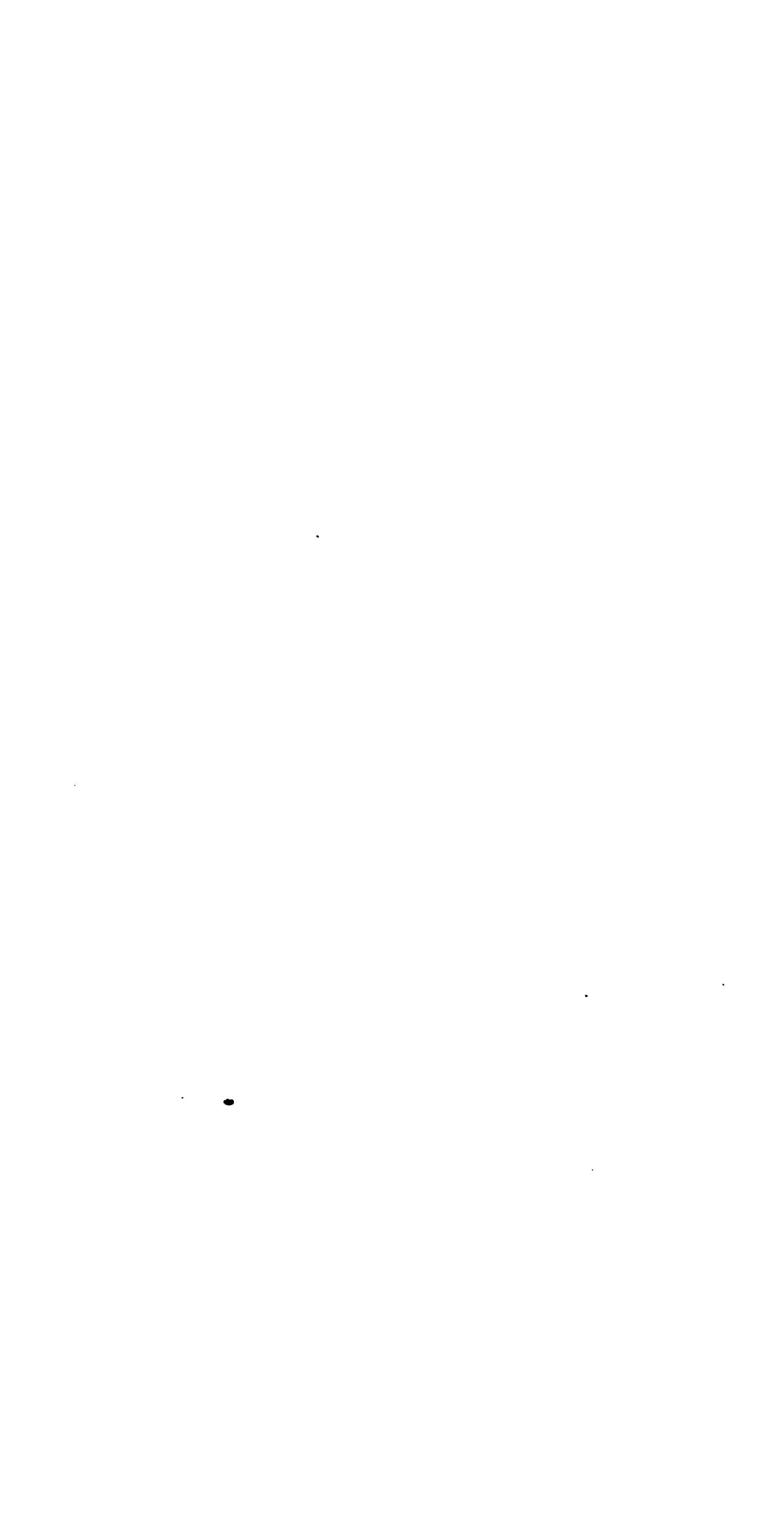
Canary seed, hemp, maize, fruit, and bread or biscuit moistened in water, will keep one of these birds in health for years. They are fairly hardy, and might, probably, be kept successfully all the year round in an out-door aviary; but upon this point the writer is without information.







RED SHINING PARRAKEET



RED SHINING PARRAKEET.

Psittacus splendens, AUCTORUM.

SYNONYMS: *Aprosmictus splendens*, BP., CSS.;

Platycercus splendens, HETF., GR.; *Pyrrhulopsis splendens*, SCH.

FRENCH: *Perruche pourpre de Fidji*.

GERMAN: *Der Glanzsittich, oder der purpurothe glanzende
Plattschweissittich*, RSS.

FROM the unanimity with which all the writers who have treated of the subject of the present notice have awarded to it the specific designation *splendens*, it is natural to conclude that it must be a very strikingly beautiful creature, and that such is really the case, a glance at the life-like figure on the opposite page, will no doubt convince the most sceptical reader.

Truly the Red Shining Parrakeet, *Aprosmictus*, *Platycercus*, or *Pyrrhulopsis splendens*, is one of the most remarkable members of the Parrot family, though it is rather a matter of dispute with which sub-family of them it should be connected. The present writer is of opinion that the term *Platycercus* should be reserved, especially for the distinctive and well-known natural group of the Australian Broadtails; while the sub-generic term *Aprosmictus* is an unnecessary distinction, and might very well be abolished. There remains therefore only the term *Pyrrhulopsis*, which is fairly applicable and sufficiently desirable; though Dr. Karl Russ rejects it, alluding to it incidentally, with a note of exclamation after it in brackets (!).

Pyrrhulopsis splendens, the Red Shining Parrot, is a native of the Fiji Islands, especially of the Viti sub-group of that archipelago, where it used to be very plentiful, and is yet to be encountered in considerable numbers.

It is by no means a delicate bird, and when fairly acclimatised can stand any weather and almost any kind of treatment. It is very teachable,

and Dr. Russ records the fact that any one of these birds exhibited by Fraulein Hagenbeck at the "Ornis" Show in 1880, was an excellent talker (ein sehr gut sprechendes exemplar), of which the price was six hundred marks, or £30. Another, on the same authority, is said to have been purchased from Herr Blaaw, of Amsterdam, for two hundred and fifty marks by Herr Director Scheuba, who gives it a good character on the whole, but complains that his bird was in a chronic state of moult; which may possibly be due to the fact, that it was accustomed to partake freely of cayenne pepper with its food.

The great similarity between three or four species or varieties of these Parrakeets has given rise to some confusion; for instance, the Amboina Parrakeet, the Tabuan Parrakeet, the subject of our present notice, and the well known King Parrakeet have a strong family likeness, more especially the three first; and have not unfrequently been mistaken one for the other. The specific differences however are considerable, as will be seen on comparing the plate of the last mentioned species, and that of the Red Shining Parrakeet; the Amboina and Tabuan species we have not yet illustrated, but hope to be in a position to do so before the completion of this work; when it will be readily seen in what respect they differ from their congeners.

In the present species the beak is blackish brown with a reddish tinge, below the surface as it were; the eye, or rather the iris, is bright reddish yellow; the lores, forehead, and back of the neck are deep shining red, and the latter terminates with a distinct collar of deep ultramarine blue; the wing coverts are brilliant green, but the flight feathers and the spurious wing feathers are deep blue, though in some lights the latter have a greenish tinge. The rump and upper tail coverts are bright green; the throat, breast, and belly, brilliant crimson. Variations of colour are not, however, of uncommon occurrence, and are due probably to age.

We had an idea at one time that this beautiful bird, following the analogy of the Eclecti, was the female of the Masked Parrakeets, but so many observers have recorded the fact that the female of the Red Shining Parrakeet resembles the male, although, perhaps, somewhat less brilliantly tinted; that we are forced to abandon our hypothesis, at least for the present.

The chief points of difference between the subject of our present notice and the King Parrakeet are, first, the size; and secondly, the colour of the beak. The Red Shining Parrakeet is considerably smaller than the King, and the latter has a coral-red beak, which fades in old subjects; and after death, to dull reddish orange.

When wild these birds are said to feed chiefly on seeds and berries,

but in the house they can be kept in rude health for a considerable time on canary seed, maize, and oats; a little hemp may be added now and then, also ripe fruit; but animal food of any kind should never be given, and this cannot be too frequently insisted on; but half decayed wood is necessary to their comfort if not to their existence, which last will certainly be cut short, unless the birds are provided with a sufficiency of coarse grit, preferably flint stones broken up small; which are a powerful aid to digestion, and serve them when swallowed in lieu of teeth.

The Red Shining Parrot has a frequent but not disagreeable cry, and as we have said, is eminently docile and in every respect desirable as an inmate of the cage and aviary.

In writing of the Splendid *Pyrrhulopsis* Dr. Russ says that it is only found in the Viti group of the Fiji Islands, "where it attracts attention in the mangrove forests not only by its brilliant colours, but less agreeably by its loud cries"; an assertion, as regards the noise, which requires confirmation.

The doctor further states that these birds do much damage to the maize crops, and are consequently hateful to the farmers, who pursue them without mercy, and that owing to this persecution they are learning to be watchful and silent; a fact which, if established, would tend to prove them gifted with no small amount of intelligence.

"The brood consists of three" according to the same authority, and if taken from the nest, the young birds become very tame.

The description of the supposed male only is given, and it is said to be an excellent talker, though awkward and clumsy in a cage.

"With the exception of its gorgeous plumage", continues Dr. Russ, "I have failed to find any pleasant qualities in the Red Shining Parrakeet, nevertheless I believe that all these large Parrakeets would develop a completely different character, if they were kept in a large aviary, where they had room to fly about", which is incontestable.

*The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of
Pyrrhulopsis splendens.*

THE Red Shining Parrakeet, as *P. splendens* is called, is most like the King Parrot both in colour and shape, so that it is not surprising some authors have called it by their generic name, *Aprosmictus*.

The beak and feet are black; its head and breast are dark crimson. There is a blue band at the neck, and the back is dark shining green, from which it may get its name of Shining Parrakeet. The tail feathers, according to Dr. Russ, are "blue with green edges at the base on the

outer web, the two central ones green, with blue tips extending about one-third of the length. But as it must be nearly twenty years since I had mine, and I only had one, I cannot describe it better than by saying it is very like a King Parrot, only that the beak is black, and the crimson much darker. Its eyes, like those of the Masked Parrot, have bright orange irides, so as to give it a wild look.

I found my bird dull and quiet. I do not remember its being noisy. Its one occupation was to scratch all day at the bottom of the cage. I wish some one would kindly explain *what* Parrots mean when they do this. My Jardine's Parrot is always doing it. I sometimes wonder is it the sign of a hen bird, and is it the burrowing preparatory to making a nest. If it was, it never laid an egg with me, but I soon parted with it to the Zoological Gardens. It did not long survive, and I have reason to think that this and the Masked Parrakeet are peculiarly liable to decline. I do not think any specimen has lived very long in captivity, and I cannot but suspect that we have not discovered its right diet. I believe I fed mine on hemp and canary seed, and I probably gave it sop, but it is now so long ago that I cannot be sure. The general price of these birds is £5, though I gave only £3 for mine. The Masked Parrakeet is worth about £4, but they seldom come into the market. I intend some day, when I can secure a thoroughly healthy bird, to try the Masked Parrakeets, and perhaps to have another attempt with *Splendens*.

QUAKER, GREY-BREASTED, OR
MONTE VIDEO PARRAKEET.

Psittacus Monachus.

SYNONYMS: *Bolborrhynchus monachus*, *Psittaca calita*,

Myiopsitta murina, etc.

FRENCH: *Perruche Souris*. GERMAN: *Mönchspapagei oder Quäker*.

PERHAPS the most curious fact connected with the natural history of the *Psittacidæ*, is the nidificating instinct of the Quaker Parakeet, which, departing from the general habits of the genus, builds itself a nest of sticks among the branches of a tree; while all its congeners make their breeding burrows in the hollow limbs or trunks of trees, or, in a few instances in the ground, or under the roots of a tree.

The nest of this bird is a very large structure, composed of the long thin terminal branches of trees, which are in-laced so firmly by the builder, that it is quite a difficult matter to tear one of them to pieces; it is domed like the nest of a magpie, and has usually two openings, one perhaps for entrance and the other for exit.

In captivity the same habit is retained, at least in the generality of cases, for M. Rousse, whom we have already quoted in another connection, relates, that his *Perruches Souris* were in the habit of filling up their nest-boxes with every thing they could find; "*remplissent leurs nids de tout ce qu'elles trouvent*;" whereas those in the possession of the present writer, although they had numerous nest boxes at their disposal, refused to have anything to say to them, but covered over a seed box with the twigs taken from a birch broom; of which domestic implements they used up three before the nest was finished to their liking. The shallow box was first filled with twigs, cut in suitable

lengths strongly matted together; and then roofed over with longer branches very firmly interlaced. In the first instance a door-way was left in the side of the nest facing north, but the birds finding, apparently, that this exposed them too much to the weather, deliberately cut another doorway facing west, and then filled up the former opening; closing it completely with an extra thickness of twigs.

They made use of no softer material for lining their abode, in which, although no eggs have been laid, both male and female pass the night and a great part of the day, but made the floor of the nest of small twigs; reserving the larger for the sides and roof.

Owing to the position in which the box was placed, the shape of the nest is flat, instead of being round, as usually happens when the birds are at full liberty; but to render it more secure they have threaded a large number of sticks through the wires of the aviary, close to which the box happened to be placed. Before finally selecting this situation, the female made several attempts to build in other places but soon abandoned them; and after her nest was fairly under way, made use of the materials she had already collected elsewhere to complete it.

It would be extremely curious and interesting if any one could find out why these birds have so widely departed, in the matter of nest building, from the habits of the race to which they belong; but that is a point that will probably never be satisfactorily cleared up, so that we must, perforce, remain contented with our ignorance. A correspondent has suggested, that perhaps instead of having taken a new departure, *Monachus* may be the only Parrot that has persisted in the old custom of nidification, once common to all its congeners; but this view we take to be extremely unlikely. Indeed it stands to reason, we think, that a universal change of the habits of a race, with one solitary exception; is less likely, far less likely, to have occurred, than that one member of that race should, from whatever cause, have worked out a new line of action for itself. Be that as it may, it is little less curious that in captivity the habit should have been occasionally departed from, as happened in the case of M. Rousse's birds; "*qui remplissent leurs nids de tout ce qu'elles peuvent trouver*," as he repeats in another part of his book on "Aviculture."

Mr. Sydney C. Buxton, of Fox Warren, Cobham, Surrey, relates in the *Animal World* for 1878, page 179, the history of a pair of these birds that were in his possession at one time. "Five years ago I brought back from South America, two small green paraquets, which I had taken when young from their nests. These two little birds became very tame and familiar; and it was a pretty sight to see

them hovering, humming-bird-like, in the air and pecking at a lump of sugar held in one's hand. Like all the paraquet tribe, however, they would not allow their heads to be scratched—the one thing above all others that a cockatoo considers blissful. These two were turned out about September, and early in October they began to build a nest on the top of a large vase, which stood in the open hall. Of course, according to their calculations, the spring should have been well forward by October. They must have thought the winter unaccountably mild, and the spring and summer too disgustingly cold.

“The nest was formed of silver birch twigs, twined and matted together making one solid mass. The tiny birds looked very graceful flying into the hall with a long sprig of birch trailing behind them. Once, when the nest was almost three feet high, the whole of it was blown down, but they did not seem to mind, and when it was put up again they went on adding twig to twig as if nothing had happened. During the process of building they unmercifully attacked any birds that attempted to come near the precious nest. One old cockatoo had to be kept indoors, so savagely did they attack him; and the doves, who also inhabit the garden hall, had anything but a pleasant time of it. Unfortunately (in January,) before the nest was finished, we had to come up to London, and one day, very soon after we had left, the birds disappeared; the nest, as then left, was some five feet high and about six feet in circumference at the top. The birds never shewed any desire to lay eggs, but probably when the warm weather came they would have made some use of their stupendous erection.”

From the above interesting account of what we presume to be Quaker Parrakeets, for we are not aware of any other American species that build nests of twigs; we gather, first, that the little architects, which by the way are as large in the body as a Bengal Parrakeet, and with larger heads, were young and inexperienced; or, instead of going on heaping twig upon twig until their edifice attained the enormous dimensions stated, they would have roofed it over before it had reached one quarter of the size, and have finished it off as neatly as our own birds have done, and with greater elegance, no doubt; for they had green twigs to work with, and our Parrakeets, dry and consequently inelastic branchlets only.

Mr. Buxton calls his birds “tiny,” but the Quakers can scarcely be so designated correctly, except as compared with the large cockatoos and macaws of which this gentleman had a goodly stock at the same time. His birds seem to have been somewhat quarrelsome and aggressive in their habits, but we have never noticed that ours interfere with their companions, or even resent their approach; in fact some

impudent greenfinches that inhabit the same enclosure actually sit on some of the projecting sprigs of birch of which the nest is built, without the Quakers molesting them in the least, or indeed taking any notice of their presence. A pair of New Zealand Parrakeets too run over the nest in their quick mouse-like fashion, without, as far as can be detected, provoking the resentment of the owners; who, possibly, may be a particularly even-tempered pair. They are not very young we know, and that may account for their superior skill in nest construction, no less than for their amiable and forbearing disposition; for youth is apt to be resentful at times, and mature age, not senility, is, or should be, more tolerant. Birds, too, like men, gather wisdom by experience, whence the superior architectural skill of our pair, which certainly greatly exceeds that of their youthful compatriots at Fox Warren; for the former work with an evident object in view, which the latter apparently lacked.

A nest five feet high, and six in circumference at the top, must have taken a goodly number of birch twigs to construct, and the havoc wrought among the surrounding trees must have been considerable. Needless to mention, that it would be perfectly useless to plant trees or shrubs in any space where a pair of Quaker Parrakeets were confined.

“Quaker”? Why are these birds called by the popular designation of the estimable people who name themselves “Friends”? It is difficult to say; but possibly on account of the fact that the head, throat and breast of these birds is of that delicate pearly shade of grey, so often affected by the lady members of that Society; but there the resemblance ceases, for the remainder of the plumage is bright grass green excepting the flight feathers, which are blue. The beak, somewhat large for the size of the owner, is white, horn-white, with a slight shade of brown. The legs and feet are lead colour, and the former are short and stout, indicating arboreal habits.

Azara, who first described these birds, gave them the name of “Young widows, because no Parrots show such an amount of smart and coquettish ways as these,” which, it must be confessed, is a little hard on the ladies. Azara, however, may, on the whole, be considered a reliable authority, and although his first account of these nest-building Parrots was received by naturalists with incredulity; his observations have since been amply confirmed by subsequent travellers in the same regions, of whom it will be sufficient to name Darwin and Burmeister; as well as by numerous exhibitions of their nest-building proclivities in various aviaries and Zoological Gardens.

If the Quaker Parrot is not, as we have seen, a showy bird, it

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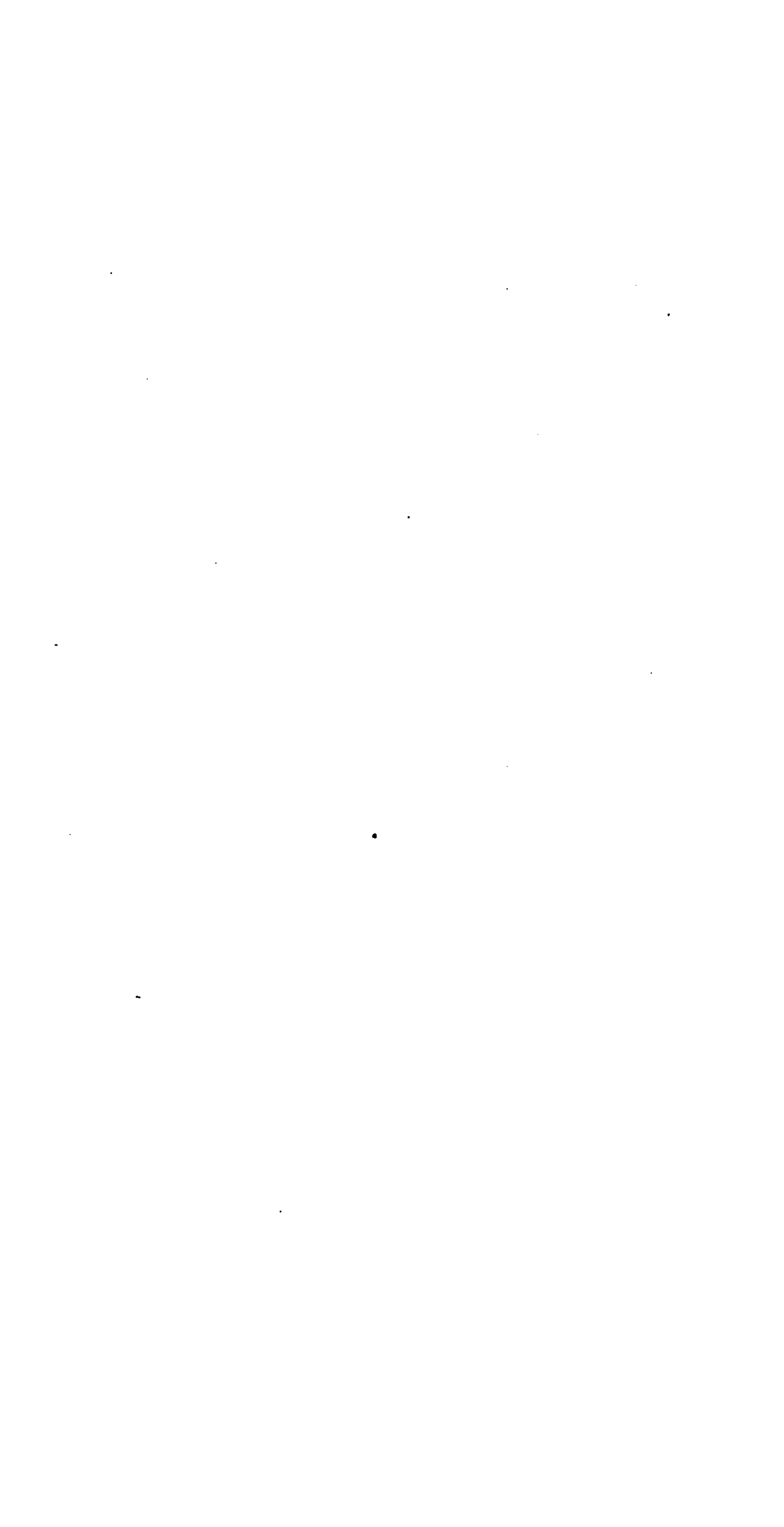
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QUAKER OR GREY-BREASTED PARRAKEET

certainly cannot be recommended for its figure, which is clumsy in the extreme; the large head and thick neck being made to look larger still, by the habit of keeping the feathers on these parts ruffed up, after the manner of the domestic cat when it puffs out the hairy covering of its tail.

In captivity, that is to say in a cage, these Parrakeets will learn to speak a little, but their unbearable cries, in which they frequently indulge, are simply insupportable.

A lady of our acquaintance was possessed of a splendid Grey Parrot, a beloved and highly accomplished bird, which was the delight of his mistress, and well deserved the care and attention she was never weary of lavishing upon it; one day, however, a friend presented her with one of these wretched birds which, the moment it was released from its travelling box, commenced to pour forth a series of the most appalling shrieks, an accomplishment of which these Parakeets are perfect masters; and the Grey Parrot caught up the hideous sounds, and has repeated them at intervals ever since; much to the dismay of the lady who owns it, and the other members of the household; and that although the offending "Quaker" was speedily sent away.

It is curious that when at liberty, or comparative liberty, in an outdoor aviary, these birds should very seldom scream, but so it is, and the aviary out of doors would appear to be their more suitable destination; since they are quieter there, and being perfectly hardy, the aviarist need not fear that the cold will do them any harm. On the contrary, their plumage is much improved by the change from the cage and house; and wears a kind of bloom that is in vain looked for in-doors. Nor is this remarkable since the home of this bird is in the western parts of South America, Paraguay, the Argentine Confederation, and Bolivia; where it is found on the mountain ranges at an elevation of from three to four thousand feet above the sea level.

Bechstein, among other writers, credits the Grey-breasted Parrakeet with the faculty of imitating human speech; and Gibson, a traveller in its native land, speaks of having heard wild birds of this species crying "Pretty Poll!" as they passed by in their rapid undulating flight from their feeding grounds; which by the way to us appears to be a somewhat hazardous flight of that author's imagination. "Often," he writes, "in passing through the forests, I heard, to my astonishment, a bird of this species crying hoarsely "Pretty Poll!" We presume it was the Spanish equivalent of "Pretty Poll" that Gibson heard them say, but further comment is superfluous.

Dr. Willink, of Utrecht, a great admirer of the Grey-breasted

Parrakeets, was recently in possession of an individual of this species which, according to the account of his friend Dr. Russ, "speaks as clearly as the best Grey Parrot, but, in spite of this, has not left off its dreadful screech, which unfortunately it utters only too often."

The breeding season of these birds in their native country commences in November, and they have not as yet adapted themselves to the change of seasons in this northern hemisphere, but begin their curious nest-building labours at the same time they used to do at home; any consequently their attempts at multiplying their species in captivity generally end in failure; in the course of time, perhaps, they will understand the difference of the seasons and accommodate themselves to their altered circumstances; as many of their congeners, notably the Broadtails and Grass Parrakeets, have already in great measure done.

The Grey-breasted Parrakeet is about eleven inches in length, of which the tail measures five; it is stoutly built, and from its habit of bristling up the feathers of the head and neck, looks more bulky than it really is.

The grey feathers of the breast are edged with a line of a lighter shade of the same colour, which is wanting in young birds; and the male has a slight shade of reddish purple on his breast, by which he can be readily distinguished from his consort.

"This pretty Parrot," says Bechstein, writing towards the close of the last century, "distinguished by its silvery grey colour, is about the size of the turtle-dove. Its ruffling the feathers of its head, particularly on the cheeks, added to the smallness and peculiar way in which it holds its bill, which is always buried in its breast, gives it somewhat the appearance of a small screech owl. It is very mild, speaks but little, and even seems to be of a melancholy turn. Its call is loud and sonorous. It is the same species which is mentioned in the travels of Bougainville, by Pernetty. 'We found it,' says he, 'at Montevideo, where our sailors bought several at two piastres a-piece. These birds were very tame and harmless; they soon learnt to speak, and became so fond of the men that they were never easy when away from them.' The general opinion is that they will not live more than a year and a half if kept in a cage, but this prejudice is entirely unfounded." Commenting on the foregoing extract from the pages of the Father of bird-lore, it is only necessary to observe that these birds are still comparatively cheap, the price varying from five shillings to seven shillings and sixpence a pair; although occasionally they can be purchased for even a smaller sum than that first mentioned. The reason of this is, that they are not particularly handsome, as a glance at the illustration will shew; that they are common in their native country and frequently imported, sometimes

in large numbers; nor are they favourites with those amateurs who have made their acquaintance on account of their noisy habits.

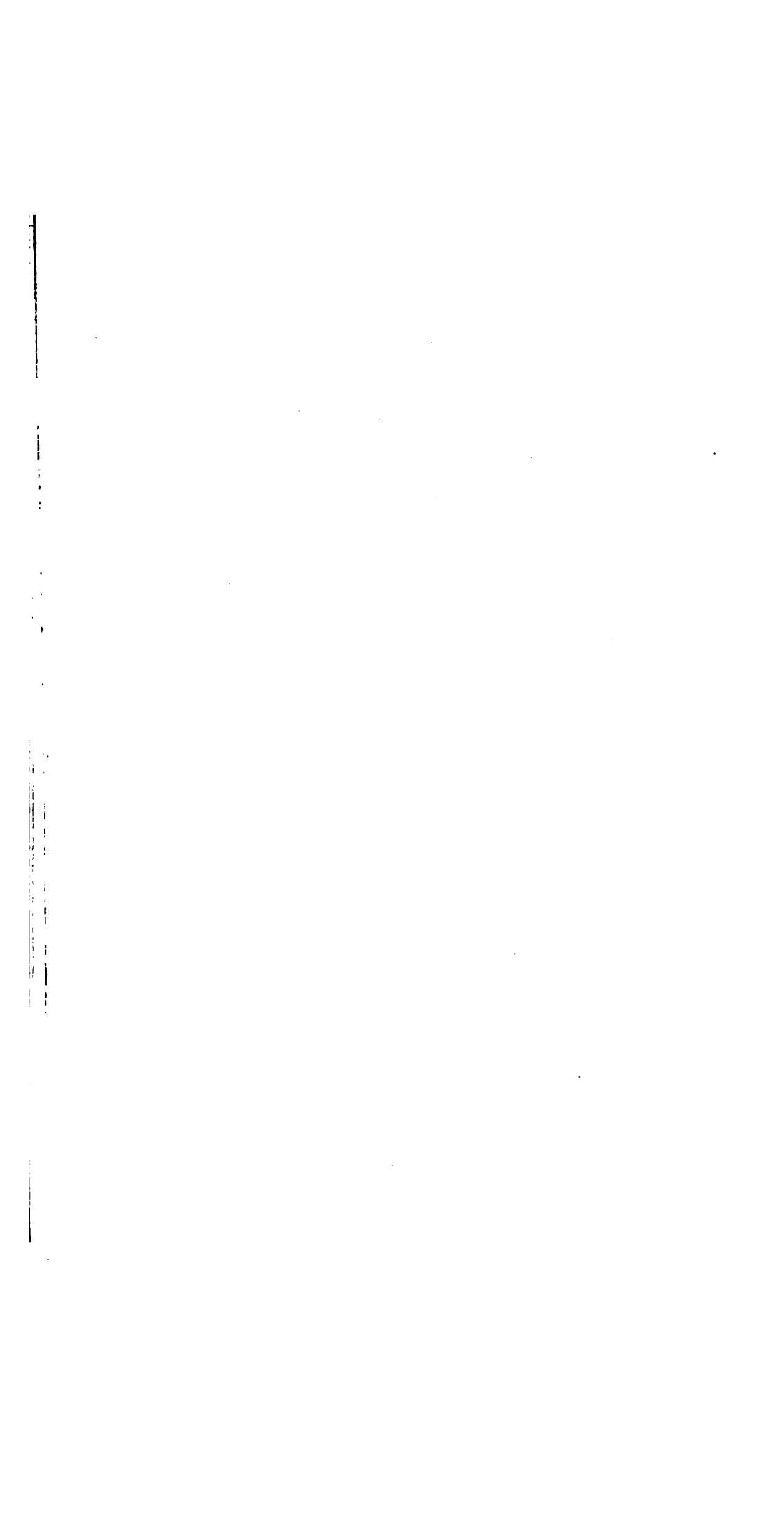
From all we have said, however, it will be gathered that could their disposition to screech be overcome, their tameness and capacity for learning to speak would soon endear them to their owners, and make other connoisseurs desirous of obtaining them; but in any case the curious nest-building propensities, and the great hardiness of these Parrakeets, are surely enough to recommend them to more favourable notice than has been accorded them of late; for there is much truth in the homely adage "Give a dog a bad name, and hang it!" as well as in the converse proposition. The Quaker Parrakeets are seldom praised by the dealers, and consequently, notwithstanding their numerous good qualities, are not very often inquired after by connoisseurs.

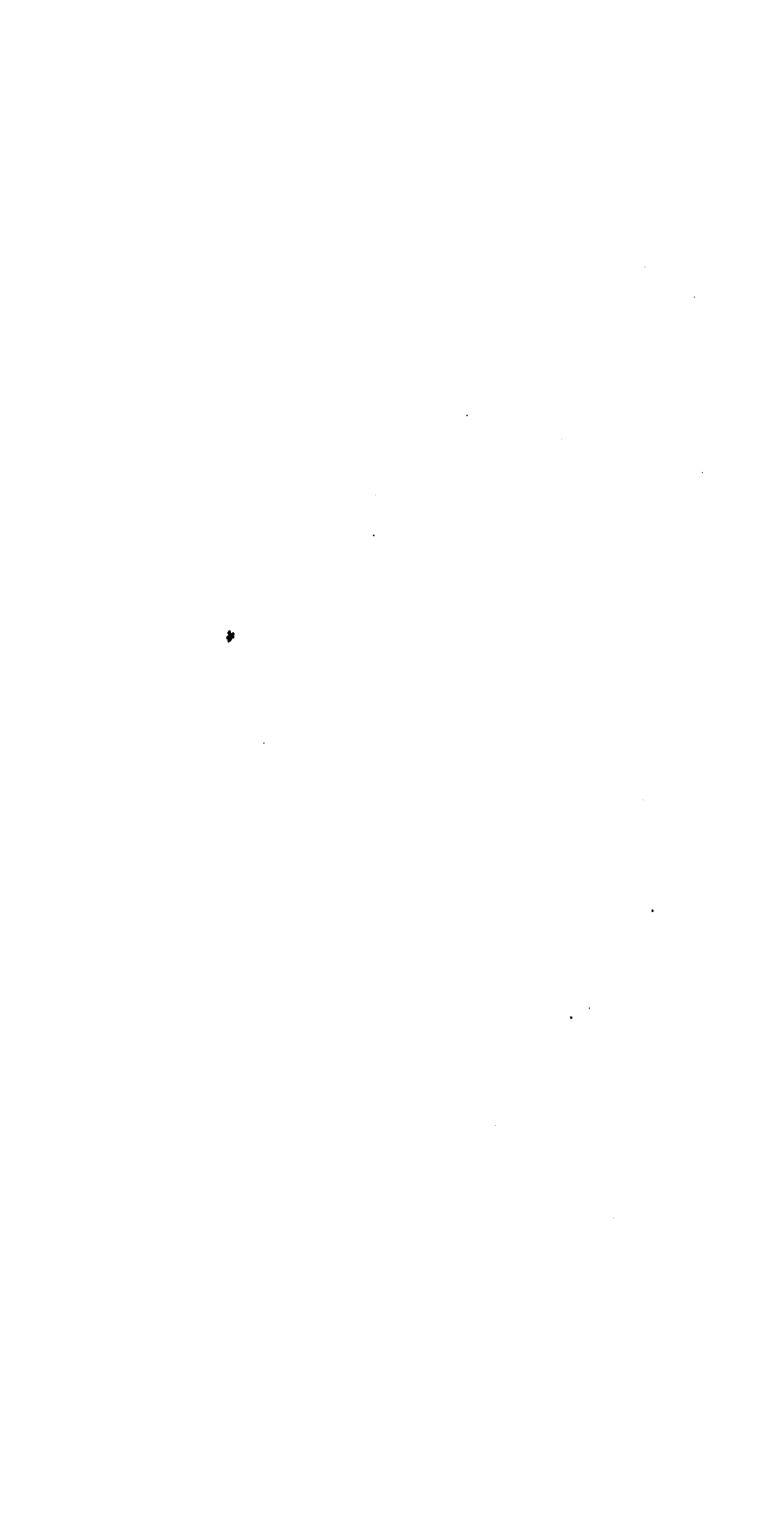
Our esteemed correspondent Mrs. Cassirer pleasantly accounts in the following manner for the deviation from the habits of the race, in the matter of nest building, of the Quaker or Grey-breasted Parrakeet:—"I, though a Parrot, find that as I live in bogs and marshes, the trunks of trees and branches are apt to be damp, and my young to be drowned by a sudden rising of the waters, therefore I will build on trees, and since I am good tempered and sociable, I will join my sisters for our common protection from enemies; and since I do not want to climb, I will carry up sticks in my beak, and I will line my nest with soft grass for health."

Well, that is very prettily put, and may be the true solution of the puzzle; indeed, we will go further, and say that probably it is: but so far our Quakers have not used any lining for their nest, though we have placed hay and fibre at their disposal; but may be they do not consider their edifice complete, though they sleep in it every night.

Mrs. C. Buxton writes, "You will be interested to know that, two years ago, our 'Monte Videan Parrakeets' built a nest on the top of a slender tall fir, and brought up a brood of four. We lost all but three. Next year two of them brought up a brood of five in the same nest; but we lost all these. They stray and do not return. This year we got four more from Jamrach. They were happily domesticated, and began collecting sticks for a nest, taking no notice of the old one. Then one killed itself against the windows, and two have disappeared, and now we have only one left."

The nest figured is drawn from one made in our own aviary.







YELLOW-NAPED PARRAKEET



YELLOW-NAPED PARRAKEET.

Psittacus semitorquatus.

SYNONYMS: *Platycercus semitorquatus*, GLD.;

aius semitorquatus, BP.; *Conurus cæruleo-barbatus*, BRJ.

AN: *Der Bandsittich, oder Der Plattschweissittich mit gelbem Halsband und rother Stirnbinde*, RUSS.

FRENCH: *Perruche Bulla Bulla*,(?) ou *Perruche à Collier Jaune.*

THE French designation of this handsome and most desirable Parrakeet is manifestly given to it in error, by M. Alf. Rousse, for Bulla Bulla is the name by which Barnard's Parrakeet is usually known to dealers, and to the Colonists of South Australia and New South Wales; where it is found. A great deal of confusion however exists with regard to these three birds, Barnard's, Bauer's, and the Yellow-naped Parrakeet, which have frequently been confounded with each other, even by scientific writers. The late John Gould, F.R.S., however is an authority, whose decision upon any matter connected with Australian ornithology is not likely to be called in question, and he distinctly differentiates them; and, in our opinion, has thoroughly made out his case, and established them as constituting a distinct group among the *Platycerci*.

The subject of the present notice is a considerably larger bird than either Barnard's or Bauer's Parrakeets, approaching Pennant's Broad-tail in size; and presents some very curious contrasts of colour and configuration. It is entirely destitute of *os furcatum*, and is consequently limited as regards its power of flight, but on the other hand, it runs very swiftly on the ground, and only makes use of its wings when closely pursued. It feeds chiefly on the seeds of the indigenous grasses, and not on the fruit and buds of the native trees, like some of its congeners; which may be the cause or the consequence of the anatomical deficiency above alluded to, as the reader pleases.

It is a handsome bird. The forehead is crossed by a narrow crimson band; the head is blackish brown, changing gradually into blue on the cheeks; a band of bright yellow encircles the back of the neck; the upper surface generally is of a deep grass green colour, which becomes paler towards the shoulders; the primaries and spurious wing feathers are blackish brown, but the external web of each feather is deep blue; the two central feathers of the tail are very deep grass green, but the next pair on either side passing to blue, and are terminated by bluish white tips; the rest of the tail feathers are green at the base passing into blue, and ending with white; the chest is dark green, and the rest of the under surface is a paler shade of the same colour; the irides are dark brown; the bill horn colour; and the legs and feet dark brown.

The Yellow-naped Parrakeet is a native of Western Australia, where Gould found it very abundant in the vicinity of Swan River. It is hardy, and frequently caged by the Colonists, who call it the "Twenty-eight" Parrot, from the fancied resemblance of the last two syllables of its call note to those words. Although essentially a ground bird, it breeds in the hollow limbs of trees, making no nest, but laying its seven or nine white eggs on the semi-decayed wood. There are generally two broods in the season, which extends from October to January.

It has not so far distinguished itself very prominently as a talker, but it has a melodious voice, for a Parrakeet, and learns to whistle an air with facility and correctness. Being of a gentle but withal not timid nature, it soon becomes very familiar, not only with the person who feeds it, but with the other inmates of the house; whom it usually recognises by a repetition of its peculiar cry.

There is very little outward difference between the sexes; but the adult female is decidedly smaller than her mate, and the colours of her plumage are duller.

The young resemble their parents from the first, but are considerably smaller than them, when they leave the nest.

M. Alfred Rousse, of Fontenay-le-Comte, to whose valuable work on *L' aviculture des Perruches*, we have referred more than once, says of this species: "Cette perruche est très robuste, et s'est déjà reproduite en volière" (this Parrakeet is very hardy, and has already bred in captivity), which should be an encouragement to other amateurs to "go and do likewise"; that is to say, to buy a pair of Yellow-naped, turn them out into a commodious aviary, and in due course, enjoy the pleasure of seeing half a dozen or more young Parrakeets join their parents on the perches, or branches in the enclosure.

Dealers are not to be depended upon as a rule in the matter of names, and appear to be considerably "mixed" with regard to these

birds, which even Dr. Russ is not quite certain about, for he gives the name of "Boa Perikit" both to this species and to Bauer's Parrakeet, and in one place credits the latter with possessing a red frontlet, (*Die fremdländischen Stubenvögel*, page 142); he also gives the length of *Semitorquatus* at 35 centimetres, and that of Bauer's Parrakeet at from 35 to 37 centimetres, which latter measurement, 14½ inches, is nearer that of the Yellow-collared than of Bauer's or the Port Lincoln Parrakeet, from which it is readily distinguished by its larger size, crimson frontlet, and the absence of the golden yellow central abdominal belt; which is so conspicuous a feature in the colouring of the latter bird.

In captivity the subject of the present notice is fed on canary seed chiefly, though it will also eat oats, sunflower seeds, hemp and flat maize. It appears to be fond of sugar, but this no doubt is an acquired taste, and should only be cautiously permitted at long intervals; as a bird under our observation for some time, has on several occasions suffered from genuine bilious attacks, owing to such indulgence. A morsel of apple or carrot every now and then is unobjectionable, as is likewise a piece of boiled potato; but monkey-nuts are to be avoided as apt to induce diarrhoea. Mignonette in flower is greedily devoured, and we have never remarked any ill effect from its use. Groundsel too, if not rank, is good for a change, and care must always be taken to have a decayed log of wood for the bird to peck at; and plenty of rather coarse gravel containing broken flints.

Water, we need scarcely observe, is indispensable for drinking as well as bathing.

It is a pity these extremely interesting Parrakeets should be so seldom imported, and consequently maintain the high price they do, that is from £3 to £4 a pair, or even more. Latterly, however, they have been of more frequent occurrence, but the demand for them not having proportionately increased in consequence of so little being known about them by the public, they have not found the sale that their undoubted merits as cage and aviary birds entitles them to; for we know of few more desirable Parrakeets. One drawback they have however, which we are reluctantly compelled to mention. Placed in the company of other Parrakeets, or even other birds, say of the Finch kind, they are apt to bite, and that severely, the legs and feet of their companions; and, at least, in one instance, a nest of young Java Sparrows was interfered with, and plucked nearly bare; apparently for mischief's sake only.

In the house, however, as cage birds there are few that surpass the Yellow-naped Parrakeet, which is intelligent, beautiful, hardy, and

docile; learns in some cases to talk a little, but in all to whistle, dance, and feed from the hand or mouth. A pair will caress each other incessantly, and under favourable conditions, nest and carefully bring up their young, which so far do not appear to suffer the least deterioration from in-breeding during several generations. It would nevertheless be desirable not to push the experiment too far.





CANARY-WINGED CONURE.

CANARY-WINGED PARRAKEET.

Psittacus xanhopterus.

SYNONYMS: *Conurus xanhopterus*, BEMST., SCL.;

Conurus xanhopterygius, BRJ.; *Aratinga xanhopterus*, SPX.;

Psittaculus xanhopterygius, BR.;

Sittace xanhopterus, WGL.; *Psittacula xanhopterygia*, GR.; *Tirica*

xanhopterus, BP.; *Protogerys xanhoptera*, FNSCH.

GERMAN: *Der Gelbfügelsittich, oder Der Kanarienfügelsittich.*

FRENCH: *Perruche xanhoptere.*

“NOT one of the rarest objects in the Bird-market”, writes Dr. Russ, “but nevertheless, no great favourite with Fanciers and Breeders”; a statement which the doctor proceeds to qualify by the assertion, that the breeding of this little Parrot in confinement is desirable, in order to the clearing up of certain points connected with its development; which however he does not specify.

It is decidedly a pretty bird, as a glance at the accompanying plate will show, of a dark grass green colour above, lighter beneath; and marked across the wings with a narrow yellow band; whence its common English name of Canary-wing, or Canary-winged Parrakeet. It is a native of the northern parts of South America, where it is of sufficiently common occurrence, and is frequently caged, for it learns to speak fairly well; and, if brought up from the nest, becomes very tame and gentle, but never loses its natural note; which Herr Max Eichler describes as “recht unangenehm”, an expression that may be freely rendered, “quite too utterly awful”! and this is unfortunately true, and would altogether unfit the bird for cage-life, but for the fact that this “exceedingly disagreeable” shriek (Geschrei) is not very frequently uttered—only, in fact, when the bird is frightened, or in want of something; while its many funny little ways endear it to the amateur who has it in possession.

Dr. Luchs, who considers its cry as "by no means harsh or disagreeable," relates that a bird of this species which he keeps in an open cage, has become very tame and gentle with him, though still distrustful of strangers; in whose presence it is always shy. At breakfast the bird comes from its cage, climbs up the window curtain, crosses two cages and comes down the curtain on the opposite side to the sofa; whence it makes its way to the table, where he is in the habit of feeding it with sugar, toast, etc. If the doctor does not immediately notice it, the little Parrakeet pecks his finger, looking at the same time appealingly up into his face. When its appetite is satisfied it returns by the same difficult route to its abode.

Dr. Luchs is in the habit of giving two or three mealworms a day to his Canary-wing, which has learned to ask for them, when it thinks the time has come for the treat it has grown to look for. "Paperle", it cries, "Paperle, ein Mehlwurm", (Little Polly, little Polly, a mealworm,) and other individuals of the species have displayed even greater capacity for the acquisition of articulate speech.

So far there is no recorded instance of the Canary-wing having bred in captivity, but as new species are yearly being found to nest in various aviaries, it is possible that it may have done so without the fact being deemed of sufficient importance to merit a notice being sent to those papers which devote a part, or the whole, of their space to bird matters.

There is scarcely any perceptible outward difference between the sexes. "I often thought that two of these birds which I possessed were a real pair, for though the plumage was alike, one was decidedly larger than the other, and that they would end by having a brood; but my expectations came to nothing, for I always found the nest-box empty, even after they had made the greatest fuss in it, and had stayed inside for an hour at a time. Possibly they might breed if they had a free flight in the aviary; but they are so mischievously disposed and aggressive towards even the largest Parrakeets when they have their liberty, that I am obliged to keep them confined. They always combine together to attack an adversary, one waiting for the assistance of the other."—Thus Dr. Russ. We have not found them worse in this respect than the other Conures, few of which can be kept in a mixed aviary without disastrous results to the rest of the inmates; whether large or small.

To sum up: the Canary-wing is a pretty and engaging little bird, about the size of a thrush; it is decidedly intelligent, and has proved itself capable of being perfectly tamed, and of learning to speak a few words; on the other hand it has a very disagreeable screech,

which, however, is seldom uttered without provocation. It is mischievous and quarrelsome with its fellow captives, and has not so far been reared in confinement. Having thus stated impartially its good and bad qualities, it is for the amateur who reads these lines to decide whether the bird is, or is not, a suitable or desirable acquisition for his aviary.

GOLDEN, OR
 QUEEN OF BAVARIA'S PARROT.

Psittacus luteus.

SYNONYMS: *Psittacus gouaruba*, GML.; *Aratinga Carolinae Augustæ*, SPX.; *Sittace lutea*, WGL.; *Conurus luteus*, GR.; *Psittacara gouaruba*, BE.; *Heliospitta guarouba*, BP.; *Psittaca lutea*, BSS.

FRENCH: *La Perruche dorée, ou guarouba jaune*, BFFN.

GERMAN: *Der Goldsittich*, RSS.; *Gelber Keilschwanzsittich*, FNSCH.

FOR wealth of colour and elegance of shape, as well as for general intelligence and docility, the Parrots are scarcely to be surpassed by any of the feathered tribes. From pure white to the deepest shade of black, from scarlet and vermilion to the richest golden yellow, from purple to sky-blue, and from dark grass green to the palest of emerald tints; these and every combination of them are the hues that decorate the plumage of the *Psittacidae*, among which there is perhaps no more striking looking creature than the subject of the present notice; a native of Northern Brazil, where amidst the rich tropical vegetation, decked with myriads of blooms of the brightest and most varied hues, it seems more like an animated blossom than a bird, as it darts on strong unerring pinion through

"Some sylvan scene,
 Where the long drooping boughs between,
 Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
 Alternate come and go,"

and impart fresh beauties to its form, by revealing each instant new gradations of colour, that would have been lost to the spectator, who had merely seen the Golden Parrot sitting motionless upon a tree, whether in sun or shade.

But after all "handsome is that handsome does," the Golden Conure, or Parrot, is not gifted with a melodious voice, but is, on the contrary, master of one of the most piercing shrieks that can distress a sensitive ear, and, worst fault of all, it will not learn to imitate the human voice, let its fair owner charm it never so wisely with sweet sounds; but on the other hand it becomes very tame in captivity, and is possessed of the most endearing ways; it will climb on to the shoulder of its owner with winning confidence, and coo pleasantly in her ear, which it will gently kiss with its pinky white and rather large bill; nor unless excessively provoked, will it dream of using the latter upon even its most aggravating tormentor or relentless foe.

Bright citron yellow is the general colour of the adult bird, but as in the case of the Hawk-headed Parrot and some others, the plumage appears to assume different shades according to the relative position of the spectator and the Parrot with regard to the light, as well as to the brilliancy or deficiency of the latter. In our gloomy English climate, for instance, the Golden Conure does not show to the same advantage as in its own country, where the sunlight has a warmth and intensity of which the dweller in these islands can form no adequate conception; but still in spite of all our climatic drawbacks, it is a bird to be remembered when seen, and when possessed "a thing of beauty and a joy," therefore "for ever."

Rich golden yellow, citron yellow, orange even, according to the light that plays upon it, and the position of the beholder, is, as we have said, the general colour of this remarkable and very rare bird, but the flight feathers of the wings are dark grass green, forming a curious and by no means unpleasing contrast to the rest of the plumage. The eyes are orange yellow with a shade of brown, and the legs and feet a pinky flesh colour.

Known to naturalists for a long time, it was accurately described by Buffon, with whom it does not appear to have been a favourite, for he says: "It does not learn to speak (which is correct,) it is melancholy and misanthropical," which is surely a libel upon an attractive and most engaging bird, and must have been the result of his observations upon an ailing specimen of the race. "At the same time," he admits, "its beautiful plumage is a recommendation in its favour, and it is very easily tamed," a gracious admission which we can entirely endorse.

The Golden Parrot is not of very common occurrence in its native country. Wallace met with it but seldom, and then only when the rice crops were about to be harvested, and on one occasion only did he encounter a small party of five, which were probably the parents

and their young ones of the year. Burmester never saw it, and Natterer and Spix but once or twice.

There is no appreciable difference in outward appearance between the sexes, but the young are said to be more or less spotted with green, especially on the back and wing coverts.

That these beautiful birds are eminently hardy may be gathered from the fact, that one of them has survived since 1871 in the Parrot House of the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park, where it is fed on maize, hemp, and boiled rice, and appears to be in as good health as it certainly is in condition, and attracts the notice of visitors, not only by its handsome appearance, but by its grotesque movements and loud and shrill outcries.

Notwithstanding this latter decided drawback we are of opinion that the Golden Parrot is as worthy as any other member of the family, of occupying a prominent position in the collection of every amateur, who may be fortunate enough to secure a specimen; and should the opportunity present itself in our case we should not for a moment consider the bird's notes as a reason for rejecting it, but gladly put up with its voice for the sake of the beautiful creature from whose throat it proceeds. Suppose it does not learn to speak: what then? Many people keep peacocks, which are not a whit more clever, and have a decidedly more disagreeable note.

This bird is classed with the Conures, but erroneously so we think, for it differs from them not only in size, but in the formation of the beak and tail, in which it approaches more nearly to the Hawk-heads, which it further resembles by the elongated nuchal feathers, which it also has the power of ruffling up to a certain extent, though not in such a remarkable manner as the latter birds, but more after the fashion of the Grey-breasted Parrakeet.

These birds are, as we have said, rare, but in addition to the London Zoological Gardens, those of Berlin and Antwerp possess examples, and others are to be met with in the aviaries of a few fortunate amateurs, among whom Dr. Russ mentions the Prince Ferdinand of Saxe Coburg Gotha.

Considering its extremely rare occurrence in European countries, no price can be fixed for the Golden Parrot, which will fetch whatever a fortunate importer may be able to obtain from an admiring connoisseur, but one of these birds would certainly not be dear at, say, five-and-twenty pounds sterling, and would probably bring more.

To sum up, giving the non-attractive qualities first: the Golden Parrot does not learn to speak, and screams shrilly at times. On the other hand, it is very hardy, as are most Brazilian birds, very hand-

some, very gentle, very tame, very droll in its movements, and very affectionate with those it is well acquainted with, while even with complete strangers it maintains rather a watchful than a defiant attitude, and if treated kindly very soon becomes familiar.

It is fond of wood cutting, and feeds on maize, rice, hemp seed, fruit, and biscuits.

Considering the scarcity of these birds in their native country, the infrequency of their importation into Europe, and their consequent high price; it is not surprising that no attempt at breeding them has been made, much less that no successful rearing of a brood of Golden Parrots has been recorded, either in the Transactions of Zoological Societies, or in the volumes of those journals which devote the whole or a portion of their space to bird matters; and yet it should not be difficult to induce a bird that is hardy and docile to perpetuate its species in captivity, which so many of the *Psittacidae* are anxious to do, and accomplish successfully when in harmony with their surroundings, which, unfortunately, is not very often the case.

The bird from which the plate was taken, and which we have had under observation for some time, shows every inclination to pair, if only it could find a mate. Should we succeed in getting it one, and a brood be the result, we shall take care to let the interesting fact be known.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of Conurus luteus.

I HAVE not much to say about this bird, because it is one that I have not yet had, but am always trying to get; but I have seen enough of it to wish to make me get one. Here let me make a digression to complain of the perverse fate which causes all the most unlikely people in the world to have Parrots sent or given to them, but which always turns that particular stream of benevolence away from me, who have loved Parrots from the time I was a boy.

However, to return to our Conure. The first Golden Conure I ever saw was at the Zoological Gardens. I was struck with the beauty of the bird, and its charming tameness. You might do anything with it; swing it by the beak or one leg, or it would lie on its back in your hand. They are said to be excellent talkers. Later on, I saw two more at the Gardens. These were young birds, and as far as I recollect *entirely* green, instead of, as in the old birds, a bright canary yellow. Even in the old birds the flight feathers are green.

Of course as they are not brought over very often, they command a good price, and one would have to pay some £5 for a bird. They are natives of Brazil.

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11



GOLDEN, OR QUEEN OF BAVARIA'S PARROT.



TRI-COLOURED OR BLACK-CAPPED LORY.



TRI-COLOURED
OR BLACK-CAPPED LORY.

Psittacus Lori, vel Lory.

SYNONYMS: *Psittacus atricapillus*, GML.; *P. exquisitus Ileri dictus*, SB.;

Ara moluccensis varia, BP.; *Lorius tricolor*, GR.;

Lorius Philippensis, BRS.; *Domicella Lory*, WGL.

GERMAN: *Der Frauenlori*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Perruche Lori des Dames*, BFFN.

THIS exquisite bird, also called the Black-capped and Philippine Lory, has long been known to naturalists, and prized by amateurs. It was described by Edwards in 1751, and ten years later by Linnæus, while Bechstein, towards the close of the eighteenth century, gave it a place in his *Natural History of Cage Birds*, in which he speaks of it in the following terms:—"The Black-capped Lory is still more scarce in Europe than the preceding (the Purple-capped Lory, *P. domicella*), therefore it is dearer, but appears to possess all its good qualities," which, our readers may recollect, are not a few; as duly recorded in our account of the latter bird in our first volume.

The subject of the present notice is a native of the northern parts of New Guinea and the adjacent islands, where it subsists for the most part on the nectar of the myriad flowers that make for the botanist an earthly Paradise of that mysterious region, and for which boiled rice, well sweetened with Demarara sugar, forms but an indifferent substitute, so that one is not surprised to find that its life in captivity is not a very long one, however merry it may seem to be; and certainly few birds appear to take such genuine pleasure in being noticed and made much of by their master or mistress as the Black-capped Lory, for it rivals the Hawk-headed Parrots in this respect; which is speaking volumes for its amiability and general good character.

True, it screams now and then, like all the Lories, indeed like all the *Psittaculæ*, but its cries are not harsh, and by no means unbearable: on the contrary, to the writer at all events, there is something fascinating, not to say soothing, in the notes of this most charming bird; which on account of its rarity in the market commands a high price, £4 or £5 per head, according to its condition when received by the dealers.

The Tri-coloured Lories that are now and then offered for sale in this country have, it must not be forgotten, been taken from the nest when young, and educated carefully by their captors, who are usually endowed with a large stock of patience; they are consequently, as the Germans say, "finger-tame," and make the most charming pets imaginable. How a specimen captured when full-grown would comport itself in confinement we cannot say, not having had the advantage, or disadvantage, of observing one under such conditions; but we venture to think it would not be difficult to tame, though perhaps it might not prove to be quite as teachable as another that had been taken in hand and trained from the nest.

Dr. Russ, on the authority of Seba, relates that a Dutchman bought one of these Lories from a native in Amboina for 500 guelders, which taking into consideration the beauty and charming disposition of the bird, was not, he thought, too high a price to pay for it; it spoke a number of words distinctly, and that in several languages; would wish him "good morning", and sing a song. So attached was this bird to his master (whether the Dutchman or the native is not stated) that it died of grief when separated from him.

Edwards highly praises a bird of this description, which spoke quite distinctly a number of words, and would jump nimbly from its perch on to his finger, calling out in a soft, clear voice, "Lory! Lory!" It would play with his hand, swing too and fro, and hop as lightly as a sparrow. It did not long survive its arrival in England.

Buffon also, as might be expected from a Frenchman, gives "Le Lori des Dames" an excellent character, comparing its charming disposition with its beautiful coat, and affirming that neither can be excelled by any other member of the family.

Dr. Meyer has at different times possessed a number of these Lories which all spoke distinctly.

On the other hand Finsch credits them with small capacity for learning to speak, which he says they never do with the facility and fluency of other Parrots. The preponderance of the testimony we have been able to collect upon the subject, is decidedly in favour of the Tri-colour as a talking Lory, and not only a talking, but a generally

to be desired member of the family to which he belongs; and we cordially recommend him to the favourable notice of our readers.

The sexes in this species are almost indistinguishable in outward appearance, which is not a matter of importance, unless it be desired to get them to breed; for the females are as intelligent and docile as their mates.

It is a pity this charming bird should have been so frequently confounded with its congener the Purple-cap, for however delightful the latter may be, the present species excels it in every respect. It is curious, too, how the confusion can have arisen, seeing that while there are undoubtedly points of resemblance, there are far more marks of differentiation between the two species; and we can only attribute the mistake to want of personal knowledge in the matter, on the part of those who made it.

However, when one comes to consider what a veritable *terra incognita* New Guinea has for many ages been to the rest of the world, and that even now its varied treasures of animal and vegetable life are but imperfectly known, we should not, perhaps, be hypercritical, for, after all, it is easy to confound together distorted and more or less imperfect skins, that are not improved when exhibited in the form of incorrectly mounted specimens in the glass cases of a museum, and in days gone by the art of the taxidermist was far, very far, from having attained to that degree of perfection we can now witness in the galleries of the South Kensington Museum of Natural History, and the windows of more than one London naturalist, several of whom who may be correctly described, not as bird-stuffers, but as artists in still-life, whose pictures rival, if they do not excel, the efforts of the most celebrated delineators of nature on canvas, or in black and white.

We are not aware of any instance in which these rare and beautiful birds have bred in captivity, or have even produced eggs, as their relatives the Purple-caps occasionally do, even in the case of a solitary female that has been kept for years; but there is little doubt that as the habits of this species are better understood, egg-production at all events will take place some day, and that stage in the process of reproduction reached, there will be every chance of complete success even in our chilly climate; and a brood of young Tri-colours will delight the heart of some fortunate amateur, by making their appearance in his aviary or bird-room, when perhaps he least expects it.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Tri-coloured Lory (Lorius tricolor).

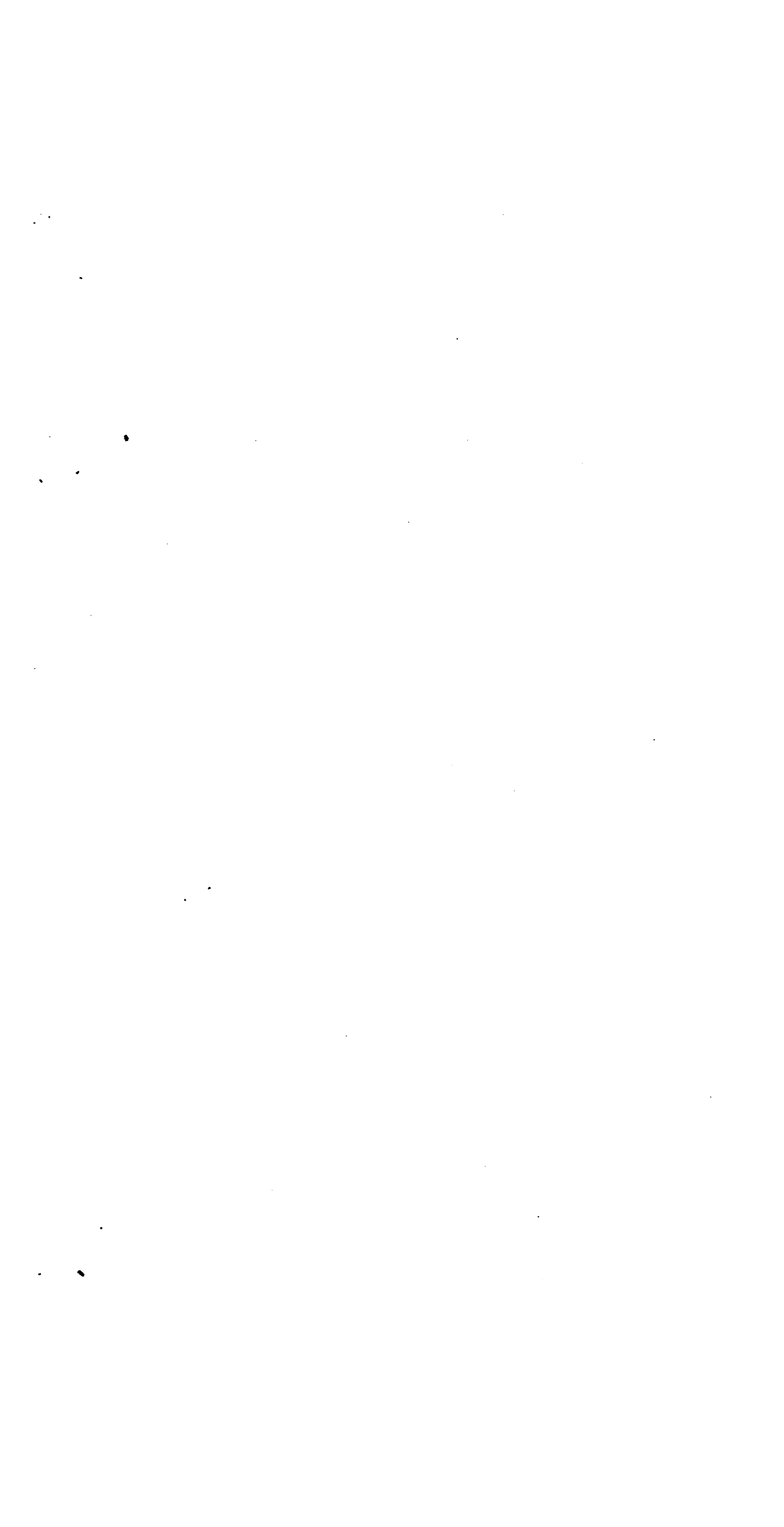
THIS bird, which is called by the French and Germans the Lady Lory, is about the size and shape of the Purple-capped, but differs from it very much in its plumage. It is much more gorgeously coloured. The cap on its head is pure black; the sides of the head and throat and neck are a glowing carmine; the back of the neck and shoulders are violet-blue; the middle of the back, the rump, and upper tail coverts are carmine; the wing feathers are dark green on the outer side and yellow on the inner, with black tips; the tail feathers are red for the first half, but run into violet at the end. Underneath, the bird is of a rich violet blue, passing into a brighter blue round the thighs, and towards the tail. The beak is orange, like the Purple-capped Lorics, the eyes are dark, and the legs and feet are dark. Russ says there are different colours, and different sizes. I have only seen four specimens myself. I did not notice any difference in colour, but one of the four was much smaller than the others. But it is not only the *colour* of this Lory which makes it so much more lovely than the Purple-cap, but a peculiar silky texture of the plumage that gives the bird's plumage an indescribable lustre. As I have said, I have only seen four, and perhaps one must not generalize too hastily, but three out of the four had the most delightfully charming ways. They loved to be played with, and having a much pleasanter note than other Lorics, suggested great possibilities of talking and whistling.

I fancy they are not very long-lived. The drawback to them is that they are not seed-eaters: at least I could not induce the one I kept to have anything to do with seed. But if any one could introduce Tri-colour Lorics on seed, I can conceive of no more charming Parrot for a cage bird. They are very fond of washing. If they are allowed to fly loose they do not wander far. They very seldom come into the market, and so command a higher price than the Purple-cap, for whereas the Purple-cap may sometimes be bought as low as thirty-two shillings, the cheapest Tri-colour ever offered me was £4. But they are such charming birds, that in spite of my dislike to Parrots that want soft food, I can hardly resist buying them when offered.

A word in conclusion as to its name. I cannot understand why we should have christened it the Tri-colour Lory, seeing it has at least six or seven different colours. The French have much more reason in calling the Ceram Lory, *Lori tri-colore*, for that really has only three colours. By far the best name is Bechstein's of the Black-capped Lory, though the French have given that to the Purple-cap.



BLUE-CROWNED OR BLUE-BREASTED, LORY.





BLUE-BREASTED LORY.

Psittacus Indicus.

SYNONYMS: *Psittacus coccineus*, LTH., SHW., RSS.; *P. histrio*, MLL.;

Eos indica, GM., TRANS. Z. S.; *Lorius coccineus*, SCHLG.;

Domicella coccinea, FNSCH.; *Psittaca indica coccinea*, BRSS.

FRENCH: *Perruche Lori à diadème bleue.* GERMAN: *Der Blaubrüstige Breitschwanzlori*, RSS.

WHY this beautiful species should have been selected as the recipient of the specific name *Indicus*, or *Indica*, is one of those mysteries connected with the science of ornithology it is impossible to understand, for it is a native of the Moluccas; and moreover the same specific appellation had already been bestowed on the Ceylonese Hanging Parrakeet, by Kuhl.

The general colour is carmine, but there are several blue lines round the eyes, and on the sides of the neck; the breast is blue, and the saddle a somewhat darker shade of the same colour; the wings are red, with black and violet markings, especially on the shoulders; the tail is bright red, marked and spotted with deep purple and blue on the upper side, on the lower it is altogether red; and the vent is blue.

There is very little difference in the outward appearance of the sexes; seen together, the female is perhaps a very little the smaller of the two, and the colours of her plumage a trifle fainter; but these differences are not sufficiently marked to enable one to tell whether a given specimen belongs to the male, or to the female gender. The male is usually the more demonstrative and noisy, and also learns to repeat words and short phrases more distinctly than his mate; which, however, is not greatly deficient in these respects, and here again the intellectual differences are insufficient to enable one to form a decided opinion.

A pair, or perhaps, to speak more correctly, a couple, of these beautiful

birds were added to the already rich collection of the London Zoological Society in May, 1871, and a third individual in June of the following year, but did not survive their importation very long, which is the more to be regretted that they showed themselves to be possessed of many desirable qualities, during the brief period in which they graced the Parrot House by their presence.

Dr. Meyer relates that in their native islands these Lories have always been held in great esteem as cage pets; a reputation which, he says, they deserve, "for they are never dull and sulky, like the Cockatoos, but lively, active, charming, and loveable"; and in another place he says, "they learn to speak, but never as well as the Cockatoos and *Electi (Edelpapageien)*."

Herr Scheuba, on the contrary, says that they are very quiet and silent, and adds that they are very timid and easily frightened.

Although these accounts of the same bird exactly contradict each other, there is no doubt they are both taken from life; from which we may conclude that the Blue-breasted Lories, like other creatures, differ immensely in disposition, and that it is unsafe to generalize from an individual, or even from two or three.

The single specimen of this species which we have had under observation was certainly far from evincing timidity, even at the sight of a stranger, but was, on the contrary, inquisitive and forward; greeting a new comer with a series of shrill outcries, as it clung to the side of its cage which was nearest to the intruder. This bird was extremely tame, and would take food, a piece of fig, or a grape, from anyone's fingers. It was fed on rice boiled and well sweetened, also bread and milk and ripe fruit. It never seemed to ail anything; yet one morning was found dead in its cage, apparently without any cause. A post-mortem examination, however, would probably have showed that a blood-vessel had given way in the brain; in consequence, no doubt, of the bird straining to relieve itself, the rice having doubtless proved to be indigestible.

Needless to remark that in their native woods these beautiful Lories, which derive their English name from a broad band of blue that extends across the breast, live principally upon the nectar of the flowers that are to be found there in such profusion, pretty well all the year round; and for which even ripe sweet fruit, figs, and especially boiled rice, form a poor substitute.

Whether it is possible to devise a better dietary, and so keep the Blue-breasted Lory in health for a more prolonged period than can at present be accomplished, or whether to allow it to range its native woods in peace, and live on the food nature has so abundantly pro-

vided for it there, are questions we must leave the intending purchaser of one of these birds to decide for himself; for even the fact of a Lory having been imported does not entirely exculpate the buyer from complicity in its premature death. If there were no demand for these birds, the dealers would soon cease to bring them over, for they are costly, and £4 or £5 too much to be risked on a chance.

Considering the rarity of these Lories in Europe, it is not surprising that no attempts have so far been made to breed them in captivity, nor is it likely, considering the brief tenure of life they appear to possess when brought among us, that success in this direction will ever be attained, at least in England. In the sunny south of France, or Italy, it is possible the birds might live, and even increase and multiply; while at the Cape, or in Australia, they would probably, in a suitably constructed aviary, "turn their thoughts to love," and a continuation of the species.

As they are mostly reared from the nest by the natives of the Moluccas, they are usually very tame when passed over to the dealers' agents; but unfortunately the greater number die on the voyage to Europe, and it is only the very few, blessed with exceptionally fine constitutions, that survive the change of climate and of food; but the very fact that some so survive, gives the dealers encouragement to persevere with their importation.

In a few instances the captive Blue-breasted Lory has been induced to eat seed, hemp, spray millet, or canary seed, and an individual of the species, in the possession of Herr Director Scheuba, partook freely of the first, to which it helped itself "regularly at eleven o'clock at night, although the room was in total darkness."

This habit, that is of taking food in the night, always indicates one of two things, either the bird is insufficiently fed, whether in regard to quantity or quality, or it is suffering from indigestion. If from the first cause, a more liberal dietary will soon cause it to abandon a custom that is not only unnatural, but very prejudicial to the bird's health; but if it is suffering from indigestion, the case becomes more serious, and must be treated on its merits; for the causes of the malady are so diverse, that no fixed rule for treatment can be laid down.

Concerning one of these birds, Dr. Meyer writes: "For a long time we had a Blue-breasted Lory, that was brought by a friend from Siao. It accompanied us to Corontalo, Makassar, and to Singapore, and afterwards to Manilla, soon after which it died. It was exceedingly tame; was very affectionate towards my wife, and liked to be near her, but was always unfriendly with me"; a differentiation of sex on the part of the bird that we have remarked in more than one instance in several

kinds of Parrots and Cockatoos, the males preferring the society of ladies, and the females of men.

As might be surmised from their scarceness, the price of the Blue-breasted Lories is a high one. £4 or £5 is that demanded by the London dealers; but Dr. Russ gives from sixty-five marks for a single bird, to one hundred and twenty marks for a pair; as the figure at which they can, or could be, obtained in Berlin. In another place he says from ninety to one hundred marks each.

These birds, it is said, differ considerably in size, though as a rule one of them is about as large as the Purple-cap Lory; but Herr Scheuba mentions that he had one that was scarcely half as big. It may, possibly, have been a young one; but as it did not survive very long, this point could not be determined.

Dr. Russ gives the length of an adult specimen at from twenty-six to twenty-seven centimetres, which is a little less than the measurements given by the same author of the Purple-cap, whose length is stated to be from twenty-nine to thirty centimetres, with a length of wing of from fifteen to seventeen centimetres; but the Blue-breast has the longest tail, eleven to twelve centimetres, while that of the Purple-cap is said to be from nine to eleven. Comparing two of these birds, we have found very little difference in point of size, or as regards the length of the tail or wings; and the small-sized birds are most probably immature.

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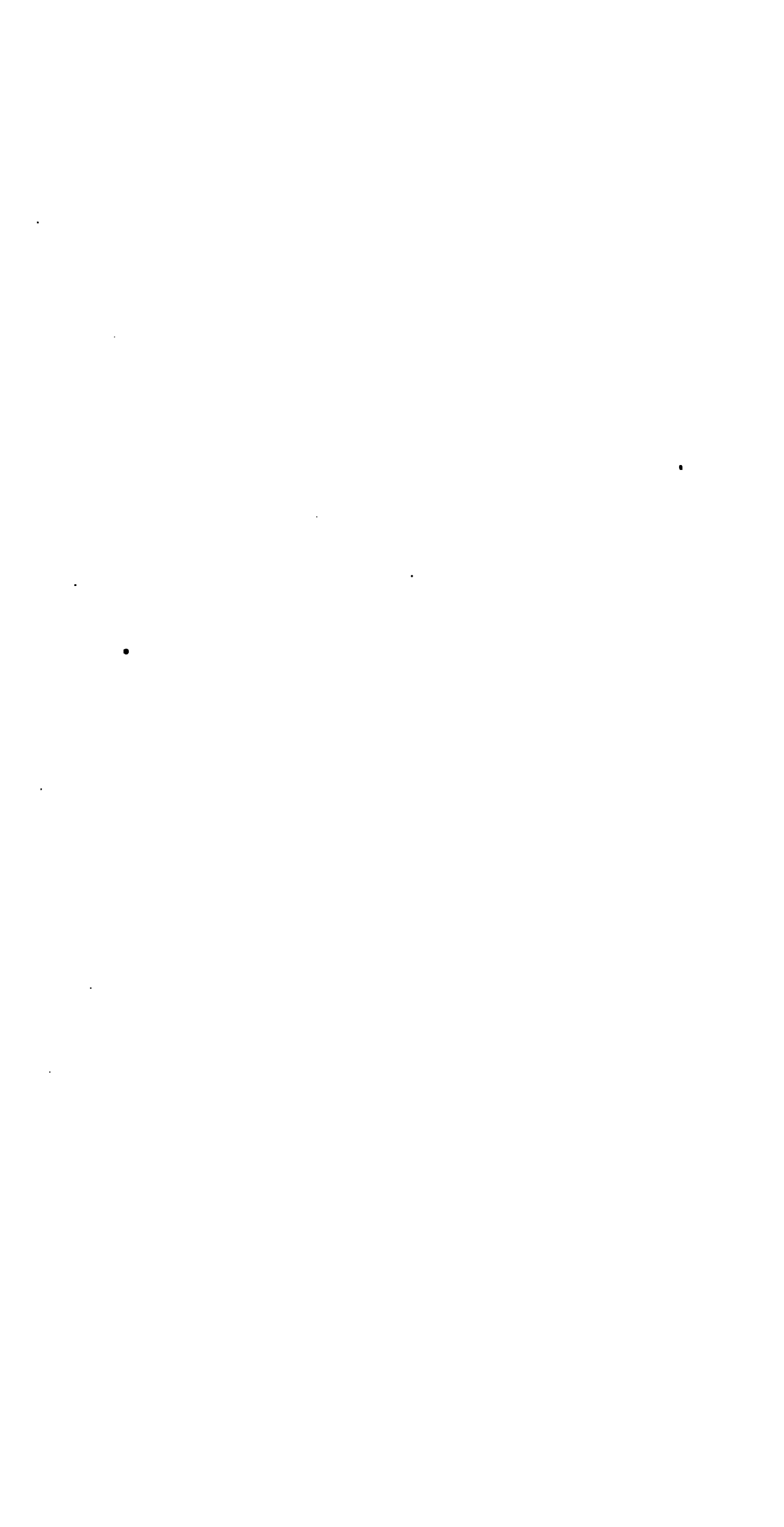
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PETZ'S CONURE.

PETZ'S CONURE.

Psittacus Petzi, AUCTORUM.

SYNONYMS: *Conurus Petzii*, GR., BP., etc.; *Conurus Canicularis*, GR.;

Sittace Petzii, WGL.

FRENCH: *Perruche à front rouge*, BFF., LVL.

GERMAN: *Petz' Keilschwanzsittich*, RSS.

THIS small and unpretending looking Parrakeet, is nevertheless a very nice bird, capable of forming the most devoted attachment to its owner, and of developing no small ability as an imitator of domestic, if not exactly of articulate, sounds; although in the latter respect instances are not wanting in which individuals have attained to a very respectable degree of proficiency in reproducing the sound of the human voice.

It is a good deal smaller than the Half-Moon Parrakeet, measuring about eight and a half inches in length, but bears a general resemblance to it in shape and colour; the frontlet however in Petz's Conure is rather orange red than golden, and is much narrower than in the case of *Conurus Aureus*.

Petz's Conure is a native of the northern part of South America, and was met with by Dr. A. von Frantzius "in large flocks in the Central American State of Costa Rica, not only in close proximity to the town, but flying over the gardens with deafening cries. They are frequently tamed there," he adds, "and easily learn to speak."

"This species has been known to writers on ornithology for a long time, and was described and figured by Edwards, Buffon, Levaillant, and Linnæus, and lastly by Bechstein, with more or less accuracy; but the first correct account we have of it is that given by Wagler in 1832," so writes Dr. Russ, in his work on the *Psittaciden* (Die Papageien, page 267).

It was described as follows by Bechstein under the name of

Psittacus Canicularis:—"This species, which is rather common among us, is ten inches in length, of which the tail measures half, the folded wings covering one third, the forehead is scarlet, the top of the head a fine sky blue, paler at the back; the upper part of the body meadow green, the under lighter. The forehead is orange in the female. This Parrot is handsome, but does not speak. Although a native of South America, it is not very delicate or difficult to preserve."

The English translator of "Die Naturgeschichte der Stubenvögel," names this bird "The Red and Blue-headed Parrakeet," a name which describes it fairly well, as the colours vary in different individuals; being lighter in some and darker in others.

Herr Schlectendal, who kept several of these birds, gives them the best character for amiability with each other, and good-fellowship with cognate species; such as the Tovi and Tirika Conures, and the Jendaya, with which one of his Petz's struck up at first sight a friendship that was only broken by death.

The small Conures generally are not large drinkers, and seldom take water more than two or three times a day; neither are they very large eaters, and should in no wise have soft food given to them. Canary seed should be their staple diet, with a little hemp now and then, but a continuance of the latter seed would make them too fat, and also be apt to induce disease of the liver.

Fruit, ripe and sweet, such as grapes, figs, or a slice of ripe pear may be offered during the season once or twice a week; half decayed wood should also be placed at their disposal, and flints broken up small, which last aid the digestion and should always be supplied.

Nuts, such as Brazil and filberts, or the edible chestnut, may also be occasionally given as a treat; but "monkey" nuts are too oily and sometimes give rise to diarrhœa.

With regard to bathing these Conures differ amazingly, some of them appear to have a positive horror of cold water; while others again are never happy except when splashing themselves from head to foot; but they rarely step into the bath and have a regular good "tub," although I have also seen this done. In their native woods there is no occasion for these birds to wash, for they get quite sufficiently wetted by the dew that clings to the leaves and branches in the early morning, and may then be seen in flocks pluming and drying themselves in the beams of the rising sun.

When a Petz's Conure does learn to repeat a few words it is in a very small voice indeed, and the meaning is not always plain, especially to strangers; but when imagination's aid has been invoked to interpret the semi-articulate sounds, it is surprising what a copious vocabulary

the bird is found to possess: but that is the case with most Parrots as well as Parrakeets, we believe; at least when we have thought more than once that a bird had spoken a certain word, we have been assured by its happy possessor that it had said something quite different. Apart, however, from its linguistic attainments, which vary immensely in different individuals, Petz's Conure is a very desirable little bird, whether kept singly, or in company with one or more of its congeners; for it is hardy, tractable, and pretty.

We seem to have an idea, that this bird has been successfully bred in captivity, but we cannot recollect where or when we saw the account to which we now refer.

The Conures belong to the sub-family *Arinæ*, of which they form a separate genus, *Conurus*, and are very numerous, the London Zoological Society having at different times possessed specimens of no less than twenty-six different species, leaving the list by no means exhausted. Dr. Karl Russ enumerates twenty-nine species, which he describes more or less fully; and others are known to exist, although possibly, as in the case of the Jendaya, the immature birds, and in some cases the females, are called to do duty separately as distinct species; time, however, will clear up these trifling obscurities, and still leave the Conures the most numerous family of the great race to which they belong, numbering, in all probability, some thirty distinct varieties.

The London Zoological Society first became possessed of the subject of our present notice in 1869, when two specimens were purchased; since then other examples have been acquired, by gift or received in exchange, and several are now to be seen in the Parrot House, where they appear to suffer more or less from ennui, a terrible malady to which so many unhappy human beings are also subject; for several of them have fallen into the disastrous habit of plucking the small feathers from the breast; and one has left itself quite bare in that region.

Want of occupation is in the great majority of cases the exciting cause of this disfiguring habit, into which some of the Jendayas have also fallen; and we have advised the placing of pieces of soft wood in the cages, so that the birds may exercise their beaks in a more congenial manner than on their own plumage. Once, however, the habit of feather plucking has been indulged in for any length of time, it is almost hopeless to effect a cure; but if the bird is noticed at the outset, and a log of soft wood, and a handful of small stones are supplied for its amusement, in all probability the self-disfiguring propensity will be abandoned; and the creature which was in danger of becoming a disagreeable-looking object will remain a thing of beauty, and so far, a joy for ever.

The price of these small Conures varies a good deal, but twenty-five to thirty shillings a pair is that usually demanded for newly-imported birds by the London dealers. When acclimatised, and in good feather, they would probably command a higher figure, say forty or forty-five shillings for an undoubted pair, aviary moulted, acclimatised, and in perfect feather and condition. We have occasionally seen them offered for five or six shillings each, but not in good condition; when the amateur, who does not mind a little trouble and waiting, by investing in a couple of pairs, might, after an interval of a few months, sell them again for at least double the amount they cost him.

Such speculations, however, always involve a certain amount of risk, for these poor dilapidated-looking birds not unfrequently die; indeed more often than not, for the hardships and neglect to which they have been subjected from the time of their capture in Central America until their transfer, after a more or less prolonged stay in the close shop of a dealer, to the more considerate care of the connoisseur; have in all probability undermined their constitution, and sown the seeds of incurable disease, to which the poor creatures will sooner or later succumb.

When such a catastrophe has been happily avoided, or averted, these Conures are perfectly hardy, and will endure in captivity on the simplest diet for years; but like all the family to which they belong, they cannot unfortunately be trusted in the company of other Parrakeets, much larger even than themselves, for they are spiteful and quarrelsome, especially in the case of nestlings, as we have more than once discovered to our cost; however, if kept by themselves, for they are eminently gregarious in their habits, they will do very well; and no doubt breed, if any amateur should think it worth his while to give them an opportunity of doing so.



JENDAYA CONURE

JENDAYA CONURE.

Psittacus Jendaya.

SYNONYMS: *Conurus auricapillus*, BRMST.; *Conurus Jendaya*, GR.;
Aratinga chrysocephalus, SPX.; *Arara auricapillus*, LSS.;
Psittacus pyrocephalus, HHN.; *Psittacara auricapillus*, VGRS.;
Sittace Jendaya, WGL.

FRENCH: *Perruche Jendaya.* GERMAN: *Der hyazinthrothe
 Keilschwanzsittich oder Jendayasittich.*

THE Jendaya Parrakeet, or Conure, is a native of the north-eastern parts of South America, where it occurs in such vast numbers as to cause no inconsiderable amount of damage to the growing crops of maize; but in these pages we are chiefly concerned with it as an inmate of the aviary or cage, to which it accommodates itself extremely well; and being possessed of a good constitution can be so thoroughly acclimatised as to pass the most severe of our winters out of doors without inconvenience.

There is a great difference between the old and young birds, and it is certain that the latter, in various stages of their development, have been taken for one or more distinct species; and so described by authors. The only reliable method of clearing up the difficulty would be to breed some Jendayas in captivity, and watch them during their growth from the time they left the nest, until they had finally assumed the adult garb; care being taken to have their portraits correctly painted at each mutation of plumage. Such a record would be invaluable because incontrovertible, and is by no means impossible of attainment, seeing that these Conures, as we have said, are hardy; and though we have no account of their having nested in confinement, it is not unlikely that so desirable a result may be ultimately attained; for a pair we have had under observation for some time incessantly caress each other, and have even paired on several occasions; the same thing has also

been noticed by other aviarists, M. Alfred Rousse, for instance, writes: "Ne doit pas tarder de reproduire, car elle s'accouple souvent."

The following is a description of the adult plumage:—Head and neck bright golden yellow; lores, or spaces between the eyes and the mandibles red; rump red; back and wings green; flight feathers blue; breast reddish yellow; thighs red; tail green and blue; beak black.

The female, which is a trifle smaller than her mate, resembles him in almost every particular; however, she has less red about the lores, and is generally of a duller shade in every part.

The young, according to Finsch, are at first of a dull green colour on the upper surface of the body, the rump feathers only showing red at their edges. Russ, however, describes an immature Jendaya thus: "Upper parts dark grass green; sides and top of the head reddish with a purple shading; forehead and lores dull dark red; rump speckled with dark reddish purple; throat and breast pale olive green, with an edging of dull red to each feather; belly, sides, vent and under wing coverts dark purplish red; thighs green; beak dark grey; eyes black; feet blackish grey.

"In the adult male the eyes are pearl grey, with a narrow red border round the pupil, and the legs and feet are black."

The Jendaya is about the same size as the Half-Moon Conure, that is to say, about a foot long, of which the tail measures about five inches.

The attractive appearance of this Conure is beyond dispute, and if the proverb "handsome is that handsome does" were only applicable in its case, few birds would be more commendable as inmates of the aviary, especially as they soon become very tame and confiding; but unhappily it has a voice, and is possessed with a mania for letting it be heard on every possible occasion, which would not be so very objectionable if its tones were only soft and sweet, but they are painfully shrill and harsh, and soon become distressing even to not very sensitive ears. In an out-door aviary however, this failing of the Jendaya is of comparatively little moment, for there its incessant vociferations only add an item to the universal noise; its shrill cries being indistinguishable in the general din.

It must, however, be said that this bird, as happens with most of its kind, is less noisy when kept in pairs than when confined by itself; the companionship of a fellow, whether male or female, seems to have a soothing effect upon the temper of both; and if they do occasionally yell, as a rule their conversation is carried on in a decidedly minor key; and the "love-song" of the male is really not at all unpleasant for human ears to listen to; then he is so attentive to his mate, combing

her head incessantly, unless when he is feeding her, or asleep, or she is performing the same kind and soothing office for him.

Such an affectionate couple would no doubt make exemplary parents, if they only decided to continue the species, or at least help to do so, in captivity; but so far, with the exception of a pair belonging to a lady, in Vienna, Frau von Proschek, they have not even produced eggs in Europe, and unfortunately those were barren; but no doubt success can be obtained, and will be by-and-by, though few amateurs have the necessary accommodation and appliances for making the experiment with any chance of a satisfactory result.

The Jendaya is not at all fastidious in the matter of its food, but will live and thrive on a diet of canary and hemp seed, with a little boiled maize thrown in for a change sometimes. Of ripe fruit it will also partake occasionally, but care must be exercised in giving it dainties of any kind, which have a tendency to derange the digestive apparatus, and cause the bird to tear out its feathers by the roots, making itself an object pitiable to behold; instead of, as it should be, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

It may not be amiss to repeat here what we have already more than once observed, that Parrots of every kind, should have access to water both for drinking and bathing, whenever the inclination takes them to bathe or drink. Coarse sand, or rather small gravel, is quite as essential to their well-being as water, and soft half decayed wood not only affords a never-ending source of amusement, but is also necessary for preserving most members of the Parrot family in health; for they eat it, and the woody fibre seems to exert a beneficial effect upon their economy.

The Jendaya, like all the other Conures, is extremely fond of whittling, to use an Americanism, and should never be debarred the option of indulging in such an innocent and natural recreation; for, in their wild state, they breed in holes they excavate, or at least arrange, in the decayed trunks or limbs of trees; and probably if a soft log were more often given to them in captivity, the association of ideas thus evoked might lead them to consider that they were not fulfilling their destiny by refusing, or neglecting, to bear their part in the great work of continuing the species, and decide them to set about doing so at once; for we have found that birds which for years had made no attempt to nest, immediately commenced to do so when suitable conditions were found available; that is to say when appropriate nesting material was placed within their reach.

In Dr. Karl Russ's account of this Conure he records the history of a pair that were kept by Herr V. Schlechtendal, who narrates a



ROCK FEPLER PARAKEET.

ROCK PEPLER,
OR BLACK-TAILED PARRAKEET.

Psittacus melanurus.

SYNONYMS: *Polytelis melanura*, GLD.; *Palæornis melanurus*, VGRS.;
Palæornis anthopeplus, GR.; *Platycercus melanurus*, SCHLG.;
Barrabandius melanurus, BP., FNSCH.; *Psittacus sagittifer melanura et*
P. s. anthopeplus, BRJ.

GERMAN: *Der olivengelbe Sittich, oder Der olivengrünlichgelbe*
Plattschweifsittich, Rss. FRENCH: *Perruche mélanure*, ROUSSE.

THIS somewhat soberly-tinted but very charming bird is the Blossom-feathered Parrakeet of Lear, and the Black-tailed Parrakeet of Gould. It is generally known to the dealers and the public by the curious name which we have adopted as its designation in these pages, namely, the Rock Pepler, or Rock Peplar Parrakeet, a compound designation of which we are unacquainted with the etymology, and which we have been unable to trace to its origin.

It is rather a difficult bird to describe, so we shall not attempt to do so in detail, as a glance of the plate will give to the reader a more correct idea of its appearance than a mere verbal description, no matter how elaborate and accurate, could convey. At the same time we may observe that olive of several shades is the prevailing colour of its plumage, in which, however, indigo-blue, crimson, and black find, each, a place.

It is a native of the south and west of Australia, where it is of sufficiently common occurrence; but is not imported into this country as frequently as some of its congeners, which are not possessed of half its merits as a cage bird, for it is perfectly hardy, that is to say, as far as our experience goes; very docile and teachable, and though, save in a few exceptional cases, it does not learn to speak, it is a

to feed itself. Secondly, birds in a cage very often suffer from ennui, or from what our grandmothers used to call "the spleen"; and in their enforced listlessness not unfrequently use their beaks upon themselves, and pluck out or disfigure their own feathers, until they look more like veritable scarecrows than familiar Parrots or Parrakeets. Thirdly, woody fibre is apparently a necessity in the dietary of all the *Psittacidæ*; and though but little of it is actually eaten by them, it serves some useful purpose in their economy, and without it a bird's health will sooner or later suffer.

The Rock Pepler is by no means a noisy bird; still it can and does scream at times, particularly if it has nothing to do; but its cries are not unbearable, for, if a trifle shrill, they are not very loud, and are chiefly uttered before rain. Which, by the bye, they enjoy immensely when so situated that they can spread out their wings and tail to catch the falling drops of a genial summer shower. In their wild state these birds seldom bathe; they have, in fact, no occasion, or need, to do so; they roll in the grass, wet in the morning with the heavy dews of night; or they dash the drops from the boughs upon their backs, as they flit to and fro among the forest trees. In the house, therefore, if a bath is desirable, and the bird does not seem disposed to voluntarily take one, it is a good plan to syringe it gently with a garden squirt, or, better still, to place the cage out in the garden when it rains.

A correspondent of *The Bazaar* newspaper recently wrote as follows respecting the Rock Pepler Parrakeets:—"Regarding them as a most charming variety, I have kept, or rather tried to keep, several. I found them extremely delicate, quite on a par with the Grey Parrot. I managed to get one through the moult, and I exhibited him at Canterbury; but he, like the rest, died of atrophy. A friend of mine, before buying, asked my opinion. Some few months after, I met him. He said, 'I found you were right about the Rock Peplers; I bought a pair, but they soon died.' I saw some in London last week (middle of January, 1887); none of them, to my mind, looked like 'livers.'"

If possible these birds should be obtained quite young; for if captured when adult, or even after they have flown a few weeks it is very difficult to accustom them to captivity; they sulk and pine, like the King Parrots, and soon die, poor things! literally of a broken heart. But when reared from the nest they are quite as enduring as the generality of Australian Parrakeets, and more so than some; the Pileated, for instance, and *Aprosinctus erythropterus*.

Another correspondent of the same paper records his experience of the Rock Pepler Parrakeet as follows:—

"I found them very delicate—and I know such has been the expe-

rience of many others—but I so thoroughly admire them, that I made great attempts, and went to great expense, to keep them.

Like kings they are subject to a disease of the eye. At first the eye is watery, then the nictoring membrane becomes enlarged, and partially covers the eye. By frequent bathing with dilute sulphate of zinc, that membrane assumes its normal condition; but the cornea becomes callous, the eye dull, and the sight entirely gone. I am quite positive this disease is not the result of draughts. One fine specimen, a male, lived some time after losing the sight of one eye. This was particularly painful to me, for when a bird of a pugnacious turn, say a Blue Mountain Lory, or a White-eared Conure, or a Bengal Parakeet, came on the perch on his blind side, he got a nasty bite at times, causing him to fly off madly. He always avoided their coarse play, if they approached him on the side of his good eye. The case was aggravated from the fact of the Rock Pepler being a most peaceful and unsuspecting bird. I never knew them to quarrel either among themselves or with any of their companions.

They are small eaters, and seem to like a little insect food; are very fond of *fresh* seedy chickweed. They regularly take their matutinal tub, and enjoy a siesta in the middle of the day, like a king. They are extremely lively towards sunset. I have noticed this with all the Australian birds I have kept; my Crimson-wings seem almost mad just before retiring for the night.

A friend of mine who goes in largely for small foreign birds, after spending some time with my stock, remarked, 'The Rock Pepler is the only large bird I would care to keep.' He admired their natural cry, which is altogether peculiar, and about as easy to describe verbally as it would be to imitate the song of the nightingale on a Scotch bagpipe; their symmetrical form, the exquisite blending of the colours of their plumage, which is extremely beautiful, without being gaudy, and in the words of my Rock Pepler loving friend, 'Their expression is so peaceful.' To me they appear very susceptible to any sudden change of temperature, so much so, that I was afraid to venture on keeping them out of doors all the winter."

"In June, 1884," writes another correspondent, "I bought two young Rock Peplers, which both turned out to be hens, and I at once put them in a small outdoor aviary. The aviary, I must explain, is all wood and glass, except where it meets the end of a verandah where there are wire bars, and this open space is closed in bad weather by a door; which shuts the aviary off from the verandah, but is not so close to it as to exclude the air. In this the birds have lived and thriven, never having a ruffled feather up till now.

Last August I succeeded in getting a cock bird, and at once put him in, and up to the present he is in perfect health. My aviary contains Pennant's Rosella, Port Adelaide Rosella, Barnard and Bauer Parrakeets, and Cockatiels.

Oats and canary seed are the main food I give, though I add to them buckwheat, hemp, and inga, by way of variety; Indian corn I do not find they care for. The Peplers feed chiefly on oats, as, indeed, I find most of them do, taking them in preference to anything else. They are very fond of bathing, and, during the late frosts, the bath was often a solid sheet of ice, but no sooner had I put fresh water in than they were into it. I need not say that during bath time, and until they were dry, I kept the door shut.

The Peplers I find rather shy, but very gentle birds, never molesting any of the other birds; in fact, they are always the last to come for any dainties I put in.

I give as green food, dandelions, and find all my birds delight in it; eating flowers, stems, leaves, and roots; groundsel, &c. I also frequently give them willow branches with the leaves on, selecting those in which some insect has laid its egg, the grub of which they pick out and eat. I also give pears and apples cut up small, and other fruit in season, but there is nothing they like as well as the dandelion and grubs from the willow leaf.

I have now kept Australian Parrakeets for about four years, and certainly the Rock Peplers, though not the most brilliant in colour, are the most beautiful in shape and the least troublesome."

Another correspondent writes: "Some time since I saw a note in *The Bazaar* respecting the Rock Pepler Parrakeet as not been a hardy bird. I have one now in my aviary that has been in my possession quite six years—an out-door aviary, summer and winter without any artificial heat."

The above experience tallies more nearly with our own, than that of the correspondents first quoted, but we have thought it right to give both sides of the question.

SUN PARRAKEET,
OR YELLOW CONURE.

Psittacus solstitialis, AUCTORUM.

SYNONYMS: *Conurus solstitialis*, GR., BP., etc.; *Conurus aurantius*, MLL.;
Psittacus gouaruba, SPX.

GERMAN: *Der orangegelbe Keilschwanzsittich oder Sonnensittich*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Perruche-soleil*, ROUSSE, PARA, etc.

“UNDOUBTEDLY one of the most magnificent of the many beautiful Parrots of America,” writes Dr. Russ of this bird in his *Fremdländischen Stubenvögel*, page 254, and we cordially agree with the remark; but when he goes on to describe the colour as lemon yellow, he is not quite correct, for it is more like ochre with dashes of crimson. The flight feathers are green, and the wing coverts also; but these birds vary immensely in appearance; and, in point of fact, no two of them are to be met with that are exactly alike.

They are noisy birds, like all the Conures, painfully noisy at times; and their voices are extremely piercing and shrill; but they get very tame, and learn to speak a little.

Without great attention they will turn and tear out their own feathers sooner or later, and that notwithstanding their being well supplied with wood upon which to exercise their sharp beaks. We recently saw one that had stripped itself of every feather it could reach, excepting the large quills of the wings and tail; but after awhile it began to eat those also; and though it did not pluck them out, it gnawed them down to the quick, and at last died miserably from cold, although retaining its appetite and embonpoint to the last. Everything that could be thought of had been tried to cure it of the distressful habit, but in vain; its passion for self-mutilation seemed to increase by what

it fed on, until at last the inevitable result ensued, and the poor creature fell a victim to its own foolish practice.

Here is a grand opportunity for a little moralising, but we shall not avail ourselves of it. The habit of self-mutilation often springs, we believe, from idleness, want of occupation; but once acquired, though opportunities of recreation and employment are afforded, they will not be made use of, and the unnatural vice will increase and grow. Society is incapable, except in rare cases, of effecting a cure, and even the usually engrossing passion of sexual attachment fails in curative power, with a confirmed feather-eater.

This bird has been frequently confounded with allied species; the Golden-headed Conure (*Conurus auricapillus*), for instance, as well as with *Jendaya*, and even *aureus*; although there is actually no great resemblance between any two of them.

The Sun Parrakeet, or Yellow Conure, was first acquired by the Zoological Society of London in 1862. Another specimen was obtained eleven years later, and yet survives in the Parrot House, where several more specimens have at different times been added to a collection that is perhaps the richest in the world, with regard not only to species but to the actual number of Parrots, Parrakeets, and Cockatoos now in the possession of the Society.

The Yellow Conure was known to Bechstein, who thus describes it: "The whole length of this bird (*Der gelbe Sittich*) is eleven inches and a half; the tail is wedge-shaped, and the folded wings cover one-third of it. The beak and feet are green (!). The throat, the naked membranes of the beak, and the circle of the eyes, are light grey; the iris is yellow. The general colour of the body is orange, with olive spots on the back and wing coverts.

"This Parrot comes from Angola, and easily learns to speak. The food and treatment must be the same as the preceding." That is to say: "nuts, and bread soaked in boiled milk", a dietary from which we must withhold our assent.

The food we have found most suitable is canary seed, with maize, oats, sunflower seeds, and now and then a little hemp. Water must be given for drinking and bathing, and a supply of gravel is as indispensable as a log of soft wood. The former assists digestion, and the latter affords much needed help against the tedium of captivity within the bars of a narrow cage.

We have not tried this Conure out of doors for two reasons, the first of which is that, like the rest of its congeners, it is extremely spiteful with other Parrakeets, and especially so with other birds; and secondly, because it is too expensive to expose to any risk of dying

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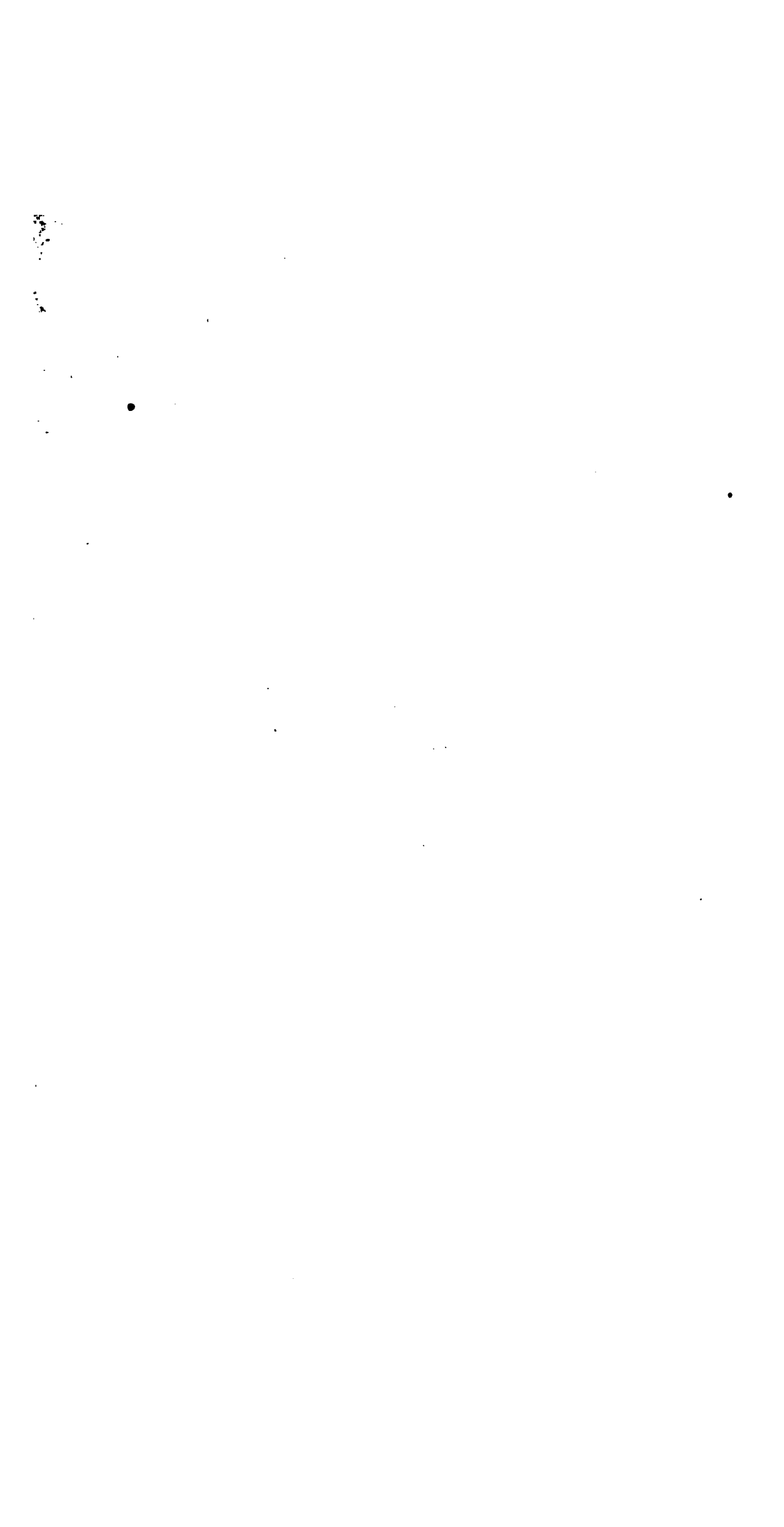
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SUN PARAKEET.

through catching cold. M. Rousse speaks thus of its capacity for outdoor life in France:—"Elle (la Perruche soleil) réclame quelques précautions pendant les premiers hivers."

Should we succeed in getting a cheap pair, we shall certainly turn them out into an enclosure by themselves, and there let them take their chance; but while the price remains as high as it is at present (1887), that is, from two to three pounds a piece, we do not care to run any risk of losing them.

The Sun Parrakeet, or Yellow Conure, is a native of the north-eastern parts of South America, from the Amazon river to Guiana. It also occurs in Venezuela, where the natives term it Kessi-Kessi, from its cry. It is a great favourite with them, according to Richard Schomburgk, and may be seen in the villages to the number of thirty or forty in a flock; breeding in holes in the surrounding trees.

The young have more red in their plumage, and the wing coverts, as well as the primaries, are green. They change slowly, and do not entirely assume the adult plumage until they are three years old; which would, no doubt, in a great measure account for the immense diversity of colouring they present.

Though cruel, like all their congeners, to other birds with which they are involuntarily compelled to associate, they are very affectionate among themselves, and dress and preen each other's heads incessantly; only ceasing now and then to feed at the seed-pan, or to disgorge into each other's beaks the half-digested food of which they had partaken. It is curious, that not only the male and female will thus caress each other, but two males, or two females, will conduct themselves in exactly the same manner; and so lead any one unacquainted with them to suppose that they were a veritable pair.

There is no perceptible difference, at least outwardly, between the sexes; but the young, as we have said, differ considerably from their parents.

We have met with no account of the Sun Parrakeets having bred in this country, or indeed anywhere, in captivity; and should think that no case of reproduction has yet taken place.

Herr Schomburgk relates that the eggs of this species are about the size of those of the Turtle Dove, and are round and smooth. "No more recent account," laments Dr. Russ in this place, "is unhappily available."

*The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Yellow Conure
(Conurus solstitialis).*

THE Yellow Conure is not so rare in England as it appears from Dr. Russ to be in Germany, though it is not a common bird. It is the handsomest Conure with which I am acquainted. I kept four once all at the same time. But their sole attraction was their beauty. Like the White-eared Conures, they were restless and noisy, and by no means tame. Dr. Russ gives, I think, too light a shade when he says the yellow of the birds is lemon-yellow. Indian yellow mixed with crimson is the colour. No two of my four were coloured alike. I daresay if they were reared by hand they might prove attractive. Probably the main reason why writers differ so much in describing the same Parrot is that one has come across a bird reared by hand, and the other has only come across a specimen caught old. But I must say that up to the present time the Conures as a race have not impressed me favourably. The Golden Conure (*C. luteus*) seems an exception; but it is hardly like a Conure, it is so different in its build. *C. solstitialis* are worth about £2 each.



YASA PARROT.

VASA PARROT.

Psittacus vasa, SHW.

SYNONYMS: *Coracopsis vasa*, GR., SCL., etc.;

Coracopsis melanoryncha, FNSCH.; *Platycercus vasa*, VGRS.;

Vasa obscura, SCHLGL.; *Vigorsia vasa*, SWNS.

GERMAN: *Der grosse schwarze Papagei oder der grosse Vasapapagei*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Le grand Vasa*, LVLL.

A RUSTY Crow, or a Rook, with its legs cut off, and a white crab's claw in lieu of a beak, would fairly represent this by no means handsome bird; which, nevertheless, is possessed of quite a string of good qualities, among which may be reckoned hardihood, longevity, a not unmusical note, or call, great capacity for domestication, and gentleness; but on the other hand it seldom learns to speak, is decidedly not pretty, and at times will yell in a most persistent and aggravating manner; a failing, however, that is peculiar to almost every member of the great family of the *Psittacidae*.

The general colour of the plumage is a dull greyish black, to which the white beak forms a curious, but not a pleasing contrast. The head is rather small, and the tail somewhat long and broad in proportion to the body, which about equals in size that of a large Grey Parrot, or a Blue-fronted Amazon; although from the length of the tail it looks a larger bird than either of those we have named; which, however, both vastly surpass it in intelligence, as they also do in personal appearance.

The Zoological Society of London were presented in 1830 with a bird of this species, which survived in the Parrot House for fifty-two years; when it died apparently from old age. This individual was, after death, ascertained to be a female; but during the whole of its long life, at least in captivity, the ovary remained quiescent, no egg or eggs having been obtained from it; a fact that caused its sex to be a matter of speculation while alive.

The Vasa is found in Madagascar and some adjacent islands, where several species of the genus also exist, namely, the Lesser Vasa (*Coracopsis nigra*), about half the size of the Greater Vasa, and the Praslin Island Vasa, from the Seychelles (*Coracopsis Barklyi*), which is smaller still. Neither of the latter species appear to be as enduring as the Great Vasa, although a Praslin has survived in the Parrot House for several years.

Concerning the large species, Herr Jänicke writes in Dr. Russ's *Foreign Cage Birds*, "It is very tame, good-natured, droll, and familiar; but I have not detected the slightest talent for speech."

Dr. Russ himself, though classing it among the speaking Parrots, does not mention an instance of a talking Vasa, but says, "They whistle loudly and sweetly, pipe tunes extremely well, and learn to imitate the songs of birds; moreover they readily acquire all sorts of other sounds, such as the barking of dogs, the mewing of cats, cock-crowing, etc."

M. J. Audebert, however, says "when trained young it whistles excellently, and learns to speak pretty well; besides, it imitates the voices of all animals, and interweaves with them its own natural notes."

Our own experience of these birds agrees rather with that of the former than with that of the latter authority; whistling and the imitation of poultry, a hen after laying an egg, but not of a cock crowing, being the extent of the accomplishments of any of these birds that have come under our immediate notice; but as the natural warbling is decidedly melodious, it is extremely probable that a young male might be taught a tune, which it would doubtless render with fidelity and expression.

We have at different times seen two or three of these birds that were speckled with white, much after the fashion of a Houdan fowl; but whether this was an accidental variation, or whether these mottled birds belonged to a distinct species, we are not in a position to affirm or deny.

The Vasa Parrot has been known to ornithologists for a long time, and had its specific name imposed upon it by the great Swedish naturalist Linnæus, in honour of Gustavus Vasa, the heroic Scandinavian monarch; who occupies so conspicuous a niche in the temple of fame of his own country.

In captivity these Parrots are not particularly friendly *inter se*, although they do not interfere with other birds; and in their wild state they are usually met with, either singly or in small family parties of from three to six; although a French traveller, Grandidier, reports having seen them in the dense forests of Madagascar, in flocks of from ten to fifty.

According to some authorities, that of A. and E. Newton, for ex-

ample, these birds are indigenous to the Island of Réunion; but this, we imagine, to be an error, as there is no evidence of any connection between that Island and the principal habitat of the Vasas, Madagascar; though it is of course possible that Black Parrots may have been intentionally imported into the former, from the latter island, and have established themselves, as other species have done, in their new location.

Newton says in this connection: "The Black Parrot lives alone among the highest trees of Réunion, where his dusky plumage harmonises well with his quiet, not to say melancholy, disposition; and his presence is detected by his loud and shrill piping. When one of these birds has been shot, the captor in taking hold of it, must be careful, for they bite viciously."

Poor creatures! under the circumstances who can blame them? Does not even a worm turn when it is wounded? Audebert, with whom the Black Parrot seems to have been a favourite, bears testimony as follows to its general good behaviour:—"I know few Parrots which give so much pleasure to their owners. It does not scream or gnaw, is good-tempered, allows itself to be taken in the hand and carried about without fear, and never bites"; observations that tally with our own as to the familiarity and gentleness of these birds.

Although of sufficiently common occurrence in Madagascar, where it is frequently tamed by the inhabitants, and kept as a pet, chained to a stand, the Black Parrot is not very frequently imported into Europe; for demand, as a rule, creates, and regulates, the supply of a given article, and the Vasas are not in much request among amateurs, although the few specimens that are occasionally offered fetch a good price—from thirty to forty shillings apiece in this country; and in Germany, on the authority of Dr. Russ, from forty to forty-five marks. One of the speckled birds which we saw at Jamrach's, was offered to us for three pounds sterling; however, though said to be moulting, it was evidently a feather-eater, and we declined it, as we did another in better condition, for which another dealer, in whose shop we saw it, asked the modest sum of £7; which, however, we have occasion to believe, he did not get; as we heard that he afterwards disposed of the bird for fifty shillings.

Dr. Russ, we cannot say on what authority, relates that "The aborigines (presumably of Madagascar) often tame these birds in considerable numbers, and bring them to Mauritius, whence they are imported into Europe."

Although undoubtedly belonging to different species, some authors consider the Greater and Lesser Vasas to be specifically identical; and one Herr Linden, a contemporary writer, even ventures to affirm that

the Greater is the male, and the Lesser the female! which is a pure flight of fancy on his part, as the autopsy on the ancient inmate of the Parrot House at the "Zoo" indisputably proves; but, as Dr. Russ very properly remarks, "Although the resemblance between the two species is slight, yet one may confidently affirm them to be distinct."

Nothing is accurately known of the habits of the Black Parrot in its wild state. It is said that the white beak becomes a pale brown during the nesting season; but this we have not observed to be the case in captivity; which, however, is no reason that the change of colour spoken of by Dr. Finsch may not take place as described by him, especially as his observations have been confirmed by those of other writers.

The most suitable food for these birds is maize, to which hemp and oats may be added; though they appear to be capable of subsisting upon the most unlikely and unnatural diet, for M. J. Audebert (Russ *passim*) says, "Mine got roast or boiled meat, broth, fish, vegetables, raw and cooked rice, bananas, sugar-cane, etc., without any evil consequences. Raw flesh they will not touch." In another place he adds, "They kept at a distance, anxiously, from any object with which they were not acquainted, such as glasses, bottles, etc., and never gnawed tables or chairs. The price in Madagascar ranges from fivepence to one shilling a head."

Avoiding unknown objects, which M. Audebert appears to think a sign of intelligence, tends, we imagine, to prove on the contrary that the Vasa is not entitled to rank with the more sagacious members of its family; and that this is really the case, the general tenour of our observations with respect to it leads us to believe. The Black Parrot is by nature suspicious, but speedily becomes reconciled to captivity. It is, however, incapable of generalization, and if accustomed to a particular object, starts in affright from another that differs from it in the very slightest respect. It spends the greater part of its time asleep, that is to say when not eating; and it is only when made the subject of continual attention by its owner that it rouses itself from the state of melancholy that appears to be natural to it, and puts on a kind of spurious gaiety, which vanishes directly the attention is withdrawn; when the bird becomes as listless and apathetic as before.

That this behaviour is not the result of grief for the loss of its freedom is quite certain; for one of the Vasas to which we allude was permitted to enjoy almost complete liberty, and differed in no wise from the others as regards the melancholic apathy that seems to be the heritage of the race; which even in the completely wild state, has not been observed to play like most other members of the Parrot family.

That many birds are by nature utterly unfitted for a life in captivity, must be apparent to any one who has even bestowed a passing thought upon the subject; the Lark, for instance, accustomed to soar aloft and revel in the boundless realms of space; or the Eagle, whose home is likewise in mid-air, and his resting place on some inaccessible cliff; but with others of the feathered tribes it is different. Some of them actually seek the society of man and assume, voluntarily, restraints that are dearer to them than the most perfect liberty; of these are the Pigeon and the Robin Redbreast. But intermediate between the two extremes are others that without seeking, yet submit, if not with pleasure, at least with perfect resignation, to a life of captivity, and refuse to return to a state of nature, when the opportunity for so doing is presented to them; of these, among others, are many of the Parrots.

One of these birds that came into our possession several years since, was as wild and vicious as a Hawk, snapping and biting fiercely at every one who came near it, trying to cut the bars of its cage, and every now and then giving utterance to the most appalling yells. The lady from whose custody it had passed into our own, was well versed in the management of Parrots, and had succeeded in perfectly taming several that at first seemed as intractable as the bird of which we are speaking; but upon this savage she could make no impression, and so she got rid of it, and it came into our keeping. When, finding it apparently irreclaimable, we turned it out into an aviary in which was located another of the same species, scarcely less vicious than this very objectionable member of the Parrot race.

The rencontre between the two was alarming and yet amusing. A battle royal took place, and feathers were scattered all about; blood was even drawn, and the combatants fought until they were both of them utterly exhausted. Neither could claim the victory, and each stood in very proper dread of the other ever after; so that an armistice was in all probability agreed to between them; and afterwards they became tolerable friends, though every now and then a sly bite from one or the other, a shriek from, and hasty retreat of, the bitten one to the farthest corner of the aviary; plainly showed that not much love was lost between them.

This went on for a couple of years, when one of the pair one morning or evening caught its foot in the wire of the aviary, and tugging to get free, unfortunately broke its leg; and retreating to a corner of the outside, or open part of the enclosure, was unable or unwilling to move, and stayed there unnoticed until, on going to feed them in the morning, we found the poor Parrot dead and cold.

Though by no means an engaging creature, we felt very grieved for

its untimely and cruel ending, for the birds were undoubtedly a pair; and we had hoped that during the coming summer (1887) we might have had eggs, and perhaps young ones, from them.

The survivor did not get tamer, and did not seem to mourn very much for the loss of his companion; but having another use for his habitation, we caught the savage, caged him and brought him indoors, when, strange to relate, without any special attention on our part, he soon got to be quite tame; taking food from the hand, and even suffering his head to be scratched. Experience had evidently made him wiser; he could appreciate the contrast between his spacious cage indoors and his life of semi-freedom in an out-door aviary; between the society of a mate who, even when accepting his caresses, was always on the watch for an opportunity of giving him a bite; and the gentleness of the hand that fed him and kept his house in order; and, as we have said, he soon became quite tame, and is now a very amiable and companionable bird, in perfect plumage and condition.

We have also remarked at various times that other Parrots, when turned out into a large aviary, were evidently quite unhappy there, and evinced unmistakable signs of delight when restored to the narrower precincts of the accustomed cage.

A tame Parrot is a most delightful bird, and few birds become tamer than a Parrot.

Mr. Groom, of Camden Town, writes concerning a Vasa Parrot, in his possession for some time, that was exhibited at the twenty-fourth Annual Exhibition of Canaries and Cage-Birds at the Crystal Palace, February, 1887:—"When first caged my Black Parrot was dreadfully wild and shy, but has gradually become more quiet, and will now hold its head to be fondled, and appears in no way spiteful, although still timid, but gentle. My opinion of these birds is that they would become very affectionate, if pains were taken with them. As to talking, I can hardly form an opinion, yet think they might be induced to speak, if trained and petted early."

At the Palace Show this bird was evidently unwell, but made no attempt to retaliate upon the numerous persons who poked him with sticks and umbrellas; merely resenting their rudeness by a little grunt, and immediately popping his head under his wing until disturbed again.

Mr. J. E. Blackman, of Chatham, who has kept almost every kind of Parrot and Parrakeet that is imported into this country, writes as follows concerning the species at present under consideration:—"I have a fine specimen of the larger Vasa. He is nothing to look upon; the first impression being generally, 'how like a squeaker.'

"He is not noisy, and says several words plainly, Dr. Russ notwithstanding. When I go to feed him he utters a very faint plaintive cry, much like a child in *cunabulâ*, and a very young one indeed. He is extremely playful, and very fond of a shampooing. I am much amused at his attempts to wash in his drinking tin; he succeeds in making himself very wet, as well as his surroundings. He is fond of having his head scratched."

The above graphic account of a fine specimen of the species to which it belongs, shows that even the Black Parrots vary in character, and that some of them are more teachable and of a gayer and more lively disposition than others; but on the whole it tallies very well with what we have written about the bird, whether from our own or the observations of others.

To sum up, we may briefly remark that in our opinion the larger Vasa is a capital bird to make a pet of; for it is docile, hardy, and not usually noisy; qualities that should render it more acceptable to amateurs than it appears to be, and which should go far to compensate in their eyes for any lack of the brilliant colouring so characteristic of the Parrot family; for, as the proverb to which we have more than once in these pages referred, truly says, "Handsome is that handsome does."

We may here mention that in addition to the Lesser Vasa and the Praslin Parrot, there are several other less known species of Black Parrots, which each and all bear more or less affinity to the subject of the present notice; which they resemble so closely, except in point of size, that it is unnecessary to figure them in this work; though a few words upon their suitability for domestic life may not be unacceptable to our readers.

The Lesser Vasa Parrot, also called the Brown and the Ash-brown Parrot, is about fourteen inches in length, and is a native of Madagascar, where it consorts with the larger species, as the Jackdaws are in the habit of doing with the Rooks in our own fields.

It is *Psittacus niger* of Edwards, and *Madagascariensis niger* of Brisson, *Le Petit Vasa* of Le Vaillant, and *Der kleine schwarze Papagei* of the Germans. It is equally enduring with its larger relative, and, like it, whistles and pipes, but speaks little, though it imitates fairly well the cries of different animals and various domestic sounds. The treatment is the same that has been recommended for the Large Vasa.

Four specimens of the Lesser Vasa (*Coracopsis nigra*, Z. S.) have at various times been placed in the Parrot House at the "Zoo", of which the first arrived in 1857, and the last in 1872.

Barkly's Parrot (*Psittacus Barklyi*), named in honour of Sir Henry

Barkly, at one time Governor of Victoria, and subsequently of the Mauritius, is still smaller than the Lesser Vasa, measuring about eleven inches in extreme length. It is an insignificant-looking, gentle little creature; of an ashy black colour, with a greyish white beak. It is only found on Praslin Island, one of the Seychelles, and is not very numerous there; so that at no very distant date it will in all probability become extinct. Four examples have at different times been placed in the Parrot House of the Zoological Society of London, of which the first was received in 1867, and the last in 1874; and this bird is, or was quite recently, living in the Gardens.

In addition to the two Vasas, and the Praslin Parrot, there is a fourth black member of the Parrot family, viz.: *Psittacus comorensis*, Fensch., or *Coracopsis comorensis*, Gr., found in the Comorine group of islands by Dr. Kirk. It is, however, even more scarce than the Praslin, and no example of the species has at any time been an inhabitant of the Zoological Gardens of London.

It is stated, on the authority of Dr. Bolau, to have reached the Hamburg Zoological Gardens to the number of three, which were received at the same time, but none since. It is somewhat smaller than the Great Vasa, to which it bears a general resemblance, except its black feathers reflect a tinge of metallic green, principally on the wings, back, and tail. The beak is blackish brown, the eyes very dark, and the feet dark brown; the cry is weak and not disagreeable.

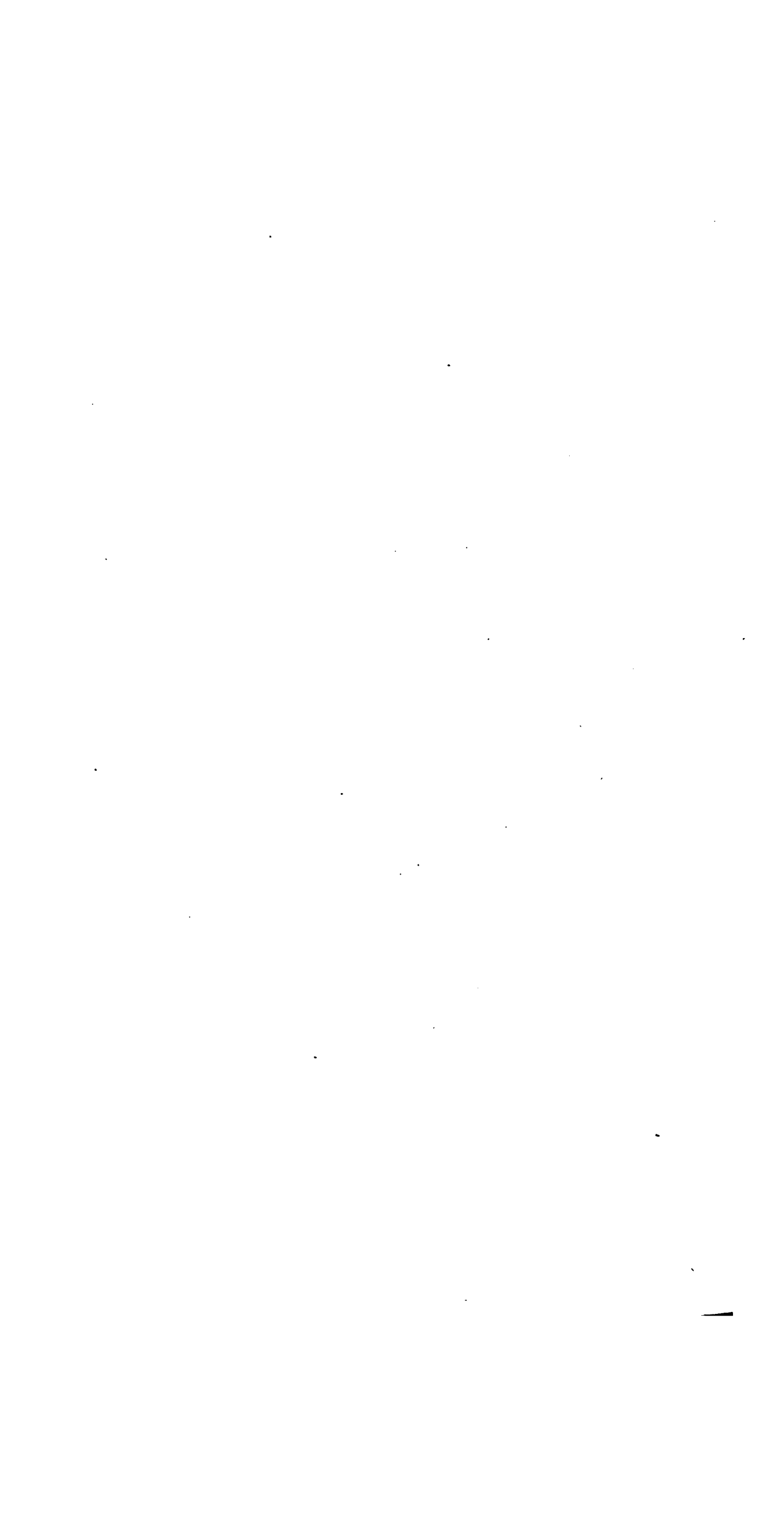
A skin of the bird was seen by Dr. Finsch in the British Museum a few years since, but it is not there now.

The rarity of the latter two species renders their price uncertain. A dealer into whose possession one of them might come, would be apt to ask for it whatever sum he thought he would be likely to get; but the Lesser Vasas, of which we saw a goodly number in a London shop a couple of years since, were sold at from eighteen shillings to twenty-five shillings apiece; although we believe the first price that was demanded was sixty shillings a head, at which figure we do not think a single bird was sold.

They would all appear to be hardy, and, if not attractive-looking, very desirable birds to make pets of, for they are gentle, the Praslin especially; and have not the loud, disagreeable scream of so many of their congeners. When they do shriek it is in quite a minor key, compared with the Cockatoos and the Amazons.

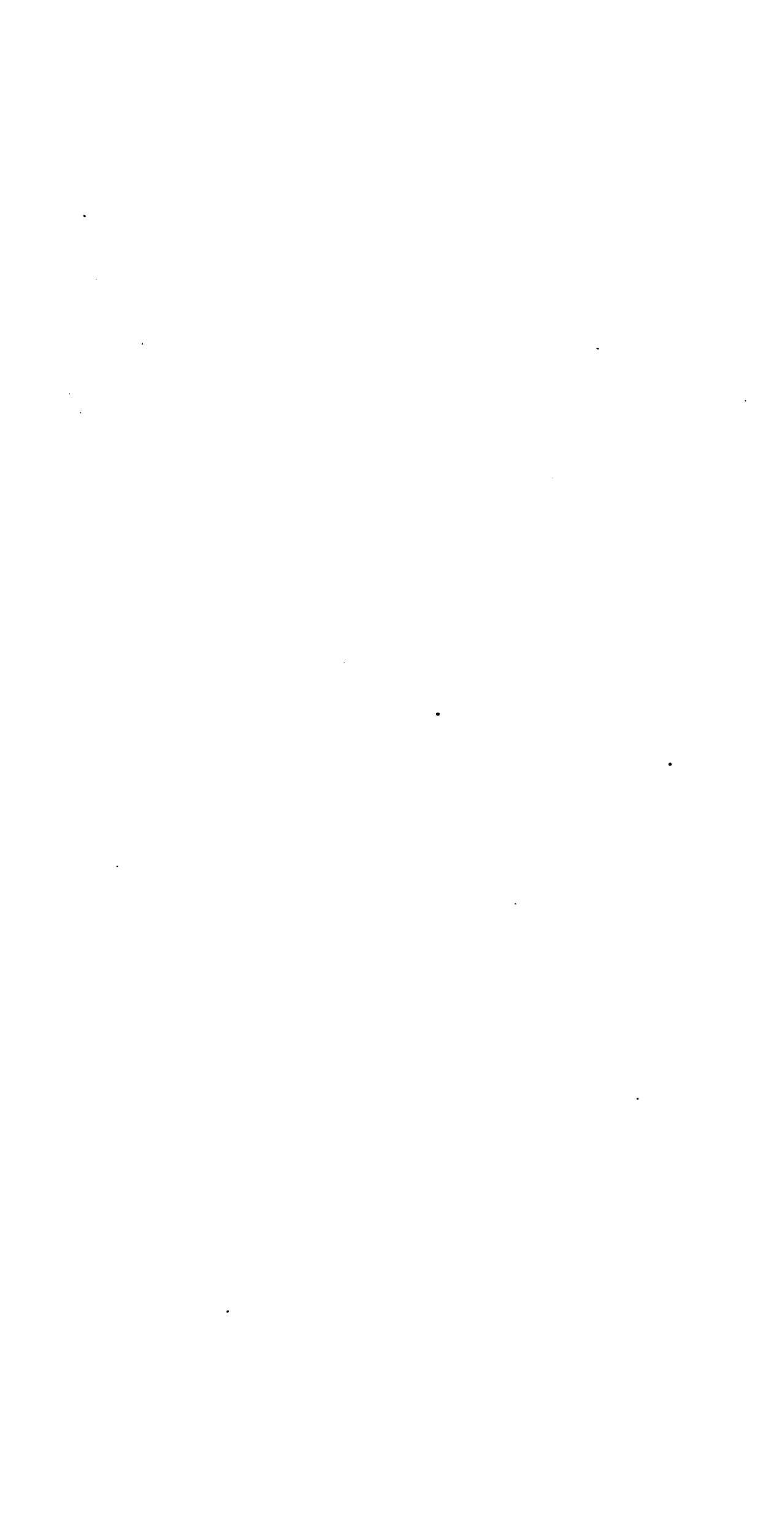
The Lesser Vasa has laid eggs in confinement, but has not, as far as we are aware, reproduced itself in the aviary.

The Great Vasa is about twenty-one or twenty-two inches in length.





JARDINE'S PARROT



JARDINE'S PARROT.

Psittacus Gulielmi.

SYNONYMS: *Pæocephalus Gulielmi*, JRD. & SLB.; *Pionias Gulielmi*, SCHLG.;
Poiocephalus Gulielmi, SNC.; *Psittacus Aubrianus*, GR.

GERMAN: *Guilelmi's Langflügelpapagei*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Perroquet à tête d'or.*

SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, the editor of the well-known *Naturalist's Library*, has had the honour, bestowed upon him by his collaborateur, Pridaux John Selby, of giving both his names to this handsome bird; and when we have said that, there remains but little more to be added to the account we have to give of it; for the *Pæocephali* are not, as a rule, remarkable for their intelligence; and *Gulielmus*, as far at least as our experience of the bird goes, comes in pretty far down the list; but as, on the other hand, our colleague and a correspondent, who have had a wider experience with it than we can boast of, speak most favourably of it as a domestic pet; and as fairplay is a jewel of the first water, we give both sides of the question, and like the showman in the story, say to our readers "pay your money and take your choice"—that is buy a Jardine, and determine for yourselves which side of the question you will choose to espouse.

To begin with the dark side of its character. Dr. Russ does not include *Gulielmus* among his "Talking Parrots" (*Die sprechenden Papageien*), and as he places in that category others that have very small faculty indeed for imitating the human voice, or repeating any sound other than their own native woodland notes; that would be saying, or rather not saying, a good deal, providing his experience of the bird were not limited to one or two specimens of unfortunately morose disposition, or that were perhaps afflicted with some disease, to which captive Parrots are so subject; for our colleague, as we have said, credits Jardine's Parrot with learning to speak quickly and well, if

“in a small, rather throaty voice”; and he has at different times possessed several examples of the species, of which every one differed from the other in character.

Herr Schlechtendal possessed two of these birds, which he believed to be a pair, for a year and a half; but says they were dull creatures (*langweilige Geschöpfe*), and had none of the sprightliness of the *Mohrenköpfe*, or Senegal Parrots.

Herr Wiener, too, has nothing much to say in commendation of them; but one of his pair dying, the other passed into the custody of Dr. Russ, who relates that he had a good opportunity of observing it, and found that in its habits it resembled the Black-headed Parrot; and when frightened or teased, would give utterance to a shrill cry; but not one word do these gentlemen say of the talking powers of their birds.

Our own experience is that the Jardine's Parrot does talk, and that passably, though a stranger will scarcely understand what it says, unless some one that is well acquainted with the creature acts as interpreter; but it seems to have a lamentable tendency to self-mutilation. Perhaps our William was not kept sufficiently amused, and that ennui caused it to turn round and pluck itself, until its back was completely bare, and very often bleeding. Nothing seemed of the least avail to stop the horrid practice; and when at last we had to make a *post-mortem* examination of the remains, the only possible verdict was one of *felo de se*; nor was the bird particularly lamented, when the kitchen range one day after dinner received all that was left of it for decent cremation.

A native of the Gold Coast, this Parrot is not particularly uncommon, nor is it very dear; the dealers of whom we have made inquiry demanding from twenty-five to thirty shillings for a newly-imported specimen; though of course a trained bird that could talk a little might bring a great deal more, and fetch perhaps as much as five pounds; which reminds us that possibly we appreciated our bird less than it deserved, for the reason that we paid nothing for it, that it was half denuded of its feathers when it passed into our possession, and that all our efforts to reclaim it were in vain. Very likely had it been in good condition, or had our endeavours to break it of its naughty habit been attended with success, we should have prized it more than, we admit, we ever did.

The London Zoological Society received their first specimen of Jardine's Parrot in 1862; since which date others have been introduced into the Parrot House, of which one example was a very nice tame bird, that eventually took to plucking itself, and probably died

indirectly from that cause; but we have been unable to ascertain its end, of which no record has apparently been kept; at all events it has escaped the intelligent custodian's memory; which is not to be wondered at, seeing the multitude of different birds that pass through his hands in the course of the year.

As our colleague has given a full description of this bird in his note, we shall not occupy space by going over the same ground, but refer our readers to the plate and to Mr. Dutton's accurate word-portrait of Jardine's Parrot.

Should another specimen of the species pass into our possession at any future time, we shall give an account in the Appendix to this work, of any further peculiarities respecting it, that we may observe. But that addition to our pleasant labours is a good way off yet we hope and believe, and in the meantime we cannot add much more, except that no instance of even egg-production has been recorded of this species up to the present time.

The female cannot be distinguished by her outward appearance from her mate; but as some of these birds have brown eyes, and others have the irides of a bright orange-red colour, it is possible that the latter may be the females; and perhaps the young of both sexes may take after their mothers in this respect; in which case the eyes of the young males would become dark as they reached maturity, and those of the females retain the lighter shade; for it is an established fact that in almost every case the young of both sexes resemble at first the adult female, and do not assume the characteristic distinctions of the sex to which they belong, until they have reached maturity, and are about becoming parents in their turn. There is also very little doubt that in the case of all birds in which the sex is not differentiated by the plumage, it is so by the permanent colour of the eye, that is to say, by the colour of the iris when the bird has reached maturity; though in some species, such as the Rose-breasted Cockatoo, for example, the distinction is much more marked than in others.

It is somewhat strange that the Jardine Parrot is not more frequently imported, for its distribution is pretty extended; the bird having been reported from all parts of the west coast of Africa, and also from Guinea, and the Gaboon, as well as from the Congo and Angola, though nothing is known of its habits in the wild state.

In length it measures about ten and a half inches, of which the tail occupies nearly three; it has strong wings, long in proportion to its size, and flies well.

The French, as a rule, are not happy in their *avine* nomenclature; and the title *Perroquet à tête d'or*, which they have bestowed upon

Pæocephalus Gulielmi, is singularly infelicitous, seeing that its forehead and crown are rather of an orange red than a golden colour. Its English and German names are greatly to be preferred to its Gallic one, though the first is perhaps the best, because the most distinctive in fact we are egotistic enough to believe that our own language is the most expressive and sensible of any tongue with which we are acquainted, and we happen to be tolerably conversant with several.

To revert to the Jardine. It is best fed on seed, hemp chiefly, but canary seed, oats, and maize must be added, and some of the latter may be advantageously boiled; though too much must not be cooked at one time, as it soon becomes sour; in which state it will disagree with a bird, and excite a kind of choleraic diarrhoea that is usually very unamenable to treatment.

Mr. P. F. Coggin writes respecting the subject of the present notice:—"I did not have the Jardine Parrot in my possession a very great time, consequently I cannot give you a large experience with it. When it came to me it was suffering from feather plucking, which I was unable to cure. It appeared to be a very sociable bird, and soon became accustomed to the person who fed it.

"When left in a room by itself, it had a very peculiar habit of lying upon its back, either upon the perch, or at the bottom of the cage; and would remain in that position for half an hour at a time unless disturbed.

"In July I turned it out into a garden aviary, but the first cold night killed it. I never heard it attempt to speak, but it was constantly making a disagreeable noise. I think it was a female; it was a small specimen compared with Mr. Dutton's bird, which I saw afterwards."

To the above account we may add that we saw the bird when it was in an advanced stage of feather-plucking; it was in good condition as regards plumpness, but was decidedly small. We are also of opinion that we performed its autopsy, and found that it had died from inflammation of the lungs; to which, of course, the loss of its feathers would render it peculiarly liable. From observations we have been able to make upon several of these Parrots, we are confirmed in our previously expressed opinion; that they make very nice pets, and that the great drawback to keeping them in captivity is their unhappy propensity for self-mutilation.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of Jardine's Parrot
(*Pæocephalus Gulielmi*).

THIS is a small Parrot, not much larger than the Senegal Parrot, which also belongs to the tribe of *Pæocephali*. Its beak is dark horn colour, and large for its size, though not so large as that of *P. fuscicollis*. Its head is green, with a greyish tinge in the green; the feathers of the back are black, edged with green. The upper wing coverts, flight, and tail feathers are black; the secondaries are black, edged with green. The whole of the under part is bright yellow-green, and the bird has red feathers on the forehead, shoulder butts, and knees. I incline to think that either there are two species, or that the male bird has much more red than the female; for the bird now in my possession has very little red, and two others I have had, had a great deal. And as mine has moulted twice with me, the slightness of the red cannot be owing to immaturity.

I was attracted to them first by the tameness of one I saw in the Zoological Gardens, which would come and talk to one, if one noticed it. But I never had the opportunity of keeping one till Mr. Carpenter, of Liverpool, whom I had asked to look out for Meyer's and Rüppell's Parrots for me, sent me the one I have now. I have had two others, both of which have died, owing to my absences from home. Of what the first died I do not know; but the second I believe owed its death to want of water, as it was given no more water than was in soap squeezed dry. They are very thirsty birds, and like a great deal of water. They are very fond of washing, too.

I have found them soon tamed, and remarkably quick in learning to talk, which they do in a small, rather throaty voice. They are as fond of play as a "Blue-bonnet," and will take a piece of wood and play with it like a kitten. Mine lies on its back, and plays in the most comical way with the wood which it holds in its feet.

Like all other short-tailed Parrots that I have tried, it has a good homing instinct; and if let out, never flies far from home. Mine recognises my voice or whistle at any distance; and if I call to it, when it is loose, it will at once fly towards me, and keep flying round me. It is a jealous little bird, and is not to be trusted, if strangers are by; but is very affectionate when I am alone with it. Its disposition however is peculiar to itself, for the two others I had did not mind who was by.

They seem to be somewhat difficult to acclimatise, but very hardy when once fairly established. My bird can stand any cold weather

when flying about loose. I give it boiled Indian corn, hemp and canary seed mixed, and sop. But I dare say it would be just as happy with plain water as with the sop, for it eats very little of the bread. They are, I think, to be strongly recommended as pets, and would be an attractive bird to acclimatise. I am sorry to say that mine is quite as unamiable to other Parrots, even of its own species, as it is to human beings; but perhaps if it met another in a tree, and not in a room, it might make friends.

Since writing the above I have had another, but it did not survive long.

They seem to be difficult to acclimatise, and I have an idea that is a characteristic of the *Pæocephali*. I would advise people to buy them in summer, though the one that did best arrived in January in a plain deal box. Even if bought in summer it would be wise to keep them in the kitchen at first, and harden them off by degrees. They are worth twenty-five shillings each when imported.

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NEW GUINEA ECLECTUS.

82

RED-SIDED
OR NEW GUINEA ECLECTUS.

Psittacus Linnei, Rss.

SYNONYMS: ♂ *Psittacus polychlorus*, SCPL.; *Psittacus sinensis*, LTHM.;
Eclectus polychlorus, GR.; *Mascarinus polychlorus*, FNSCH.;
Eclectus pectoralis, Z. S.; ♀ *Eclectus Linnei*, WGL.; *Eclectus puniceus*, BR.

GERMAN: *Der Neuguinea Edelpapagei*.

FRENCH: ♂ *Lori-perruche à flancs rouges*, ♀ *Perroquet de Linné*.

THE mystery which for a long time surrounded these curious birds has at length been satisfactorily cleared up, as far, that is to say, as the wonderful difference of the colouring in the sexes is concerned, for there is still some doubt whether the subject of the present notice is not identical with the Gilola and the Ceram Eclecti, from which the male scarcely differs in any respect, and the females in so trifling a degree, that it seems almost absurd to make three distinct species, of what in all probability are nothing but local varieties of one.

The male Eclectus appears to have been first described by Scopoli in the early part of the eighteenth century, and afterwards more fully by Edwards; while the female, though mentioned by Müller in 1776, was not described till 1832, when Wagler included it in his *Monograph of the Psittacidæ*, under the name of *Eclectus grandis*.

“This elegant species, which exceeds the Amazon Parrots in size, is a native of the Moluccas and New Guinea. In appearance, and the colour of its plumage, it approaches the larger Lories, a resemblance also indicated by the name given to it (Linnean Lory) by Latham and others. The bill is black, with the culmen of the upper mandible rounded; the nostrils placed at the base of the bill, and concealed from view; the eyes yellow, and the ophthalmic region entirely clothed with

feathers. The head and upper neck are of a rich crimson red; the lower neck, breast, belly, and upper tail coverts, rich scarlet, with a purplish tinge. The flexure of the wings, and the outer webs of the quills, are azure blue; the vent and apical fascia of the tail yellow." Thus Selby and Jardine, who omit the distinctive mark on the breast, namely, a broad band of dark purplish blue.

The male, contrary to the usual custom among birds, is much more soberly clad than his extremely brilliant partner, the prevailing colour of his plumage being vivid green of several shades; the primaries, however, are dark blue, the flexure of the wings light blue, and the sides and inner wing coverts scarlet; the upper mandible is whitish flesh-colour; the lower dusky horn.

The length of the male bird is about sixteen inches, that of the female not much less; both are stoutly built, and have large heads. The texture of the plumage is generally fine, and the feathers thickly disposed over the body, so that the bird is comparatively independent of the weather; and if turned out during the summer, may be safely wintered out of doors.

These birds, both males and females, have been imported in increasing numbers since the time of Edwards, *circa* 1750; but the former were always the more numerous, and naturalists never suspected that their so-called two species were in reality the male and female of one until Dr. Meyer, the travelled director of the Natural History Museum in Dresden, first published his discovery that the well-known Green Eclectus and the Purple Eclectus, to which Wagler had given the name of Linneus, stood to each other in the relationship of husband and wife. This announcement however was received with laughter and contemptuous ridicule, such as greeted the present writer when he made it known that our old friends the Canaries could be reared not only without egg-food, but that they would be stronger and healthier when fed wholly upon seed, than when treated in the unnatural manner resorted to by breeders from time immemorial.

However, the fact, in both cases, is indisputable; for Dr. Frenzel, by experiments in breeding, conducted under his own superintendence at Frieberg, has conclusively proved the correctness of his countryman's observations, as numerous Canary fanciers have ours by repeated trials; and the scoffs, sneers, even insults and misrepresentations of unbelievers, count for nothing, *magna est veritas et prævalebit*.

The Eclecti, male and female, though handsome, and on the whole tolerably quiet birds, are not general favourites; their listless ways, and occasional screaming fits, together with their inaptitude for acquiring articulate speech, may, perhaps, account for this. True, one of them,

now and then, will learn to speak a little; but Dr. Russ estimates their capacity in this respect very correctly when he says: "As talkers, they can only take third, or, at the best, secondary rank."

When acclimatised they are hardy, but when first imported decidedly delicate, and require a good deal of careful management to keep them from incontinently "going over to the majority." Nor is this to be wondered at, considering the change of climate and the difference of food. Natives of the tropics suddenly transferred to our bleak shores must feel the cold intensely. Feeders on bananas and other luscious fruit, green rice, and similar grain, do not take kindly to maize and hemp seed, which, however, with oats and canary seed, should constitute their food if they are to be kept alive in their involuntarily adopted country.

The transition from the diet they have been accustomed to, to that which is to be theirs in future must be gradual, and the effect of the change carefully noted for the first few weeks or months; but if purchased during the summer, and the feeding judiciously attended to, they will soon become acclimatised, and give no further trouble.

Though armed with powerful mandibles, they are not very destructive, and do not appear to have the same propensity for gnawing wood that is so great a drawback to the complete domestication of the larger Parrots and Cockatoos, and the Australian Parrakeets generally, but especially the *Platycerci*. We must, however, confess that the Eclecti do not, for the various reasons enumerated, stand very high in our esteem.

In *Poultry* for 1884, a writer described as follows a male Eclectus, which had taken a first prize at the preceding Crystal Palace Bird Show:—"As those who had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of 'Sir Garnet' will remember, the general colour of his plumage is vivid grass green, except upon the sides, which are ruby red; the beak is pinky red, like coral, and has a yellow tip. The size of this bird is about that of the larger African Grey Parrot; but the Eclectus has a bigger head, and is more thickly covered with feathers than our old friend 'Polly Grey.'

"It usually happens among birds that the female is more soberly clad than the male; and even in cases where the plumage of the sexes is identical in general colouring, it will be found that the tinting of the hen bird is duller than in the case of her mate; but in the present instance this order of things is reversed, for the female Eclectus is very much more brilliant in appearance than her partner; and is altogether such a different looking bird, that authors, until recently, supposed her to belong to a different species, and for a time refused

to believe that she could be the female of *E. polychlorus*. Nevertheless, such is undoubtedly the case, as was clearly proved by the author of that splendid work, *The Birds of Australia*, John Gould, F.R.S., who during one of his expeditions, heard from 'the natives' that the two supposed 'species' stood to each other in the relation of husband and wife, but absolutely declined at first to believe the tale.

"However, having shot a number of birds of both 'species', he found that all the green ones were males, and all the purple ones females; facts that shook his confidence in his own opinion, while subsequent observations led him to the conclusion that the aborigines were right after all, and that he had made a mistake, which he certainly very seldom did.

"The female *Eclectus* then is a much more resplendently attired person than her mate, and may be thus minutely described.—The head and upper neck are a rich crimson red; the lower neck, breast, belly, and upper part of the thighs purple, with a lilac shading; the mantle, back, scapulars, wing coverts, and upper tail coverts rich scarlet, with a purplish tinge. The flexure of the wings and outer webs of the quills are sky blue, and the vent and apical fascia of the tail yellow.

"Such a superabundance of rich colouring induced the earlier ornithologists, who obtained specimens of this bird, to class it with the Lories, with which, however, it has nothing in common but the outward semblance, which is too often deceptive; for its diet consists of seeds rather than fruit, and it is quite incapable of subsisting upon honey and the nectar and pollen of flowers."

The owner of 'Sir Garnet' not considering that justice had been done to his pet, described him as follows in a subsequent number of the same journal in which the notice had appeared: "I think he is a most handsome bird, and has got as many different colours on him as the female, if you will allow me to relate them: Beak coral tipped with pale yellow, no nostrils seen; head and neck bright grass green, the feathers like hair; top of each wing bright royal blue; back of neck yellow; back bright golden green; under the wings bright crimson, green between with a rose of crimson on the front of the breast; flight feathers purple; end of the wings crossed at back. The under part of the tail is purple, upper part bright green; each feather in the tail is half green and crimson-green, and blue-green and purple. The end of each feather is shaded like a golden geranium leaf.

"When the light is on him, he is simply grand. I think you will see by this that 'Sir Garnet' is not to be beaten by any other Parrot, and can hold his own against all comers, including even his female partner."

From these various descriptions of both the male and female Linnean Eclecti, and especially from the coloured plate, a very correct idea of the birds may be formed by readers who have not chanced to have seen them in the flesh, but they must be heard to be appreciated as they deserve; and although we adhere to the exactitude of the following description, we beg all who read these lines to suspend their judgment until they have had an opportunity of forming their own conclusions from personal observation.

"The Eclectus", continues the former writer, "is capable of being rendered very tame, and learns readily to imitate not only domestic sounds, but even occasionally the various words and expressions that are addressed to it, as well as to whistle. But when its beauty and accomplishments have been fully enumerated and dwelt upon, the question arises, Are these enough to counterbalance the appalling hideousness of its truly demoniacal yells? Scarcely, we think; and for our part we are quite content to leave the Eclecti, *polychlorus, grandis*, and the rest of them to Zoological Gardens, where their maddening shrieks are not much less terrible than those of their neighbours, the Glaucous Macaws and the Orange- and White-crested Cockatoos.

"It is not pretended, however, that a quiet, sedate, even silent specimen of this species is not to be encountered now and then; but all we can say is, that we have not as yet been fortunate enough to meet with one; and until we do we have no room for either of these birds (male and female) in our collection, whence doubtless our neighbours would soon insist upon their expulsion."

It will be noticed that while the owner of 'Sir Garnet' hastened to vindicate the character of his favourite, as regards the possession of personal beauty, he was silent in respect to the more serious imputation against what may be called its moral side; a fact that speaks volumes for the correctness of the estimate from which we have quoted above.

Why German writers should have bestowed upon these birds in particular the appellation of noble Parrots (*Edelpapagei*), is somewhat curious; for, at least in our opinion, they are not nearly as *distingué* looking as the Cockatoos, for instance, or even as the Amazons, particularly the larger species of that genus.

In the Zoological Society's "List" the Eclecti occupy the third place in the sub-family to which they are allocated, that of the *Palæornithinæ*, family *Palæornithidæ*, order *Psittaci*, constituting the genus *Eclectus*, of which three species have been exhibited at different times in the Parrot House, and of which several examples survive to the present day; particularly a remarkably fine pair of Linnean Eclecti, which were for eighteen months domiciled in a large aviary in the

warm and comfortable "Insect House", where with a persistency worthy of a better cause, they continued at variance, we might say deadly feud, with each other for the whole of that time; and then, when the authorities at last despaired of their ever agreeing, and removed them once more to the Parrot House, placing them together in one large cage, they for a time maintained the same mutually hostile attitude; but on our paying a visit to their prison-house a few weeks since (that is, in the early part of March, 1887), we found them, not one on the floor, and the other on the perch, as their custom had hitherto been, but sitting "cheek by jowl", and actually engaged in feeding each other!

That is to say, the green male was attentively feeding his purple partner with grains of half-digested maize, which he brought up by a regurgitating movement from his crop for her especial benefit;—a delicate attention on his part which she seemed to greatly appreciate, as was evidenced not only by a twitching of her tail, but by a little pleased murmur, that reminded us of the purring of a young kitten; and the little comedy was continued in spite of our inquisitive inspection for several minutes; the intelligent keeper assuring us that it was only within a very few days that the couple had "made it up."

Patience and perseverance are excellent virtues, and to be commended to owners of zoological collections, as well as to other people. Had these Eclecti been suffered to remain in their spacious aviary in the Insect House, they would, in all probability, ere this, have reared a family, of which it would have been vastly interesting to have ascertained whether all the members would in the first instance have resembled their mamma, or whether the sons would, from the first, have donned the paternal livery; but, in a cage, what chance have the poor birds got?

Unfortunately none; for if again transferred to the Insect House, where their former apartment is occupied by some other birds, in all likelihood they would be "upset", and the contemplated alliance between them postponed indefinitely. *Carpe diem* is the motto in such a case, or should be; but unhappily folk are not always ready to seize an opportunity when it presents itself, and the "tide which taken at the flood leads on to" success may not occur again.



JAMAICA PARROT.



JAMAICA PARROT,
OR WHITE-FRONTED AMAZON.

Psittacus collaria, LNN.

SYNONYMS: *Chrysotis collaria*, GR.; *C. Amazonica*, FNSCH.;

Psittacus leucocephalus var. δ , WGLR.

GERMAN: *Der Jamaïka Amazone*. FRENCH: *Perroquet de la Martinique*.

THIS little bird is one of the smaller members of the genus *Chrysotis*, and a native of Jamaica, where at one time it was very abundant, but is now found in yearly decreasing numbers. It was known to and described by Linnæus; and is yet to be met with occasionally in the dealers' shops on the continent of Europe, as well as in this country, where it is priced at from fifteen to twenty shillings; although a trained and talking specimen would necessarily command a larger sum, and sometimes it can be obtained for less than the former.

Of its linguistic attainments we are not able to report favourably; the various specimens that have come under our notice from time to time not having attained to any very great degree of proficiency in the art of imitating the human voice; although domestic sounds, such as the cackling of hens, quacking of ducks, and the cooing of pigeons were rendered by one of these birds with extraordinary fidelity.

Dr. Russ is of the same opinion in this respect, and credits *Chrysotis collaria* with small capacity for learning to speak, although he commends it as "teachable" (*gelehrig*).

It is very destructive to the fruit crops, especially to the oranges, in its native island; hence a war of extermination is waged against it by the inhabitants, which must eventually end in its extermination as a species, unless it could be perpetuated in a state of domesticity. In the house it is best dieted on boiled maize and hemp seed, with an occasional tit-bit in the shape of some ripe fruit, or a morsel of sweet cake or biscuit; but animal food should be strictly prohibited.

This bird has been frequently confounded with its congener, *Chrysotis leucocephala*, from the adjacent island of Cuba, from which nevertheless it differs in several material points. The general colour of the body is grass green, the feathers not presenting the deep black edging common to many members of the genus, and especially noticeable in the Cuban bird; the forehead and lores are white; the top of the head blue or bluish green; the sides of the head, the throat, and sometimes, but not always, the back of the neck ruby red; the upper tail coverts are greenish yellow; the base of the tail feathers with the exception of the central pair, which are wholly green, is scarlet; the beak is yellowish horn-colour, the cere greyish white, the legs and feet brownish yellow, and the belly greenish yellow.

It measures from twelve to thirteen inches in length, of which the tail occupies about four inches; the wings are short, and the bird by no means a strong flyer; a circumstance that favours its destruction by the negroes, with whose oranges and bananas it takes unwarrantable liberties, which Sambo and Quashie naturally resent, and turn the tables on poor *Collaria*, by trapping and making her into a stew, and feasting off her small but plump carcase; or selling her into captivity for the remainder of her days.

This species was first received by the London Zoological Society in 1869; since which date several individuals have been added to the collection, the last in 1881.

As will be seen by the plate it is a handsome bird, and has the further recommendation of being hardy and not noisy. Two of these Parrots which we had under observation for some time were very tame, and showed every inclination to breed, but were, unfortunately, not in circumstances that admitted of their doing so with any prospect of success. There is little doubt, however, that favourably situated, they would breed, and doubtless rear their young to maturity. The eggs are usually three in number, about the size of those of a small Pigeon, and are laid on the bare wood; no attempt at lining or furnishing the nest cavity being made.

It is said by several writers that the young are usually fed on fruit, particularly bananas, with which they can also be readily hand-reared if taken before their eyes are open, in which case they become very tame. The *modus operandi* is as follows:—"Sambo, or Dinah, as the case may be, chews a piece of banana to a pulp, and then putting the beak of the young bird into his or her mouth, forces the prepared food into its throat with the tongue." Whether a European would care to perform the same operation is doubtful, but numbers of young Parrots are annually thus brought up by the negro inhabitants of the

various West Indian Islands, who are not as fastidious in many respects as we are.

Though undoubtedly mischievous, it seems a pity that these interesting birds should be sooner or later doomed to extinction; for whether clambering among the dark green foliage of the orange trees, clinging to the purple or yellow bunches of bananas, or making a reconnoissance among the crops of maize, they add materially to the animation as well as to the beauty and picturesqueness of the scene they grace with their presence; but it is doubtful, to say the least, whether their various good points are appreciated by the owners of the several crops mentioned; and possibly were we in a position to change places with the owners in question (which a kind Heaven forbid!), we should be of their way of thinking; for we feel vexed with our own saucy sparrows, when we find a mob of them devastating a bed of crocuses or of primroses; or busily engaged in scratching up the seed which the gardener has just planted on the lawn.

It is a case of every one for himself, we are afraid, in which the weakest must go to the wall sooner or later. The Dodo has disappeared, also the Great Auk, not to speak of the Dinornis and the Moa. The Phillip Island Parrot is also probably extinct, while the Curious-toothed Pigeon (*C. strigirostris*), the Great Ground Parrot of New Zealand, and many others have either passed, or are on the point of passing away from the familiar scenes they once haunted in peace and security; and which, in a few short years at the latest, will know them again no more for ever. Yet the world jogs on in its accustomed path, and no one, except a few old fogies, will even give vent to a sigh of regret for the irrecoverable loss of a whole race of fellow-creatures; which no doubt once had a rôle to fulfil, and having fulfilled it, were bound to disappear from the stage of existence, and make room for others, that doubtless will in the course of time be fain to follow in their footsteps.

Be that as it may, it is probably hopeless to expect that legislative enactments will at least postpone the extinction of some of the threatened races in this and the other hemisphere; for vested interests take little note of legal restrictions that are not enforced by heavier penalties than obtain, say in the case of our Wild Bird Protection Acts, at which our professional bird-catchers simply snap their fingers and laugh; spreading their nets in defiance of the law, and taking birds by the thousand, we might indeed say by the million, from the 1st. of January to the 31st. of December. What is every person's business is usually nobody's, and so the slaughter (for to trap the poor creatures in the summer-time is tantamount to killing them) goes on; and fanciers

wonder why their favourites have become so scarce; or have even vanished altogether from scenes where they once abounded.

No, there seems no help for it. Man, be he pale-faced, or black-faced, is lord paramount over the creation, it would appear; and woe betide the creature that sets itself in antagonism to him, or, which amounts to the same thing, he imagines takes up such a position in his regard. He has no pity where his selfish interests are concerned, and takes no notice of any feelings but his own in the matter. "Those rascally Parrots", for instance, he will say, "suck my oranges, and I shoot them." "If you do so at every season of the year", we reply, "there will soon be none of them left to damage your property, or anybody else's"; "and a good job, too", he answers, viciously; whereupon we retire from the contest, feeling that to spend more time talking with such a person would amount to little less than a crime, be an utter folly at all events; and so the White-fronted Parrots must be left to take what care they can of themselves.

There is one little shred of hope, one little crumb of comfort, left to us after all. The Parrots are quite as wise in their generation as our own Rooks, or the Great White Cockatoos of the Australian continent; and when about to descend, be it on a fruit or a maize crop, are cunning enough to post sentries on the tree tops round the scene of their marauding expedition, which sentinels give the signal on the slightest suspicion of danger; when the whole flock rise at once into the air, with deafening clamour, in the case of the Cockatoos; and with the loudest and shrillest cries they are capable of uttering in that of the Jamaica Parrots, and hie them away with what speed they may to safer quarters; returning when the threatened peril has passed to finish their interrupted banquet.

Persecution has undoubtedly sharpened the wits of many threatened races, and postponed for an indefinite period, if it has not altogether averted, the day when the last member of them shall follow his companions to that bourne from which nor bird, nor beast, nor man himself has ever yet returned. Parrots, like Rooks, soon learn to "smell powder", as country people say; to recognise the lethal weapon at all events that deals death among them from a distance, they seem also to have learned to measure; for we have often noticed, when in Australia, that the Cockatoos, Lemon-crested, or Long-billed, never attempted to rise until we were almost within gunshot, when the sentinels would give the alarm; and the flock obeying the signal, would hurry away without the loss of a feather, screaming in terrified response to the report of our double-barrelled gun.

There are of course still mountain fastnesses and inaccessible ravines

even in Jamaica, where the persecuted White-fronted Parrots find a safe asylum in which to bring up their broods; and as long as such exist there will be no danger of the extinction of the race; but as the island becomes more and more densely populated, *Collaria* must of necessity be driven further and further back with the advance of cultivation, and finally disappear. May that day be far distant, for she is a nice bird, and if not talkative, tame and gentle, and has many pretty little ways that endear her to those into whose custody she has chanced to pass.

Dr. Russ asserts that these birds make their nests in holes in trees, and lay four eggs (*in Baumhöhlen nisten und vier Eier legen soll*); but three is, by other observers, asserted to be the usual number; and we have not heard of more than the latter complement having been laid in captivity, in which no young have, to our knowledge, been produced as yet.

There is very little difference in the colouring or outward appearance of the sexes; the male is, perhaps, a trifle larger than his mate, and has the red throat of a brighter shade; but the resemblance is so close that it is difficult to say of a given bird, or even a couple of birds, whether they are cocks or hens; for two of either sex will caress and feed each other when kept together, as freely and as affectionately as if they were a real pair.

They quarrel sometimes, it is true; and if these domestic squabbles are of frequent occurrence, and one of the two birds is always the aggressor, the connoisseur may be certain that they are really a pair, that the quarrelsome party is the female, and the quiet one the male; for, except during the breeding season, the hen birds invariably have the best of it, and drive their "lords and masters" about in the most uncompromising manner; yet, strange to relate, when spring, or instinct, or call it "love", has turned their thoughts into another channel, they become submissive and affectionate wives. But this meekness only lasts for a comparatively short time, and when domestic duties are at an end, Monsieur has to be on his good behaviour, and take care of himself again, as well as he is able.

In the wild state he simply flies away, joins a flock of good fellows of his own sex, and leaves Madame to shift for herself; sometimes returning to her in the spring, and sometimes solacing himself with another partner. True some kinds of birds pair for life, but *Collaria* does not appear to be one of them, for which reason it will be as well to separate the ill-assorted pair as soon as it is observed that the female, instead of submitting gratefully to his attentions, commences to peck at her lord, and drive him about the aviary or cage; for we have

known cases in which the male has been so persecuted that he has been unable to feed, and become so weak at last he could not stand.

It is said that a captive bird of this species, whether male or female, will at once take charge of a young bird of the same kind, and feed and nurse it until it is able to provide for itself; but we have no personal knowledge of the fact, although judging from what we know of similar acts of kindness performed by many birds towards the helpless of their own and kindred races, we do not think it is at all improbable; and if any of our readers are cognisant of such attentions having been rendered by their birds to others, we shall be glad to hear from them, and record the fact in the Appendix, with which at some future date we propose to conclude this work.

Crescendo vires! we gain knowledge as we proceed, and many facts have kindly been brought to our notice by correspondents since we began *Parrots in Captivity*, of which we shall be only too glad to avail ourselves when an opportunity for so doing is presented to us.

In conclusion we cannot, we think, do better than commend *Chrysotis collaria* to our readers as a very desirable pet; from whom, nevertheless, too much must not be expected in the matter of speech.



RED-THROATED WHITE-FRONTED AMAZON.

CUBAN PARROT, OR
 RED-THROATED WHITE-HEADED
 AMAZON.

Psittacus leucocephalus, LNN.

SYNONYMS: *Chrysotis leucocephala*, AUCT.; *Amazona leucocephala*, SCHLG.;

Psittacus martinicus gutture rubro, BRSS.; *P. Paradisi*, SHW., CTBS.

GERMAN: *Der weisköpfige Amazonenpapagei*, BCHST.

FRENCH: *Perroquet de Cuba*, BFF.

THIS charming bird bears, as we have said, a considerable resemblance to its neighbour of Jamaica, from which it is principally distinguished by the black lacing on the feathers of the head and neck, and by the red throat. It is also somewhat larger than *Collaria*, to which it yields in no good quality, while it surpasses it in linguistic attainments.

It is probably the longest known of any of the American Parrots, having been mentioned by Aldrovandi, though first accurately described by Edwards, and named by Linnæus. Not long since we saw a most graphic portrait of one of these birds in an old oil painting; it was represented leaning forward, with out-stretched wings, from the branch of a tree, to reach a cherry held out to it by a pretty child in the foreground, and had evidently been painted from life. We made a bid for the painting, of which the artist was unknown, but failed, to our regret, to secure it.

Catesby, from reason unknown, but probably from the combined beauty and gentleness of the creature, named this bird the Paradise Parrot; and the father of chamber bird-lore waxed unusually eloquent in its praise in his larger work; although in his *Naturgeschichte der Stubenvögel*, he dismissed it with the summary remark:—"This is one

Referring to some old catalogues of the Crystal Palace Bird Shows, we find that a White-headed Parrot was exhibited there in 1883, in the "Any other variety of large Parrots" Class, and took a third prize; the price affixed was £4 4s. Another was shown in 1884 by Mr. Washer, under the ill-omened name of "Cut-throat Amazon", but was left unnoticed by the Judges; the price asked was £2 10s. In 1885, Miss Ada Skinner showed a very fine specimen, that took first prize in the same class, and was valued at the comparatively low figure of £3 10s. The same bird was exhibited the following year by the same owner, who then priced it at £5 10s., but it only succeeded in gaining a fourth prize; and in 1887 none were shown.

The food for this species is the same already recommended more than once for members of this sub-family, namely, hemp seed, maize, boiled and raw, and canary seed. A morsel of sweet cake, or biscuit, or a bit of stale bread, may be given now and then for a change, as well as a slice of raw carrot, or ripe apple, or a few grapes. "Sop" is not to be advised; but water, both for drinking and bathing, should always be available; while sharp grit is a *sine quâ non* if the bird is to retain its health and beauty. A log of soft wood will afford amusing occupation; and a fly round the room now and then will exercise the wings and the comparatively large muscles that move them.

Occasionally the claws or the beak become overgrown and must be cut; which can be done by means of a sharp pair of scissors or a nail nipper, which is perhaps the better instrument of the two for the purpose. The bird should be held in the hands of another person, and for security from bites should be wrapped in a towel or napkin, leaving exposed merely the parts that are to be operated on. After a time, or two, should it be necessary to repeat the cutting, the bird will not make nearly so much resistance as at first; and finally the cloth may be dispensed with, as the Parrot will submit with resignation to the inevitable.

We recollect a short time before his lamented death, seeing a very fine specimen of this bird at the establishment of Mr. Anton Jamrach. It spoke several words with very fair distinctness, and was so tame it would allow him to take it out of its cage, and toss it about without resisting or appearing to be frightened in the least. We forget the price he asked for it; but probably it was somewhat high, or the bird would have exchanged owners, as it was a pretty gentle creature; and being yet young, gave good promise of becoming a valuable acquisition in the near future.

It is, however, a mistake to suppose that Parrots, generally, do not require to be taught; but that they will pick up of their own accord

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'Dr. Bree is favourably known to ornithologists by numerous contributions to our zoological periodicals, in all of which there is found the same genial spirit, and the same tone of good feeling, kindness, and reverence, which pervade the present work..... The figures are, for the most part, highly satisfactory, and leaves us in wonder how they could be produced, in combination with the full and copious text, for so small a price.'—*Athenaeum*.

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a variety of accomplishments without any attention to them on the part of their owner. An odd one here and there may certainly do so, but as a rule, unless considerable pains are taken, a Parrot will make no progress to speak of, in a human language.

The more a Parrot is noticed and spoken to, the sooner it will become docile, and begin to repeat the words and sentences it hears. We have, it is true, known cases where one of these birds has repeated with perfect accuracy even tolerably long sentences, which had certainly only been once uttered in its presence; but such exceptional talent is, to say the least, rare; and the contrary rule may indeed be said to obtain among them.

If it is wished to teach some word or phrase to a pet Parrot of any species, that phrase, or word, must be distinctly and slowly repeated before it whenever an opportunity presents itself; and the more frequently the better. At first, very likely, the bird will take no notice; but after a longer or shorter interval, the patience of the tutor will be rewarded by hearing the pupil whisper a word, or a word or two of the phrase spoken to it, which it will do in a low key, and with a deeply meditative air, as if it were severely taxing its memory, or testing its power of articulation. By and bye the pupil gains confidence, and repeats its lesson with more boldness; but not until it is perfect in it should another trial be made, and a new word or sentence be introduced, or added to the existing repertory.

By judicious education a Parrot, of almost every known kind, from the tiny Budgerigar to the gigantic Macaw, may be converted into a talker, more or less proficient it is true, according to the species taken in hand; but we have no hesitation in saying that all the Parrots, with a very few exceptions, will learn to speak; and very likely that the few that have hitherto been looked upon as non-talkers, may with greater care than has hitherto been bestowed upon them, develop latent talents which had not been previously suspected.

Who, for instance, would have imagined a few years since that the Undulated Grass Parrakeet, generally known by its aboriginal Australian name of Budgerigar, would have developed powers of speech? but that it has done so is incontestable; for not only does Dr. Karl Russ, in his work, *Die Sprechenden Papageien*, give several instances of talking Budgerigars; most interesting, but too long for quotation in these pages, although we reserve some of them for our Appendix; but a well-known London amateur has recently communicated to the *Bazaar* newspaper an account of one of these birds, which he has himself taught to speak.

"I have at the present time", writes Mr. Joseph Groom, on March

2nd., 1887, "a most wonderful talker in a male Undulated Grass Parrakeet (Budgerigar); it is quite a plain speaker, and has not learnt from another bird, for I taught him myself from the first, and now he pronounces very distinctly different words he hears that suit his fancy; such as, 'Oh! you wicked boy; so you are.' I find the females will also talk fairly well."

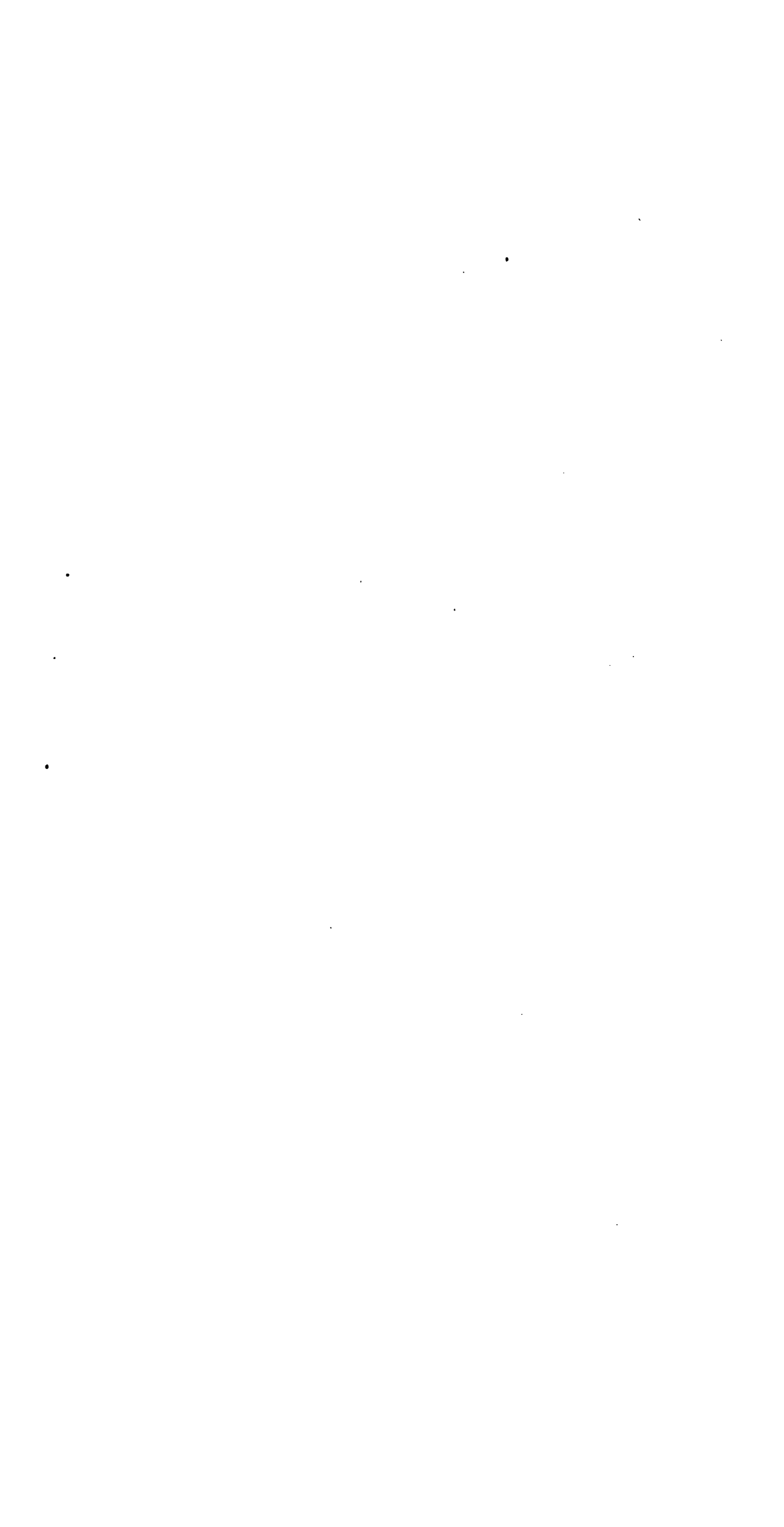
If then this mite of a bird can be taught to imitate the human voice, what may not be expected from the more highly gifted Cuban Parrot, if taken in hand young and carefully trained? The attempt certainly is worth making, if only from a pecuniary point of view; for, say that a newly imported White-headed Parrot is worth twenty shillings in the market, the same bird capable of repeating distinctly half a dozen or so of short sentences, or even a few words, would certainly be worth double, or treble, the sum named, or even more. Let amateurs therefore persevere, for in the Cuban they have a plastic material to work with; a bird which a high authority in this connection pronounces to be teachable, good-tempered, easily tamed, and chattering all day.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the White-headed Amazon (Chrysotis leucocephala).

I RECOLLECT the first of this species that I saw was a very tame little bird, that used to run about the kitchen floor in the house where we lived. He would say "Pretty Polly", and he loved having his poll scratched. But there his accomplishments ended. After a time his mistress, whose devotion to him was not, I think, very deep, found that he was infested with vermin, and sent him to the Zoological Gardens, from which she never, I believe, took him back.

I have written thus at length about him, because I think he was a very typical specimen of his kind. Bechstein speaks of it as "very tame and talkative." I should agree with the "very tame." I look upon it as perhaps the most easily tamed of all the Amazons, but as a decidedly indifferent talker. Other people have given it a good character for talking; and it cannot be too often repeated, that you may find clever individuals in species that learn with difficulty; and individuals absolutely incapable of learning anything of the very cleverest species. Still, as a whole, the small Amazons are not, according to my experience, good talkers; and the White-headed is not even good amongst the small Amazons.

Their price varies according to the number in the market. Unless the specimen be clever, £1 is ample at any time. They might be bought much cheaper.





YELLOW-NAPED AMAZON.

YELLOW-NAPED AMAZON.

Psittacus auripalliatus, LSS.

SYNONYMS: *Amazona auripalliata*, SCHLG.; *Chrysotis auripalliata*, FNSCH.;

C. auro-palliata, GR.; *C. aureipalliata*, BP.; *C. flavinuchus*;

Psittacus flavinuchus, GLD.

GERMAN: *Der gelbnackige Amazonenpapagei*, Rss.

FRENCH: *Perroquet Amazone à collier d'or*.

JUDGING from the specimens that at different times have come under our notice, this is a very delightful species, clever, gentle, tractable, and less given to the undue exercise of its vocal abilities at their utmost pitch than many of its congeners; it is also handsome and hardy, and, in a word, one to be highly recommended to the notice of amateurs.

The general colour of the plumage is grass green, darker above than on the under surface of the body; the forehead, top of the head and the cheeks are of a paler shade of the same colour; the nape is deep citron-yellow, which is also, occasionally, the colour of the crown of the head; the green wings are dappled with deep crimson and blue; the tail is green with red spots; the feet and legs dark horn-grey, the claws black, and the irides reddish brown.

Mrs. Proschek, of Vienna, in Dr. Russ's *Chamber Birds*, writes as follows concerning this species:—"Of all the Parrots I prefer the Amazons, and of these the Yellow-nape is my favourite. It is the most charming and delightful creature imaginable. When anyone rings the bell, or when the dogs bark, the Amazon calls out, 'There is some one there!' (*es ist jemand da!*) When it hears me speaking it flies to me and whispers in the most charming voice, 'Where have you been?' (*wer war da!*). If it sees me preparing to go out, it flies on my shoulder, and calls out in the most plaintive manner, 'Don't go, stay here.' (*geh nicht fort, bleib' da*). When I take it and put it down on its perch,

after having kissed it, and gone out, it commences to whimper and cry like a child. When I return and go to see it, it flies immediately on my shoulder, and exclaims, 'Stay here' (*bleib' da*). It laughs, cries, and sings when I ask it to do so, and will lie on its back in my lap and play like a kitten. It will not bite, lets me do what I like with it, and is never in the least vicious. In the evening, when all the other Parrots have gone to their cages, it is the last up, sits on my arm, covered with a handkerchief, and regularly goes to sleep. After it has been warmed and kissed, it retires voluntarily into its cage. When it is sleeping on my arm, and I say, 'Now, dear Lori, sing', it commences in a little soft voice, 'wie im Bauer.' It will go to ladies without any difficulty; and I have no fear that the strangers will be bitten, but gentlemen it cannot abide. This ever-charming little creature, after having been in my possession for three years, was returned to its former master, Herr Schöttler, in Bremerhaven. The poor bird was at death's door, it fretted so greatly, and had a severe bite at the root of the beak inflicted by a large Macaw, or a monkey. I wrote to Herr Schöttler, begging him to let me have the bird to nurse until it was well: he was obliging enough to consent. Then began a cruel time, but I nursed it; and the bird, becoming in the interval as dear to me as a child to its mother, recovered at length; when I bought it, and now my pet is prettier, stronger, and healthier than ever. It has struck up a warm friendship with a Vinaceous Amazon, and when the cook is called in the morning, 'Rosa, bring the coffee (*Rosi, bring' an Kafe*), it cries out to the Amazon, 'Tauberl, bring the coffee' (*Tauberl, bring' an Kafe*)."

The London Zoological Society first acquired this species in 1844, when a specimen was purchased. Another was presented to the Gardens in 1866, and a third in 1879.

The cost of a newly-imported Yellow-naped Amazon is about forty or fifty shillings; an educated specimen that spoke well, would of course command a very much higher price. Dr. Russ quotes the value of a talking bird of this species at from £6 to £7 10s.

This Amazon was first fully described in 1842 by Lesson. It is a native of Central America, and is frequently kept by the inhabitants of Costa Rica, where it is a great favourite with both rich and poor, according to Dr. A. von Frantzius, who had opportunities of observing it in its wild state as well as in captivity; and who gives it an excellent character for gentleness and capacity for learning.

The Yellow-naped Amazons differ from each other very considerably in appearance, although the description we have given above is that more generally applicable to them; but some specimens have blue, and

others yellow on the head and face, and some are either almost or entirely without the yellow collar on the back of the neck, but these are thought to be immature birds; and it would be interesting to note the changes wrought in the colour of the plumage of a given individual by the lapse of time; observations which we have not, as yet, had an opportunity of making.

It is a large bird, measuring about fifteen inches in length, of which the tail occupies four and a half inches; the wings measure from eight inches to eight inches and a half, and cover, when folded, about two-thirds of the tail.

When treating of the Yellow-naped Amazon, Dr. Karl Russ mentions that Fräulein Hagenbeck received in 1878, among other birds, three supposed members of the species which had the face and the whole of the front of the head yellow, while the beak was bright yellowish horn-grey (*hellgelblichhorngrau*); and when he asked what they were, Karl Hagenbeck replied, "I do not exactly know, though I believe them to be hybrids between the Yellow-naped and the large Yellow-headed Amazon. It is certainly very curious, but by no means impossible, that such a cross should have occurred in a state of nature."

Nevertheless we do not greatly believe in mules as the result of cross alliances among birds or animals living a natural life of freedom, though we are aware that such monsters are not of unfrequent occurrence when the same creatures are reduced to captivity by the hand of man; their natural instincts blunted, and their idiosyncrasies lost or perverted by his action. We are more inclined to think that the Fräulein's Parrots were pided "sports", which are not so unusual among the denizens of our woods and fields; and presumably are now and then to be met with in Tropical America, as well as in our own less genial climate. The question certainly might have been set at rest by putting up these birds to breed *inter se*, when had there been no result but barren eggs, it might have been confidently declared that the creatures really were hybrids; while had any young birds made their appearance, it would have been very curious and interesting to watch their development, and whether they assumed the usual family livery, or perpetuated the deviation of their parents from the ancestral type.

In the latter case the presumption would have been that the three birds were the offspring, not of individuals belonging to two distinct species, but rather to two races owning a common origin; in which case the progeny would have been mongrels. It is hopeless, however, for private individuals to attempt such necessarily costly experiments,

which should rather be undertaken by the various Zoological Societies and Sociétés d' Acclimatation throughout the world; which, although they undoubtedly have done a good deal, have by no means exhausted the possibilities of scientific effort in the direction indicated.

Our London Zoological Society has at various times possessed thirty species of Amazon Parrots out of thirty-eight enumerated by Dr. Russ, who divides these birds into three groups; the first of which contains sixteen species with red dappling on the wings (*Mit rothem Flügelspiegel*), and one (*Chrysotis xanthops*) without.

The second group consists of eight species with blue wing coverts, and, for the most part, with red frontal band and red eye streak.

The third group contains thirteen species, subdivided as follows:— Firstly, five with the edges of the wings and the first wing coverts marked with red; secondly, two without red dappling on the wings; thirdly, six species that have red dappling on the wings; all three sub-groups having red on the heads, and the first wing coverts green.

This division is not without its disadvantages; for the Amazons, as we have said, are by no means uniform in colouring in many of the species; and we think a preferable mode of classification is by size, which varies considerably. Thus we have the large group, veritable giants of the race, such as Natterer's, and the Mealy Amazons, which measure about nineteen inches in length; then we have the medium-sized birds, of which the subject of the present notice, the Surinam and Festive Amazons are examples, their length varying from fifteen inches and a half to fourteen inches; and lastly the small Amazons, such as the White-fronted and Finsch's, which only measure twelve inches in length.

To return to the Yellow-naped. It will readily be conceded that from its appearance it takes high rank among its fellows; while as regards its intellectual capabilities it will perhaps come next to the Double-fronted, otherwise Le Vaillant's Amazon, which was figured and described in the second volume of this work. It is certainly to be regretted that so eminently desirable a Parrot, from the fancier's point of view at all events, should be of such rare occurrence in the bird market; and we may advise our readers to secure every specimen of the Yellow-naped they may chance to come across.

It is decidedly hardy, even when first brought over, and with the commonest care will survive in captivity for a great many years. Cases are recorded where it has attained to quite a patriarchal age, and been handed down from one generation to another, like an heirloom.

The food should consist of maize, boiled and raw, hemp seed, oats, a few nuts, and in summer a little ripe fruit; but meat, or animal

food of any kind whatever, should not on any account be given; as by heating the blood, such unnatural diet leads to skin disease, and is one cause at least of Parrots disfiguring themselves by plucking out their own feathers; a habit that once contracted is most difficult of cure.

We do not think these birds have so far been bred in captivity, though some Amazons had young ones in the wood at Northrepps; but from the description given we conclude them to have been the Blue-fronted Amazon; a much commoner importation than the Yellow-naped. If however one species has multiplied in this country, there is every inducement for amateurs to make trial of other members of the genus; and the scarcer the species the more remunerative would be the venture to the enterprising amateur.

Another advantage would be that the progress of the nestling to adult Parrothood, could be noted at every stage, and numerous doubtful points in their history be satisfactorily cleared up; while it is reasonable to suppose that creatures born in captivity would become more readily domesticated, than others that had enjoyed a previous life of liberty; or at least were the descents of wild birds, in which the hereditary love of freedom would of necessity be strong.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Yellow-naped Amazon (Chrysotis auripalliata).

I HAVE only kept one of these birds. I got it from Håvre, where it drew a great many people round the shop by its conversational powers. It was quite young when it came to me, so young that there was but a yellow feather or two showing where the gold nape ought to be. I kept it through its next moult, and it was bought at the Albert Palace Show by a lady, who tells me that she prizes it more than all her other Parrots. It was very clever, but I think it missed the lively streets of Håvre, and found a quiet country parsonage in England a surprising experience; for it was some time with me before it said a word. It talked best after the arrival of a Double-fronted Amazon, which came from Håvre too. Then, it was very amusing to hear them talking and answering one another, like a couple of old Frenchwomen. It was said to sing three songs, of which the names were given to me; but I think I may safely say that whatever the accomplishments it had, those were certainly imaginary.

And how many other Parrots are credited with saying and doing things, of which they are as innocent as Mrs. Harris' sister's child was of "performing beautiful upon the Arp!" I suppose the people who tell you what Parrots say, really believe they have heard them. Let

us hope they do. But at any rate if Jacquet did not sing "Hola, le Nicholas", or "J'ai du bon tabac", neither did he scream, and the lack of the voice quite counterbalanced the lack of the accomplishment. I think Dr. Russ says that the drawback to Amazons is that, however accomplished they may become, they never quite give up their natural screams, whereas the Grey Parrot does. But my experience does not tally with his. I have had at least one Blue-fronted and one Double-fronted, as well as Jacquet, which never screamed. And with regard to Greys, though they may give up their natural scream, they almost always have some disagreeable noise, either the squeak of a creaking barrow or some loud shrill whistle, or even only the chirp of a Canary; but rendered, as it were, through the microphone, if I am right in supposing that the microphone is the instrument that makes the walk of a fly sound like an elephant's tramp? So that the chances are that a good Double-fronted or Yellow-naped Amazon will prove a pleasanter companion than a Grey, take them all in all. In one respect Jacquet was more like a Grey than an Amazon. The merit of an Amazon is that he talks freely before strangers, as a rule, and a Grey will not. But Jacquet would *not* talk before strangers, in England at any rate. In Håvre, as I have said, I was told he always kept a crowd round the shop where he hung. He was a nervous bird, and though he would come on your hand, was easily frightened. But my experience of him leads me to say that a young Yellow-naped Amazon is quite as desirable as a Double-fronted Amazon.

They are about the same value—£2 10s. to £3 each. The food for the Blue-fronted Amazon suits the Yellow-nape. I would not advise any one to buy a bird of which the Yellow-nape had fully come, and which was still wild. They would probably secure nothing but an unbearable screamer. Of course a clever Yellow-nape, like a clever Double-fronted, is worth a great deal more than £3.

I have talked of Jacquet as "he", but I don't feel sure it was not a hen. The fact is that owing to "perroquet" being masculine, and "perruche" feminine, all French Parrots are "he", and all French Parrakeets "she". I think it may have been a hen, because it struck me that the Yellow-naped Amazon exhibited at the last Palace Show had a much bluer head. Jacquet was of a more uniform green.



MEALY AMAZON.

MEALY AMAZON.

Psittacus farinosus.

SYNONYMS: *Chrysotis farinosa*, BDD.; *C. pulverulentus*, SWNS.;
C. farinosus, GR.; *Amazona pulverulenta*, LSS.; *A. farinosa*, SCHLG.
 GERMAN: *Der bepuderte Amazonenpapagei, oder die Mülleramazonen*, RSS.
 FRENCH: *Meunier de Cayenne*, BFF.; *Perroquet meunier*, LVLTT.

THIS is perhaps the largest of the Amazons, measuring nearly twenty inches in length, of which the tail only occupies about five inches. It is not a handsome bird, and its capacity for uttering the most ear-piercing shrieks imaginable, must be taken as a set-off against its docility and powers of imitation.

It learns to speak clearly and well, and is extremely gentle as a rule; but the strong beak is often exercised upon the furniture, and if it should happen to bite anyone, either in anger or in fear, the wound inflicted is not a light one.

It is a native of Brazil, Guiana, and the northern parts of South America generally, but does not extend into the central parts of the dual continent; and is decidedly most numerous in Guiana.

Not very much is known of the habits of this species in its wild state; but under this heading, Burmeister gives the following brief account, which we extract from Dr. Karl Russ's *Die Papageien*:—"It is found exclusively in the densest forests, to which it resorts in flocks composed of moderate numbers. In the neighbourhood of Rio and Pamba I saw many of these birds caged and tame."

Latham was the first English writer who described this Parrot, which was scientifically named by Boddaert—Dr. Russ says "in 1873"; but this evidently is an error, as the Mealy Amazon was an inhabitant of the London Zoological Gardens ten years before that date; a specimen having been "deposited" on the 18th. of March, 1863, and two more in 1873, which last may possibly have been those to which the German doctor alludes.

As might have been expected from the character we have unwillingly been compelled to give of this bird, it is not in much request with amateurs; and specimens may occasionally be picked up for a few shillings, though the market price is quoted at from thirty to fifty shillings a piece, and occasionally more. Recently we were asked £3 for a Mealy, that was evidently suffering from lung disease, for its feathers were ruffled, it breathed with apparent difficulty, and gaped every now and then. Needless to say we "declined with thanks", although we were, at the time, anxious to secure a bird of this species.

A glance at the accompanying plate will convey to the reader an excellent idea of the bird's appearance, which may, however, be thus briefly described:—Size of a Raven, but standing on shorter legs, looks less; general colour dark grass green; forehead, cheeks, and under parts yellowish green; crown of the head yellow, changing into dusky violet, and on the nape to blackish green; back and sides greyish green; wings dark green, with black, deep blue, and crimson markings. The tail is dark green, with yellowish and blue shadings. The irides are brown, and the beak horn-colour. The whole plumage is plentifully besprinkled with a pearly white powder, which gives the bird a very strange appearance, and has originated the specific designations of *farinosus* and *pulverulentus*, that have been bestowed upon it; as well as its English, German, and French trivial names of "mealy", "bepuderte", and "poudré", which all have the same signification.

It is certainly curious, and, when heard for the first time, decidedly startling, to find a bird talking with the voice of a man, and repeating words and phrases with more or less accuracy and distinctness; but after all the bird's own natural language, inarticulate as it may appear to us unfeathered bipeds, is really much more extraordinary. True it may be elliptical, and perhaps incomplete, that is from our point of view; but in order to obtain the best idea of it that we can we should put ourselves in the bird's place, and not the bird in ours. This is a difficult matter no doubt; but if we disabuse our minds of all preconceived notions, it is much easier, than might at first sight appear, to obtain a knowledge, limited in extent it is true, of what two birds of the same species are conversing about.

Parrots perhaps are not the best subjects to choose for this novel study, for domesticity has caused them, to a certain extent, to forget their native language, or at least has rendered them more or less inexpert in its use; but even tame Parrots can talk to each other, and will do so now and then, especially when no human being is by; and it is astonishing what a variety of intonation, even of syllabic sounds, can be detected in their utterances by an attentive listener.

These sounds and utterances, no less than the actions of the birds are often ludicrously misrepresented by writers; for example, speaking of the Toucans, a well-known author says, "Grotesque as is their appearance, they have a great hatred of birds which they think to be uglier than themselves, and will surround and mob an unfortunate Owl that by chance has got into the daylight; with as much zest as is displayed by our Crows and Magpies at home under similar circumstances. While engaged in this amusement they get round the poor bird in a circle, and shout at him so, that wherever he turns he sees nothing but great snapping bills, a number of tails bobbing regularly up and down, and threatening gestures in every direction."

The above extract is very funny no doubt, but is it true? We do not mean is it true that the Toucans will mob an Owl, for we have no doubt that in common with all other feathered denizens of the woods and fields, they have a horror of the midnight marauder that comes slyly up on noiseless pinions, and pounces on them in the dark, when they are unable to resist his insidious attack; but that they surround him with threatening gestures, "because he is uglier than themselves" is an absurd statement that should not have been made by a naturalist of repute. In the first place are the Toucans; are any creatures for that matter, "ugly" or "grotesque" in their own eyes, or in those of the Beneficent Being who made them, and fixed the bounds of their habitation? Certainly not; we cannot for a moment believe or accept as correct so rash an assertion.

Similarly one may read in other works on natural history that some bird utters "a sobbing sound of deep pain", when really it is the creature's natural note, and is expressive of a variety of sentiments which the writer in question has utterly failed to discriminate; or another, speaking of the Nightingale, will call it "the bird forlorn", and take its song to be "passing sad", when it is exactly the reverse.

A more truthful, because more thoughtful and observant, writer says upon the same subject in a recent essay: "There is no more miserable captive, in a small way, than the 'call-bird' employed by bird-catchers. He beats himself against the bars of his prison, and, at sight of his free brethren overhead, utters pitiable cries, which an 'ingenious naturalist' has thus interpreted: 'Call-birds manifest a most malicious joy in bringing the wild ones into the same state of captivity. Their sight and hearing infinitely excel those of the bird-catcher. The instant the wild birds are perceived, notice is given by one of the call-birds, after which follows the same tumultuous ecstasy of joy.' This may be man's view of the situation; but what is the bird's? Dejected with confinement, it is placed in a small cage upon the borders of a breezy

down, or swelling upland. The thistle seed is wafted past his prison bars—cloud, sun, and gale play upon it. The passionate desire for freedom swells the breast of the unhappy captive, which at this moment hears the joyous twittering of an approaching flight. What wonder that it sends forth a piercing note of appeal, or that its agitation attracts the attention of its fellows on the wing?"

What wonder indeed? but as long as the actions and voices of birds, whether they be Redpolls, Linnets, or Mealy Amazons, are considered solely from the human point of view; so long will they be liable to more or less ludicrous misrepresentation.

The same writer, whose true interpretation of the "call-birds" notes we have just quoted, further remarks in another place, "Superstitions regarding the articulate speech of birds were once widely prevalent among the Oriental nations, and were fully shared by the aborigines of the New World. From this stock has sprung an entirely false estimate of the so-called powers of speech supposed to be possessed by certain birds above others. Imitative speech is not speech at all, but mere jargon caught up and reproduced by some fowls gifted with the faculty of mimicry. These over-praised orators never really talk less than when giving solemn utterance to some phrase or trick of human speech; their efforts have import only to the human ear. They are purely mechanical and accidental, and afford no basis of understanding among the birds themselves."

This conclusion, nevertheless, appears to us to be a little overstrained; the possession of human speech once, we know, saved the life of a tame Piping Crow that had wandered from its master's house into a newly ploughed field, where a number of its congeners were engaged in picking up the various grubs that had been dislodged from their accustomed haunts; and as soon as these wild Crows saw the tame one, they surrounded and attacked it, when the latter began to volubly repeat its whole not very choice repertory of "colonial" phrases, which had the effect of putting its adversaries to immediate flight; whereupon the tame bird returned in triumph to the farmhouse, where it began to pipe lustily the tune of "There's nae guid luck about the house", which, under the circumstances, was perhaps the most unsuitable melody it could have selected.

From our point of view the actions of birds are no less ridiculous than their mode of expressing themselves in certain contingencies; for example, two Mealy Amazons, one of which is combing the other's head, or feeding it with half-digested food disgorged for the purpose, are at once absurd and disgusting; but if we put ourselves out of the question for the moment, and consider the same actions from the

Parrot's point of view, we shall certainly arrive at another and a truer interpretation. The head combing is a delicate attention, equivalent to the human osculatory salute, which possibly a Parrot may consider ridiculous enough; while the feeding, to our notions repulsive, is the greatest mark of affection one bird can bestow upon another.

This reminds us of a case that recently came under our notice: a lady correspondent wrote complaining of her Parrot; we forget the species, but let us say it was a Mealy Amazon, a most charming bird, and hitherto the delight of her life, so tame, so affectionate, and so clever! but alas! it had within the last few weeks acquired the most horribly disgusting habit! (there were three or four notes of exclamation in the original) every time she went near the cage the wretched bird made itself sick, and brought up great mouthfuls of half-digested food. What could be the cause of, and what could be done to cure it of, such an abominable habit?

In vain we assured the lady that the poor bird was not only unconscious of offence, but was actually offering to its ungrateful mistress the very strongest proof of its affection for her, that it was capable of giving. She would not listen to our explanation, and either sold or gave away the bird, which she declared acted as she had described on purpose to annoy her; and to this day she believes that her interpretation of the poor affectionate Parrot's conduct is the correct one.

In concluding his account of the Mealy Amazon, Dr. Karl Russ says: "Its mode of life resembles on the whole that of the other Amazons. It is much hunted, is easily tamed and trained, and learns to speak well; nevertheless, on account of its screaming, it is not so highly esteemed as its fellows previously described."

We may here remark that it is rather on account of the injury done to the various crops that this bird is persecuted by the inhabitants, than for the sake of making a few reals by selling it into captivity.

The personal appearance of this large Parrot is not in its favour, for it looks as if it had been rooting in a bag of flour, and wanted brushing; and we never see a Mealy Amazon without an inclination to give it a good shaking; which, by the bye, would not be a very judicious thing to do, considering the formidable bill of the creature, and the use to which it would doubtless put it in such a contingency.

Putting, however, the be-powdered condition of the bird out of the question, the Mealy Amazon is not so undesirable an acquisition as might from what we have said about it be considered. It screams, no doubt, and screams loudly too, but it is docile, and learns to talk fairly well; then its mere size is a recommendation, and its great hardiness is another. There is no doubt it could be readily acclimatised

in our woods, were it not for gamekeepers, and sporting farmers, who invariably shoot every strange bird they come across, even when they are perfectly aware that it belongs to a next-door neighbour. On the other hand, the wood-cutting propensity of this creature would make it an undesirable one to turn adrift in a plantation, where, with nothing else to do, it would beguile the time by lopping off the terminal shoots of the trees; being particularly fond of mutilating pines and firs.

Like most of its congeners, the Mealy Amazon, in its native wilds burrows in the decayed branches or trunks of trees, and lays its eggs and brings up its young in no other situation. According to Prince von Wied, the latter are greyish blue on the top of the head; but Dr Russ considers that this appearance is not constant, and has seen others with red and yellow in the same position. The powder, however, with which these birds, old and young, are so plentifully besprinkled, masks their colours so effectually, that unless they could be brushed, it would be extremely difficult to say they were anything but greenish grey.

In stuffed specimens, of course, the natural colouring is more perceptible, but when the bird is alive, the curious secretion to which this Amazon owes its trivial name, covers all; and, together with the large size of the bird, makes it impossible to mistake this species for any other.





MOUNTAIN PARROT.



MOUNTAIN PARROT
OF NEW ZEALAND, OR KEA.

Psittacus notabilis.

SYNONYM: *Nestor notabilis*, GLD.

GERMAN: *Der olivengrüne Stumpfschwanzlori.*

FRENCH: *Le Perroquet Ka-Ka des Montagnes.*

THIS curious bird has been frequently confounded with its relation the Ka-Ka Parrot (*Nestor meridionalis*), from which it differs in many material points; however it is now fully differentiated as a distinct species, although the Zoological Society of London tries to perpetuate the confusion by naming one the Ka-Ka, and the other the Mountain Ka-Ka; which is, to say the least, injudicious.

The Kea is a large bird, measuring nineteen and a half inches in length, of which the tail occupies seven and a half, and the bill, along the ridge of the upper mandible, one and three quarters. The lower mandible along its edge measures one inch.

The tarsi are short, measuring 1.5 inch; but the toes, claws inclusive, are rather long, the longest measuring two and a quarter inches.

The first recorded notice we have of this species is that given by Mantell in 1856, not 1848 as quoted by Dr. Russ. It was figured by the late John Gould in the Supplement to his *Birds of Australia*, and was found to be plentiful in the snowy mountains in the province of Otago, by Dr. Hector, who saw it "among the holes and fissures of all but inaccessible rocks; which are often shrouded with dense mists or clouds of driving sleet, impelled with terrific violence by the north-west wind."

"The Green Parrot", writes Mr. Potts in this connection, "may be observed entering or leaving crevices in the rocks, or soaring with motionless wings from peak to peak; far above the screaming Ka-Kas

or the chattering Parrakeets. It has also been seen feeding on the ground in the moonlight, and can hardly be esteemed an arboreal bird."

The Nestors are a family of flowersuckers, the tongue being furnished at its extremity with a fine brush-like or filamentous development for that especial purpose; and yet, strange to relate, the subject of the present notice is said to have departed from the habits of its congeners in this respect of late years, and to have acquired a partiality for quite another kind of food, as we shall presently see.

The Keas are sprightly birds and active, whether on the wing, or when threading their way through the woodlands of their native wilds. On the ground they progress by a series of hops, instead of walking with the waddling awkward gait of the true Parrots, and are quick and sudden in their movements; springing in a cage from perch to perch with the agility of a Sparrow.

During the summer their food consists in a great measure of the nectar of flowers, a banquet of the gods, which, however, they in common with their relations, the Ka-Kas, vary by feasting on grubs and insects of all kinds, as well as on seeds and roots, so that they may very properly be called omnivorous.

When its native mountains, however, are capped with snow, and the flowers and the grubs have all disappeared, the Kea descends into the plains, visits the "stations" of the settlers, where, to quote Mr. Potts, "it soon finds and appreciates that indispensable requisite of every out-station, the meat gallows, which it usually visits by night; beef and mutton suffering equally from its attack, and even the drying sheep skins are not neglected."

Were this all, the Mountain Parrot might be pardoned; for what will not extremity of hunger prompt a starving creature to do? but after all, the heads of sheep and cattle are what it makes a meal of, when food of no other description is to be obtained; and these having been cast away as valueless by the stockmen and butchers, no great harm can be said to be effected by the theft.

Mr. Potts, however, relates, on the authority of the *Otago Daily Times*, how "for the last three years the sheep belonging to a settler in the Wanaka district, appeared afflicted with what was thought to be a new kind of disease, for which the neighbours and shepherds were equally at a loss to account, never having seen anything of the kind before.

"The first appearance of the supposed disease is a patch of raw flesh on the loins of a sheep, about the size of a man's hand, from which matter continually runs down the side; taking the wool com-

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pletely off in the parts it touches, and in many cases death is the result."

At last a shepherd, more observant, or perhaps more imaginative than his fellows, "noticed one of the Mountain Parrots sticking to a sheep, pecking at a sore, while the animal seemed unable to get rid of its tormentor", and reported the matter to his employer; after having, not without difficulty, driven away the Kea, and rescued, for the time at all events, the poor bleeding sheep.

"The runholder gave directions to his shepherds, when mustering their flocks on the high grounds, to watch the Parrots, with the result that when near the snow line on the upper ranges, they saw several of the birds surrounding a sheep, which was bleeding from a recent wound in the side; while on other sheep were noticed places where the Keas had begun to attack them, small patches of wool having been plucked out."

"The birds come in flocks", continues the narrator, "single out a sheep at random, and each alighting on its back, in turn tears out the wool, and makes the sheep bleed, till the animal runs away from the rest of the flock. The birds then pursue it, continue to attack it, and force it to run about till it becomes stupid and exhausted. If in that state it throws itself down, and lies as much as possible on its back to keep the Parrots from pecking the part attacked, they pick a fresh hole in its side, and the animal thus set upon frequently dies."

A most extraordinary story, which, as Dr. Russ, in quoting it, appositely remarks, it takes no inconsiderable amount of faith to believe. For our part we confess it appears too circumstantial for implicit credence; but if true, the mode of attack evinces the possession of no inconsiderable amount of sagacity, not to say intelligence, by these carnivorous honeysuckers; combining, as they do, for a common object, and working in relays to attain it with a minimum of labour and fatigue. *Credat Judæus!*

Sir Walter Buller, who quotes the article, from which the foregoing extracts are taken, in his *History of the Birds of New Zealand*, expresses no opinion of his own in regard to it, but leaves it to his readers, apparently, to reject or accept as they please. At the Zoological Gardens the Keas did not evince a great liking for the lumps of raw mutton that were ostentatiously hung up in their cage, but evidently preferred maize and oats, with which they were always provided.

It is possible that in time they might have taken to their provision of raw flesh, but they did not live long enough to acquire the unnatural taste, or rather to indulge in it while other and more palatable diet was available; for with less than their usual discrimination, the

authorities who rule the Gardens, placed the denizens of snow-capped mountains in the Parrot House, where a tropical heat is generally maintained, with the result that anyone in the least acquainted with the habits of these birds might have anticipated, and a resultant loss to science, that will better be appreciated by and bye, when the last Kea has joined his congener of Philip Island in "the happy hunting grounds", from which is no return.

"Where the Keas so attack the sheep", continues the writer in the *Otago Daily Times*, "the elevation of the country is from four thousand to five thousand feet above the sea level, and they only do so in the winter time!"

Yet, so true is the saying, "give a dog a bad name and hang him", these curious and really beautiful birds, that devour so many noxious grubs during the summer months in their mountain home among the New Zealand Alps, are doomed, on the authority of a newspaper article, to speedy extermination; though the same writer concludes his sensational story with the remark, "On a station, some thirty miles distant from the other, and belonging to the same owner, at the same altitude, in the same district, and where the birds are plentiful, they do not attack the sheep in that way."

Poor Keas! when you have been all trapped, shot, and otherwise destroyed, the concluding paragraph, from the article in the *Daily Times* of Otago, will perhaps be remembered as well as those that preceded it, and people will say "what a pity! how that wretched *Cossus ligniperda* (or whatever the goat-moth's New Zealand equivalent may be) has increased and multiplied since the Mountain Parrots have disappeared;" but then it will be too late to remedy the sad mistake.

Inhabiting as they do the slopes of the New Zealand Southern Alps, the Kea Parrots are quite indifferent to cold, and could no doubt be readily acclimatised in this country, were any amateurs bold enough to introduce into our midst a bird that rightly or wrongly has incurred such an evil reputation.

It is only during very severe weather that it descends from its native fastnesses into the plains, and then it is want of food, and not the dread of cold that impels it to migrate. Those who have visited its alpine haunts report it to be still comparatively common there; and at the heads of all the principal rivers in the Canterbury Province it is to be seen soaring aloft above the rocks, or foraging amongst the close stunted alpine vegetation; but in the more settled districts of the colony its numbers are much diminished, and from some places where it was formerly abundant it has entirely disappeared.

The first Kea seen in the Regent's Park Gardens, was acquired by

the Zoological Society in 1872, having been presented by the Acclimatisation Society of Canterbury, New Zealand. Another was presented by Dr. de Lautour in 1881, and a third was "deposited" in the following year.

In addition to a "mewing" cry, noticed by Mr. Potts, the Kea utters a sharp whistle, a chuckle, and a suppressed scream scarcely distinguishable from that of its congener the Ka-Ka. Nothing is known, with certainty, of its breeding; but judging from its habits, it is probable that the nest is placed in some inaccessible crevice of the rocks in its wild alpine haunts.

In captivity the Mountain Parrot is very attractive, becoming very docile, gentle, and playful; it also learns to speak and whistle, and engages attention by its sprightly active movements. It is frequently kept by the Maories, who prize a trained bird so highly that Sir Walter Buller has known £10 to be refused for one that was somewhat old and dilapidated as to its plumage, but invaluable to its owner as a decoy. Even in their wild state they are by no means shy; but in the Otago province are so tame that they are easily knocked down, says Sir Walter, by a stone or other missile.

The same writer gives the following minute description of the plumage, which will be found to differ somewhat from the illustration given with the present article; but, as Buller observes, "The members of the genus *Nestor* show a great tendency to individual variation", scarcely two of them being found exactly alike:—"The general colour of the plumage is a dull olive green, brighter on the upper parts, with a rich gloss over all; each feather is broadly tipped and narrowly margined with dusky black, with shaft lines of the same colour, except on the head, where there is merely a darker shaft line; the ear coverts and the cheeks are olivaceous brown, with darker margins; the feathers on the sides are strongly tinged with orange red; the primaries are dusky brown, with the outer webs light metallic blue in their basal portion, and largely toothed on the inner web with bright lemon yellow; the secondaries are greenish blue, changing to olive on their outer webs, dusky brown on their inner, and toothed with orange yellow; the lining of the wings and the axillary plumes are vivid scarlet, with narrow dusky tips; the inner coverts towards the flexure are washed with lemon yellow; the rump and upper tail coverts are bright arterial red, mixed with olive, and prettily vandyked at the tips with dusky black, this colour being richest on the middle tail coverts, and changing on the lateral ones to bright olive, shaded with red and tipped with brown. The tail feathers are olive green on their upper surface, with a fine metallic gloss, paler at the tips, and inclining to blue on the

outer feathers, the whole crossed near the extremity by a broad band of blackish brown; the under surface is pale olive green, with the subterminal band less distinct, and broadly on the inner webs with bright lemon yellow; the under tail coverts are dull olive green tipped with brown.

"The bill is greyish brown, the lower mandible rich wax-yellow in its basal portion; the feet are yellowish olive, with paler soles.

"The female is similar to the male, but has the tints of the plumage generally duller, and the dusky margins of the feathers broader.

"In some examples the lower mandible, instead of being wax-yellow, is dark brown, and these are probably young birds."

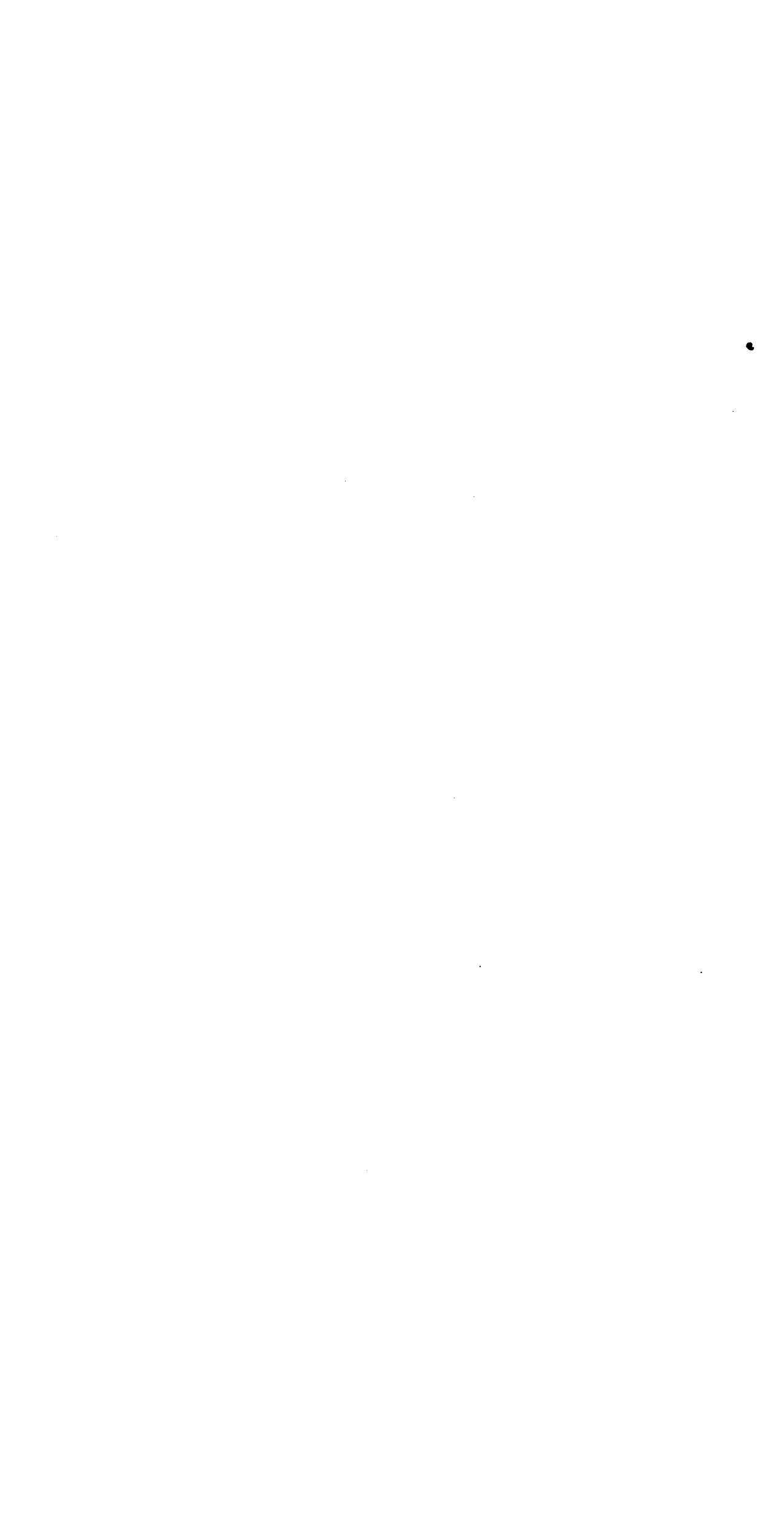
*The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Mountain
Parrot (Nestor notabilis).*

It is a great pity that these Nestors are not exported, instead of being shot down by the colonists. At present their rarity and costliness keep them out of the reach of the ordinary amateur. But from what one can observe of their playful ways in the Zoological Gardens, they look as though they would make delightful pets. They are very clever, and their cages at the Gardens had to be padlocked, for they would open any ordinary fastening. I daresay they would therefore make good talkers too. Parrots which are clever in one way are generally clever in another.

From what a gentleman from New Zealand told me, I gather the Ka-Ka (*Nestor hypopolius*) is guiltless of sheep-eating, and that our subject is the sole culprit. He told me that the Ka-Ka was strictly a forest bird, and confined to the Northern Island, where there are no sheep-runs, and that the bird which killed the sheep was a large green bird, *burrowing*, and *partly nocturnal* in its habits. Not at that time having seen the Kea, I could only think of the Owl Parrot (*Stringops*); but knowing the rarity of *Stringops*, I could not account for the bird being so destructive. But the Kea unites all the qualities my informant attributed to the sheep-killer. It is large, green, burrows, and flies by night, and inhabits the South Island. However, even if it be so destructive, the New Zealanders would do better to export it than kill it. Supposing the price, which is now £25 a piece, fell to £5, they might still make a profit. It should be noted that the Ka-Ka in the Gardens preferred Indian corn to mutton.



GREAT BLACK COCKATOO.



GREAT BLACK COCKATOO OF
NEW GUINEA, OR GOLIATH ARATOO.

Psittacus aterrimus, GML.

SYNONYMS: *Microglossa aterrima*, Z. S.; *Microglossum griseus*, SWNS.;

M. ater, LSS.; *Solenoglossus ceylanicus*, EDWS.;

Ara electo, TMM.; *Cacatua intermedia*, SCHLG.; *C. aterrima*, VLL.;

Psittacus gigas, LTH.; *P. Goliah*, KHL.

GERMAN: *Der Schwarze Ararakakadu*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Microglosse noir à trompe*.

THAT so remarkable a bird as the Great Black Cockatoo of New Guinea should early have attracted the attention of travellers in its native regions is only natural; for, quite without exception, it is the most extraordinary looking member of the order to which it belongs, namely, that of the *Psittaci*, as well as of the family *Cacatuidæ*, of which it constitutes the sole genus *Microglossa*.

It was described as early as 1707, by the Dutch writer, Van der Meulen, and figured by Peter Schenk, under the name of *Corbeau des Indes*, both description and plate testifying rather to the imaginative powers of the artist and author, than to their fidelity to nature.

Fifty-seven years later, in 1764, Edwards described it accurately, not however from a living specimen, but from a drawing, which he had received from the Dutch Governor of Ceylon; and twenty-six years afterwards the bird was scientifically named by Gmelin.

Numerous other writers, of different nationalities, have written about this curious Cockatoo; and amongst them we may mention Buffon, whose narratives are so readable, but so little, as a rule, to be depended on for accuracy. Wallace, Lesson, Bechstein, and Meyer have also given more or less circumstantial accounts of the bird, which has been

so fully described and beautifully rendered by Gould, in his work on the birds of New Guinea.

The first specimen received by the Zoological Society of London came into their possession in 1861, and another was purchased in 1875, which yet lives in the Parrot House, where it attracts the notice of visitors, no less by its extraordinary appearance than by the comical antics in which it is prone to indulge.

Although the beak of this Cockatoo is of portentous dimensions, the creature shows no disposition to make use of it upon men or things; for it is very gentle and playful with the keeper, and is never to be seen gnawing its cage, as so many of its companions in captivity are in the habit of doing.

The figure given in Jardine's *Naturalist's Library*, vol. x. page 158, does not do justice to the curious appearance of the bird; which differs in many respects from all the other Cockatoos, especially in the formation of the crest, which is composed of more numerous and more slender feathers than is the case with any other member of the family. Our plate of this bird is drawn from the specimen now to be seen in the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, and could not be more true to life if a photograph.

Although usually said to be a native of New Guinea, the Goliath, or Goliath Aratoo, is also found in the adjacent Islands of Eastern Australasia. Mr. Wallace met with it on the north coast, and Müller in the southern parts of New Guinea, where it attracted his attention by its comical antics among the trees; stooping down and opening its mouth at him as he looked on it with surprise; the deep red colour of the naked cheeks and the bristled plumage testifying to the bird's anger at the intrusion of a white stranger in its haunts, or possibly to its dread of the unknown. It was also seen by Macgillivray at Cape York.

It is curious that the colour of the face should undergo, according to the emotions that for the time animate the creature, changes analagous to the becoming, but sometimes inconvenient, phenomenon known among human beings as blushing; but it actually does blush, not however from shame, or modesty, as in the case of man, but from anger or surprise; though excitement will also give rise to the change of colour, as when it sees the keeper approaching with some "monkey nuts", of which it is particularly fond.

That this avine blushing is of service to the bird, and has been adopted by it as a ruse for striking terror into a foe, as a writer, whom we need not name, pretends, is, to say the least, improbable; and the true explanation of the phenomenon doubtless is, that it results

from an involuntary flow of blood to the part through fear, anger, or excitement; rather than from a deliberate action on the part of the bird exerted in self-defence.

The most remarkable fact connected with this strange creature is the smallness of the tongue; which is more like a round pink worm with a blunt black head, than the tongue especially of one of the Parrot tribe. It seems almost lost in the enormous cavern of the mouth, where it rolls about in the most extraordinary manner when the creature is eating.

It is curious to see this Cockatoo take a great beakful of seed, hemp for instance, and lodge it in a kind of pouch under the tongue, from whence it is picked up by that organ, and cracked, grain by grain, until the creature's appetite is satisfied, for it is not a large eater; but, on the contrary, appears to require much less food than from its size might have been supposed. It drinks freely, and is fond of splashing itself with water.

The tips of the crest feathers have a backward inclination, like those of the Moluccan Cockatoos; while those of the Australian *Plyctolophi*, on the contrary, bend forwards.

This bird has few points in common with the other Cockatoos, and is quite correctly classed as the one species of a distinct genus. There is no very appreciable difference between the plumage and appearance of the male and female, though the latter would appear to have a lesser extent of bare skin on the face, and to be of somewhat smaller size.

The young are said to resemble their parents, with the exception that in the former the beak is of a light yellowish horn-grey, and has the point less developed, and the feathers on the belly, and vent, the inner wing coverts, and the under tail coverts are streaked with faint yellowish lines; but these are points requiring confirmation before they can be implicitly accepted as actual facts.

When sitting in a meditative attitude, as it sometimes does, or when it is asleep, the bare cheeks of the Aratoo are covered by the feathers on the sides of the head; which the bird has the power of using as a mask for its naked face; so that on the whole it may be looked upon as a very *human* bird, blushing and hiding its face like a bashful girl; but there assuredly the analogy ceases.

It does not talk, neither does it make a great deal of noise, though it can scream of course, for it would not be a Parrot, much less a Cockatoo, if it could not do so; and lustily, when occasion demanded. Happily, however, it does not appear to be possessed of any inordinate desire to let its voice be heard; but must, on the contrary, be

considered a quiet respectable creature, that takes no pleasure in annoying people by the undue exercise of a faculty that has its uses no doubt; but is certainly misemployed when rendering its owner a nuisance to the neighbourhood where it happens to be lodged.

It is a solitary bird, generally found singly, or at most in pairs, in the densest forests, where Wallace discovered it living on the fruit of the *Canarium commune*, the shell of which is so hard, that the nuts are with difficulty broken with a hammer; yet the Black Cockatoo manages to extract the kernel, which would be all but impossible for any other bird to accomplish; and in the process, which is one that takes time, the Black Cockatoo is assisted by its horny-ended tongue as much as by its indented and sharp-pointed beak.

As will be seen by the drawing, the latter organ is very large, with the tip of the upper mandible very long and acute, projecting far beyond the under mandible, which, although of respectable dimensions, is, nevertheless, weak and small in comparison.

The colour of the plumage generally is black, but glossed with a greenish grey tinge; from the quantity of white powder secreted by the skin and interspersed among the feathers.

It has been remarked that these birds vary considerably in size in different museums; but this we think is owing rather to the imperfect mounting of the specimens than to any real difference among the living birds; for the few individuals we have at times been able to observe did not vary much in dimensions. Kuhl, however, considered that the larger birds constituted a distinct species from the lesser, and distinguished the former by the title of *Psittacus Goliah*, and the latter by that of *Psittacus aterrimus*.

“But”, as Selby very properly remarked, “further observation is required to verify the views of this ornithologist; and for the present we adhere to Wagler’s opinion, who considered them identical.”

As we have already observed, an inexperienced or careless taxidermist will frequently manipulate his subject in such a manner as to render it almost unrecognisable; now extending the skin to far beyond its natural dimensions; or again, by insufficiently softening it, make it look much smaller than it ought to be, as may be seen by comparing together specimens mounted by different workmen; and that this was the case with the skins examined by Kuhl, who does not appear to have ever seen the bird alive, is more than probable.

The Arara Cockatoo is one of the few birds that maintains a price altogether out of proportion to its merits; for after all has been said there is little to recommend it to the notice of amateurs; yet the dealers demand from £15 to £30 apiece for it, according to Herr Wiener;

while Dr. Russ prices the bird at from four hundred and fifty to six hundred marks; and one we saw at Jamrach's, in Ratcliffe Highway, a few years since, was to be purchased for £40; but what that veteran dealer ultimately obtained for his prize we cannot say, probably somewhat less. For our part we should prefer to give £25 or £30 for a Golden Parrot rather than for a Black Cockatoo, whether it hailed from New Guinea, Northern Australia, Papua, Waigesa, or any of the other localities whence it has been recorded; but tastes differ, of course, and other people need not necessarily be of our opinion in this, or any other matter.

The legs of the New Guinea Cockatoo are long and somewhat slender, and the bird hops lightly and freely after the fashion of the New Zealand Parrots, which are especially active on their limbs, no less upon the ground than among the boughs of their favourite trees.

Macgillivray compares the cry of *Psittacus aterrimus* to the syllables "hweet hweet", and says it altogether lacks the harshness of the notes of the white Cockatoos; while d'Albertis describes it as "a distinct, long drawn out, loud and shrill but melancholy whistle." The two or three specimens of the species we have had under observation, seldom made any sound at all, and appeared to be extremely silent though active and lively birds, fond of being noticed, and gentle and tame; yet, as we have said, they can call out when necessary.

The few individuals of the species that are now and then brought to Europe have been taken from the nest, and brought up by hand by the aborigines, which would account of course for their docility. How a Goliath captured when adult would comport himself in captivity, is a question that remains to be decided, as far that is to say as our experience goes; but most likely it would prove as intractable as the rest of its congeners in similar circumstances.

This bird, though using its foot to convey food to its mouth, does not do so as habitually as the rest of the Cockatoos; proving that it rather feeds on small seeds, which it can hold in its boat-like under mandible, rather than on large nuts or fruit that require a prehensile foot to convey them comfortably to its mouth.

Ornithological nomenclature is often singularly inappropriate and inconclusive, nor in the present instance is it much happier than in many others; some of which have been already cited in these pages, but more of which remain to be noticed. For example, the name "Goliath" or "Goliah", has, we presume, been bestowed upon the bird on account of its size; but the Macaws, the Moluccan and Banksian Cockatoos, are all larger than the New Guinea Cockatoo, and some of

them are nearly twice its size, and the same remark applies to the epithet *gigas*.

The specific name *aterrimus*, again, is a misnomer, for the Vasa is darker every way, and so are the male Banksian Cockatoos; while to call the poor creature by the name of the dread Alecto, as Temminck has done, is to libel grossly a very engaging, if somewhat peculiar-looking, creature, whose "bark is", infinitely, "worse than its bite."

The designation Aratoo is a compound of Ara, a Macaw and Cockatoo, which is, to say the least, fanciful; for it requires a good deal of imagination to agree with Finsch that it resembles the Arara; all the reader has to do is to ignore its crest, and fancy its tail longer and more pointed, and the metamorphosis is complete; but we cannot agree with the ingenious author of the remark, "Wenn man die Haube fortdenkt, und den Schwanz länger und spitz, so gehört nicht viel Fantasie dazu, um sich einen Arara vorzustellen"; for we think it would require a very great stretch of the imagination indeed.

In conclusion we can strongly recommend the New Guinea Black Cockatoo to amateurs, who need be under no apprehension respecting its character, which is good, we might indeed say excellent; but if any of our readers possess, and have become tired of the bird, we shall be grateful if they will transfer it to our custody, if only for a time; as the price, at present, as far as we are concerned, is absolutely prohibitive.



GANG-GANG COCKATOO.

GALEANG OR GALEANGA COCKATOO.

Psittacus galeatus, KHL., LTHM.

SYNONYMS: *Callocephalon galeatum*, GLD.;

Calyptorhynchus galeatus, VGBS.; *Corydon galeatus*, WGL.; *Banksianus galeatus*, LSS.; *Plyctolophus galeatus*, SWNS.;

Callicephalus galeatus, BR.

GERMAN: *Der rothköpfige Langschwanzkakadu, oder Helmkakadu.*

FRENCH: *Cacatois Ganga, ou Banksien à tête rouge.*

THIS curious bird, which is not unlike a Timneh Parrot, with a bright red head and crest, was mentioned by Cook in the journal of his voyage of discovery to what was then called *Terra incognita Australis*, and is now known by the name of Australia; and was afterwards described and figured by Lesson in 1802.

It is stated by Gould to inhabit the south-west portion of the colony of Victoria, the islands of Bass's Straits and the northern parts of Tasmania; but is always a scarce bird, so much so that it has never been seen by some colonists of many years standing with whom we are acquainted; nor did we ever meet with it during our sojourn in those parts it is said to frequent.

It is a forest-loving bird, shy and difficult of approach, leading a solitary life among the topmost boughs of the Eucalypti, with which the whole face of its habitat was at one time covered, and subsisting mainly on the seeds of the peppermint gum-tree.

Authors vary greatly in their estimate of the Helmeted Cockatoo; some declaring that it makes a most charming cage-bird and pet, while others, on the contrary, give it a character for peevishness, moroseness, and in fact everything that a pet should not possess.

Thus Dr. Max Schmidt says that it is a little more active than the other Cockatoos, but much more morose, insusceptible of being tamed,

and unteachable; while Mr. Westerman, of Amsterdam, on the contrary, declares that no bird could be tamer, or more gentle, and moreover that it speaks very well; a statement that is supported and confirmed by Dr. Russ, who says he bought one of the dealer Hieronymi, which would come on his finger, let itself be stroked, and would return of its own accord to its cage.

The price of this bird is necessarily high, in consequence of the infrequency of its appearance in the bird-market. £8 was demanded in 1880 by Jamrach of London for a fine specimen that had come into his possession.

The London Zoological Society first obtained a Ganga in 1859; since which date four more are recorded in their list, the last of them having been purchased in August, 1870. At present the species is unrepresented in the Parrot House in the Gardens.

These birds are not long-lived as a rule in captivity; a fact which would tend to prove that the proper treatment for them has not yet been discovered, and that some more appropriate substitute for the aromatic seeds of the peppermint gum-tree must be found, than hemp and maize, before connoisseurs can hope to see the Gangas established as inmates of their aviaries or bird-rooms.

It is not surprising that amateurs should differ with regard to the disposition and adaptability or otherwise of this bird for cage life, for but few of them have enjoyed an opportunity of intimately studying the Helmeted Cockatoo in confinement. Our own experience with the species does not extend, we regret to say, beyond a casual acquaintance with two specimens of the race in the Parrot House of the Zoological Society, in Regent's Park, a few years ago; since which time we have tried our best to obtain one, but without success.

One London dealer, to whom we spoke upon the subject, went so far as to assure us, confidentially, that it was impossible to bring over the Ganga alive, because it subsisted entirely upon roots, for which no adequate substitute could be provided on the journey. We ventured to suggest potatoes; but the dealer, a very consequential personage, pooh-poohed the idea, and said it could not be done. We then spoke to the late Mr. A. Jamrach, who promised to look out for one for us; but his untimely death put a stop to the strong hope we entertained that our desire to possess a Ganga would one day be realized.

In looking over Dr. Karl Russ's *Die Papageien* a short time since, we lit upon the following curious passage, which we transcribe in the original:—"Eine wunderliche Erfahrung hat Dr. Hasskarl im zoologischen Garten von Buitenzorg auf Java i. J. 1842 gemacht. Dort ertappte man einen schwarzen Kakadu mit rothem Schopf, welcher inhermals

Meerschweinchen getödtet und gefressen hatte, und Pfarrer Snell, der dies mittheilt, hebt hervor, dass, obschon nichts absonderliches darin liege, wenn Papageien Fleisch fressen, hier vornämlich die Tödtung des kleinen Nagers durch den Kakadu auffallend erscheine."

Which we thus translate: "Dr. Hasskarl had an extraordinary experience in the Zoological Gardens of Buitenzorg, in the island of Java, in the year 1842; where a black Cockatoo with a red head was taken, that on several occasions killed and ate guinea-pigs; and Pastor Snell, who relates the story, further adds that although there would be nothing remarkable in that, if Parrots ate flesh; yet the before-mentioned killing of the little rodents by a Cockatoo, must appear very strange."

It is possible, of course, that the above black Cockatoo with the red head may not have been a Ganga, but some other kind of bird; but it must nevertheless be borne in mind that, in captivity at all events, some of the *Psittaci* will kill small birds and animals, if they get the chance; their natural vegetarian appetite changing to one for a carnivorous diet. Thus a dear old Goffin we once possessed killed and partially ate a truant Canary that wandered into his cage; and the reported partiality of *Nestor notabilis* for mutton, dead or alive, are cases in point.

But how did a Tasmanian, or at least a Southern Australian Cockatoo get to Java? The distance is immense, and the climates so different, that it is almost impossible the guinea-pig killer, if really a Ganga, could have arrived at Buitenzorg of its own accord, but must have been conveyed thither by some one, from whose custody it afterwards escaped, which would account for its cannibalistic proclivities.

Almost daily we receive communications from persons whose Parrots or Cockatoos are suffering in various ways, in consequence of having been fed with "all sorts of scraps (including meat) from the table"; and we regret to say that our Goffin had been thus indulged before passing into our keeping, which might perhaps account for his reprehensible conduct with regard to poor little Yellow Feathers; while as to *Nestor*, we confess, we are at a loss to account for his perverted sense, otherwise than by assuming him to have been driven by sheer want to the commission of deeds that have made his name a bye-word in New Zealand, and must bring about his extermination at no distant date, as we have related when treating of that curious bird.

"Are bacon and ham bad for a Parrot?" recently inquired an innocent correspondent, adding, "because I have been told that is the reason my Polly has taken to pulling out her feathers, and biting herself, until she makes herself bleed."

To which we replied, "Cause and effect, my dear sir; stop the unnatural diet, and perhaps the feather-picking habit will be abandoned"; but we have not since heard from our correspondent; though once a Parrot, or a Cockatoo, acquires such a depraved taste as that of flesh eating, there is no telling what enormities it will not perpetrate, and a cure is all but impossible. We cannot get it to sign a pledge, and it is deaf to reason; nay, let us charm never so cunningly, it will disregard all our remonstrances; and, whenever it is left alone for a moment will recommence to disfigure itself.

"The rarity and beauty of the bird", writes Dr. Russ of the Ganga, "naturally cause the price to be high"; and there seems no prospect of the figure being reduced, seeing that the bird is an inhabitant of the densest and most inaccessible districts, into which no one but an aborigine could penetrate; and these, in Tasmania at all events, as our colleague pathetically laments, are extinct.

Poor people! when Cook, in an ill-fated hour, discovered their beautiful and climatically highly favoured island home, they were very numerous; but in considerably less than one hundred years the last survivor of the race died a prisoner to the usurping whites in Hobart. We are a great nation, but we have not been kind to the aborigines anywhere where we have set our colonising feet; though perhaps in no possession of ours have we been so altogether wanting as in Van Diemen's Land, where the natives were hunted down, shot, poisoned, and massacred wholesale, like wild beasts, by the settlers and their bond slaves, as the *deportés* practically were; until, as we have said, the last survivor of the race died a few years since a virtual prisoner, though made much of as a curiosity when it was too late.

A case of the survival of the fittest, some one may say. Well, we cannot argue the point, nor is this the place to do so; but we hope that it may be a long long time before the Gang-Gang, and the other beautiful members of the Parrot family that are now to be found in tolerable abundance in Tasmania, where the Swift Lorikeet frequents the streets of Hobart, follow their human compatriots to that bourne from whence is no return.

To resume: there is considerable difference between the male and female Helmeted Cockatoo; for while the head, face, and crest of the former are bright scarlet, the same parts in the latter are a dusky brownish grey. The young are said, on the authority of Gould, to resemble their mother; and although we have not chanced to meet with one in its nest feathers, there can be no reasonable doubt upon the matter; seeing that in almost every case where the female differs in plumage from her mate, all the young resemble her until after their

first moult; and sometimes the young males do not assume the full dress of their father, until they are two or three years old.

The Ganga is rather less than the Rose-breasted Cockatoo. It is a good climber and strong flyer, but somewhat of a clumsy bird upon the ground; as might be expected from its arboreal habits.

Nothing certain is known of the creature's habits in its wild state, that is, with regard to the season or site of its nidification, the number of the eggs, and whether there is, or is not, more than one brood in the year; and the probability is that these particulars will not be ascertained unless some Zoological or Acclimatisation Society takes the matter in hand, and lodging a pair of Gangas by themselves in a suitably furnished aviary, gives them an opportunity of reproducing their species in captivity; for it is to be feared that as cultivation proceeds in their native land, and the settlers encroach upon the wilderness, the shy and solitary Helmeted Cockatoo will at last be added to the already too long list of extinct species.

The Gangas possessed at different times by the Zoological Society were fed on canary seed, hemp, and oats; to which should, we think, have been added boughs of trees with leaves and buds on, among which they would have been able to find some larvæ of various insects; upon which there is little doubt these birds at least partially subsist in their island home.

The thought occurs to us in this connection, whether it might not be possible to import the seeds of the Eucalypti in sufficient quantity to constitute them an article of commerce for the feeding of Australian Parrakeets and other birds, natives of that great island and its dependencies?

Perhaps some bird-importer or seed merchant will take the hint, and make the experiment.

It is certain that the proper food for many of the most beautiful of the denizens of the Australian bush, has not yet been obtainable for them in captivity; the Gangas are a case in point, and the same might be said of *Pulcherrimus* and *Multicolor*, not to speak of Bourke's Parrakeets and the ever-charming Pileated Parrakeet; which can but rarely be induced to exchange a life of freedom for one of confinement for any length of time.

The Port Lincoln, too, the Collared and Bauer's and Barnard's Parrakeets, are not as acclimatisable as they ought to be; and the reason is that the only food we are able to provide for them does not quite suit their constitution, and that they pine and in too many instances die for want of something we cannot give them. What more likely than that this desideratum should be the seeds of the Eucalypti,

that certainly furnish a large portion of their sustenance in their native land?

It is not fair to generalise from an individual, or even from two or three individuals, for a variety of trivial circumstances may conduce to impart quite another complexion than the natural one, to its or their character; and therefore we hesitate for the present to recommend the Ganga to amateurs, who are not very strongly imbued with a love of foreign birds, and that for the reasons stated—they are shy birds; consequently nervous, and require patience and perseverance in the treatment accorded them. So far they have not proved themselves long lived in captivity, and especially they are expensive.

On the other hand, they are handsome birds, undeniably handsome, and of such rare occurrence, that their very scarcity is in itself a recommendation in the eyes of many fanciers; some of whom are ready and willing to put up with almost any amount of inconvenience and even loss for the sake of possessing a unique, or at all events a rare specimen of animated nature, which they rejoice to be able to call their very own; and which would lose half its value in their estimation if everybody, or indeed anybody, could share its possession with them.

A reprehensible sentiment it may be said; perhaps so, but very human.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Gang-Gang Cockatoo (Callocephalon galeatum).

AFTER seeing the beautiful drawing of this bird in Gould's *Birds of Australia*, I was always hoping I might see one; perhaps that it might be imported in sufficient numbers to enable me to buy one. At length, to my great delight, I saw one at the Zoological Gardens. Alas! never was there a greater proof that "distance lends enchantment to the view." The bird was neither brilliant in colour, nor graceful in shape; but it was decidedly sulky in temper, and its name Gang-Gang was music itself compared to its note, which is the most rasping and aggravating of all Cockatoo cries, and that is saying a great deal.

Our editor has still a great desire to possess one of these birds. He generally seems to me to be in luck about Parrots. I hope he may get his wish. For my part, if Fortune has no unkind turn in store for me than that I should never possess a Gang-Gang, that fickle lady and myself will always remain on the best of terms.



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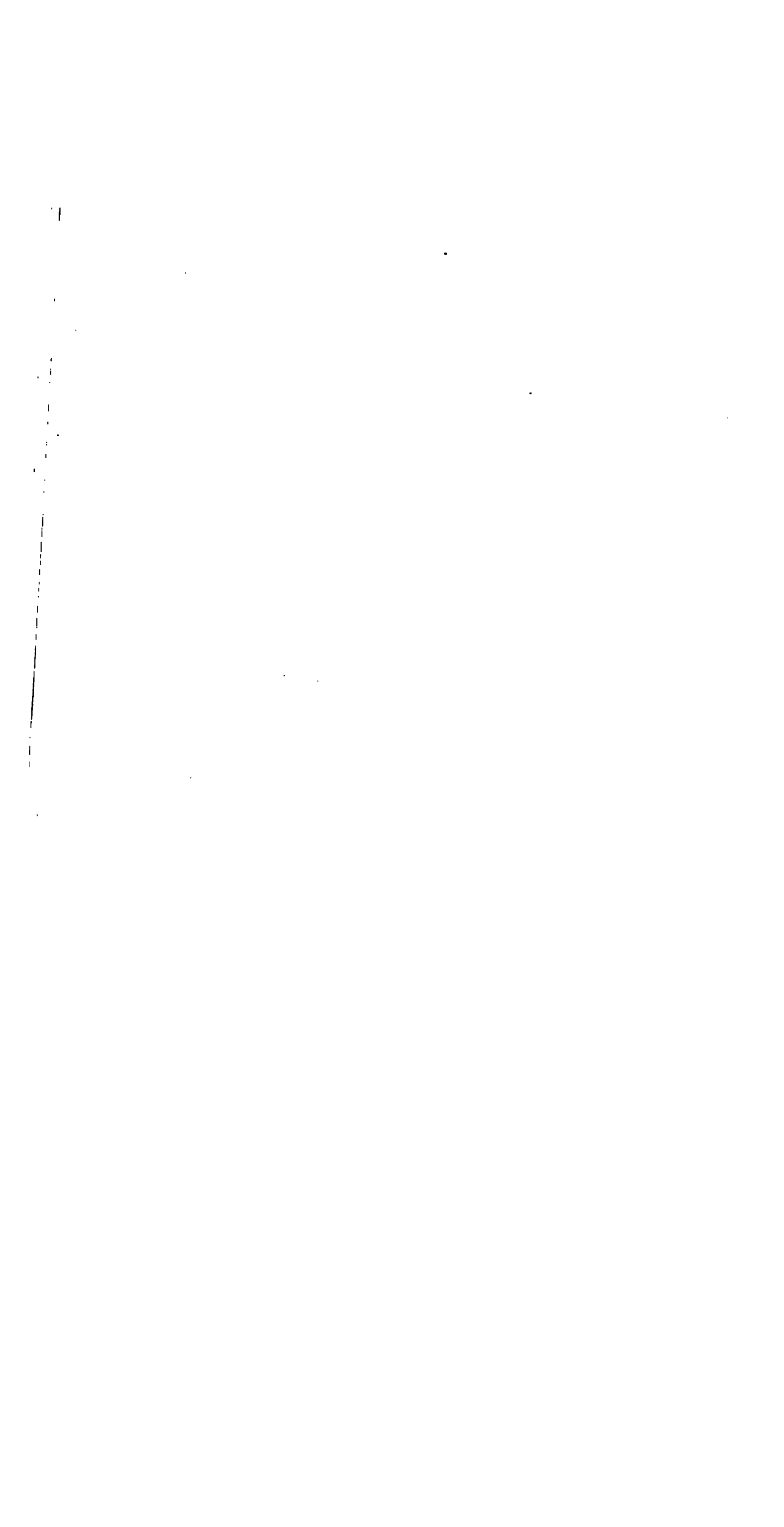
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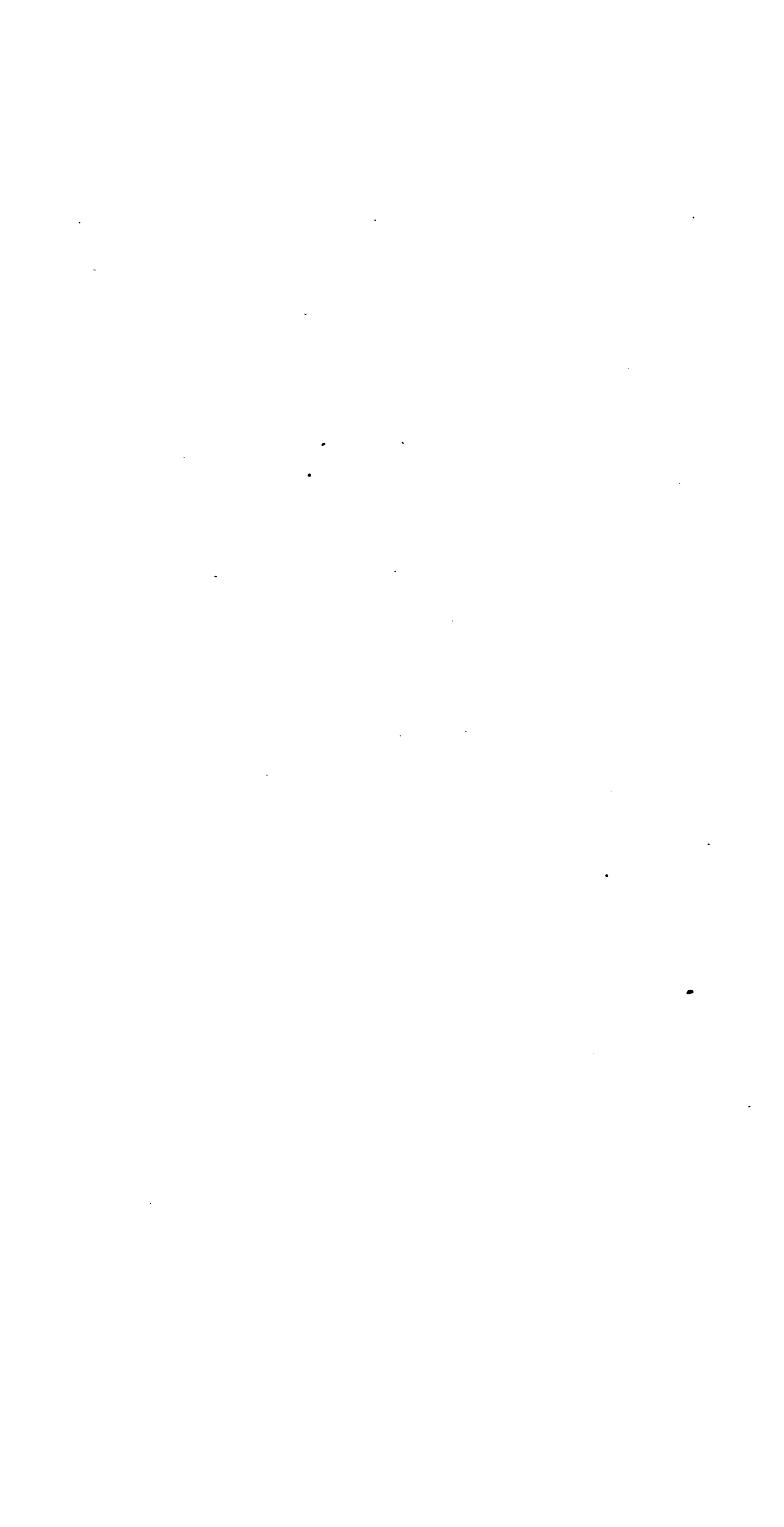
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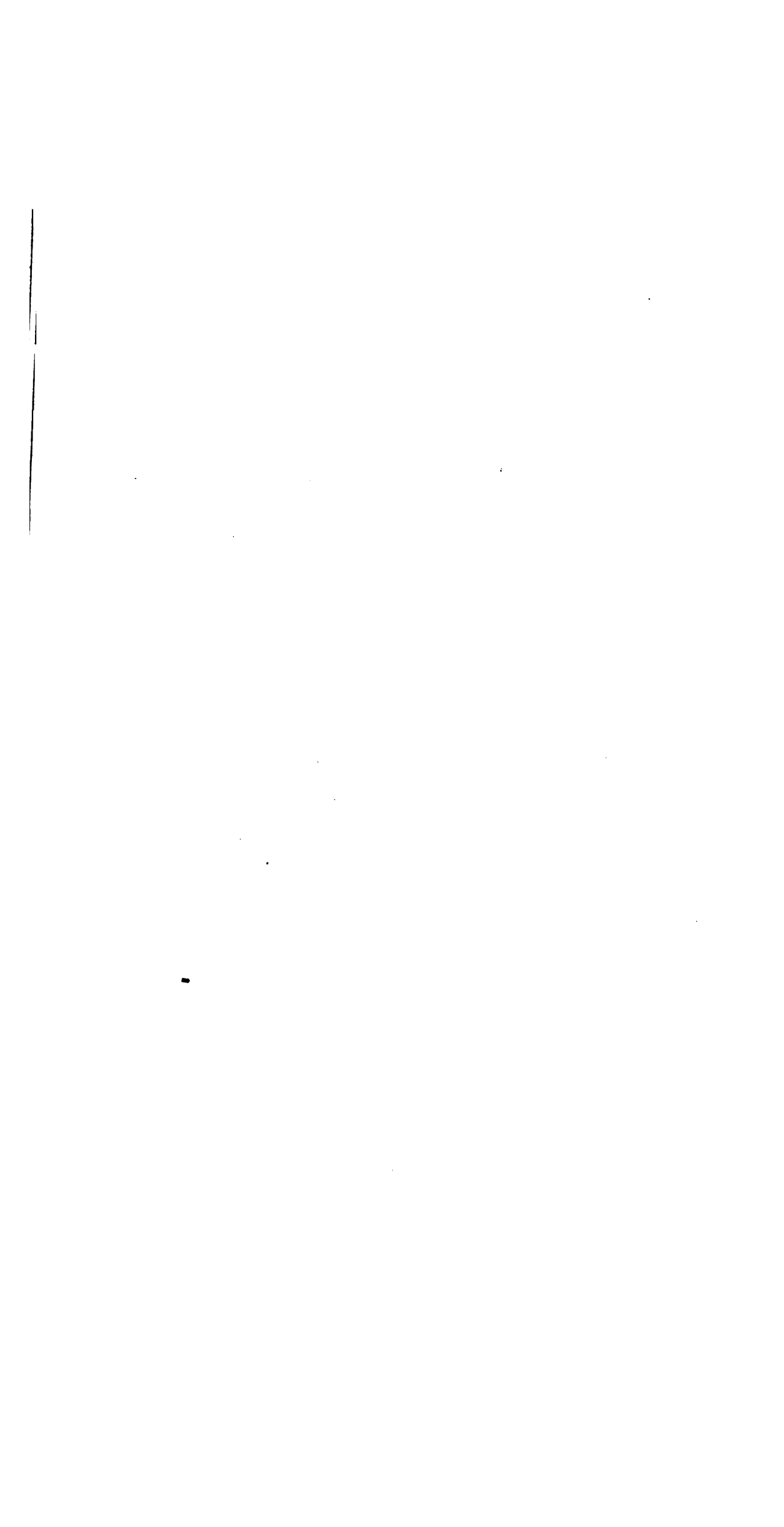
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HAWK-HEADED PARROT.





PARROTS IN CAPTIVITY.

HAWK-HEADED OR RUFFED PARROT.

Psittacus Accipitrinus.

SYNONYMS: *Psittacus Olusii*, SHAW; *Pionias accipitrinus*, FINSCH.

FRENCH: *Perroquet à cravatte.* GERMAN: *Kragenpapagei.*

THE exceedingly curious bird, whose portrait, admirably drawn from nature by Mr. Lydon, heads this chapter, is one of the most commendable Parrots with which the writer is acquainted. In size it about equals the Grey, which it rivals in linguistic attainments, while it is infinitely more droll and amusing in its ways, as well as more gentle and confiding in its disposition.

It is not by any means a common bird, even in its own country, the Brazils and Honduras, and is very rarely imported. So scarce is it, that a pair of these birds would readily command the high price of £20: the dealers appear to be unacquainted with it, and the few specimens that now and then reach our shores are brought over by private hand, and are, consequently, quite tame and gentle on arrival.

Like most South American birds, the Ruffed Parrot, though comparatively thinly clad with feathers, is perfectly hardy, and requires no particular care as to temperature, that usual in an ordinary dwelling-

house appearing to be sufficient to maintain it in health and comfort.

It is frugal in its diet, and prefers hemp seed to any other kind of food, but will eat fruit, biscuits, sugar and bread, and a change of diet on these lines is conducive to maintaining the bird in health.

When "Pinto", as the writer has named his bird after the Portuguese gentleman who very kindly presented it to him, first arrived after a long journey in an open cage on a very cold winter's day, he was shivering, seemed very ill, and kept on repeating incessantly, in a loud and reproachful tone, "check, check, check", as if pitying himself and his condition exceedingly. The warmth of the room to which he was at once transferred, and some fresh food of which he partook freely, soon restored him to what has since been ascertained to be his normal state of equanimity, and he speedily composed himself to sleep; emitting every now and then a little self-congratulatory chuckle that sounded extremely droll.

Needless to say that "Pinto" soon became a prime favourite with every member of the family, and was allowed almost perfect liberty, of which, however, he was somewhat slow in availing himself at first, as he had not the least idea of flying, though provided by Nature with a pair of long, broad, and seemingly strong wings. He soon gained confidence though, can now fly anywhere, and is fond of using his powers of flight, but puffs a good deal when he settles down again after one of these aerial expeditions.

When he first arrived among us he could not speak at all, but repeated continually the sound made by clicking the tongue against the roof of the mouth, which we have endeavoured to express by the words "check, check, check"; but he soon acquired other accomplishments, and astonished us all one day very much by repeating, though of course, in a louder key, the song of a Canary that was kept in the room with him. His next feat was to imitate with wonderful fidelity the crying of a young child, and after that he began to pick up words, and now says, "Little boy", "Pretty Poll", and other short phrases, each of which he prefaces with the interjections "Ah! ha!" He always salutes the writer in the morning with the exclamation, "Ah! ha! Papa!" an observation he never addresses to any other person. He also laughs in the most natural manner possible.

He knows his name, "Pinto", perfectly well, and always answers to it; he generally salutes a stranger with the interrogative monosyllable "Well?" adding occasionally his favourite exclamation "check, check, check!" If he does not like the new comer, he raises his wonderful ruff, expands his tail, and drawing himself up to his full height, dances on his perch, and presents altogether so weird and uncanny an appear-

ance, that most people are afraid of him, yet he is the dearest and most gentle old thing in the world, and not in the least spiteful, though fond of pretending to be very wicked indeed, now and then.

For instance, he has taken a great dislike to one lady visitor, and if he happens to be out of his cage when she comes into the room, flies at her open mouthed, hissing like an Owl, and chases her all about the place; and when he has forced her to beat an ignominious retreat, runs along the table, pressing his beak to its surface, and every now and then emits a little squeal, not unlike the sound made by a wheel in want of greasing—wheeling a barrow, as the young folk of the household call this funny procedure on the part of their favourite.

He very much enjoys having his head rubbed, and will sit for any length of time on one's lap, grunting the while with satisfaction at the gentle friction and the genial warmth to his feet. He is very playful, and will frequently, in his cage and out, turn over on his back and amuse himself with a stone or a bit of stick, which he tosses about from beak to foot in evident enjoyment of the game.

Two objectionable habits he has; one of which is, that he will try to feed his friends by bringing up the half-digested food from his crop, and the other, that he takes it into his head to scream awfully at times, and can scarcely be pacified once he has begun. But on the whole his good qualities far and away outbalance the bad, so that the writer has no hesitation in recommending the Ruffed Parrot to the favourable consideration of his readers.

Though not as good, or bad, a carpenter as some of its congeners, this bird greatly enjoys picking a log of soft wood to pieces; an employment, or amusement, in which its powerful mandibles are doubtless of great assistance: it can also crack nuts and bend the wires of its cage; needless then to remark that it can bite, but fortunately appears to have no disposition to do so, even under a considerable amount of provocation.

The colouring of the Hawk-headed Parrot will be better understood by a glance at Mr. Lydon's excellent illustration than by the perusal of half a dozen pages of letterpress. It will, however, be necessary to observe that the conspicuous ruff that adorns the creature's neck is usually worn level with the remainder of the plumage, and that it is only when the bird is excited that it is raised, as shown in the plate.

The green of the wings and back varies in shade in the most curious manner, according to the light in which the bird is placed; thus, whilst ordinarily it is of a brilliant emerald tint, it will appear to be of a

dull bronzed or even coppery hue when the creature is placed between the spectator and the window; and the same remark applies to the shading of the breast and back of the neck, where the feathers change from red to purple according to the point of view of the beholder.

The tail feathers, with the exception of the central pair, are black which is also the colour of the flight feathers of the wings; these never undergo the chameleon-like phases that a change in the relative positions of the spectator and the bird produces, for they are ever and always black.

There would seem to be several varieties of these birds, for the British Museum contains the skin of one that is as large as a White Cockatoo, and, while the top of "Pinto's" head is dull grey, a pair of Hawk-heads at the "Zoo" have the feathers in the same position white, but otherwise exactly resemble the bird from which our illustration is taken.

As it might be thought somewhat venturesome and illogical to generalize from an individual instance, and praise a whole race for the sake of one of its members, that deserves all that can be said in its favour; it is advisable to point out here that Dr. Russ also gives these birds an excellent character, including them among his "Talking Parrots", and voting them intelligent and docile.

The Hawk-headed Parrot is not the only member of the family that has the power of raising a nuchal crest, for the Orange-crested Cockatoo and several of the Amazons are similarly gifted; the former even to a much greater extent, for it not only elevates the feathers on the back, but on the sides, of the neck; as will be seen when we come to describe it further on.

It would be instructive, and curious too, if one could ascertain why this power was conferred upon these birds and not upon others of their race; but the inquiry is one that is not likely to be satisfactorily answered. Certain it is that the ornament in question imparts an extraordinarily savage appearance to its possessor, and is doubtless of service to the creature by inspiring terror in the beholder.

On one occasion when "Pinto" was sent to the Bird Show at the Crystal Palace, his curious appearance was commented upon by the reporters for the press, who one and all united in pronouncing him to be something unique, and exhorted visitors not to fail in getting a sight of so remarkable a bird; one of them even went so far as to characterize the dear old fellow as having a Satanic expression, which was perhaps excusable, for his brilliant colours were scarce discernible in the dim uncertain light of the Show, and his excited manner as he incessantly raised and depressed his nuchal ruff, and danced up

and down, with widely expanded tail, on his perch, justified in a manner, the infernal epithet.

Yet this strange bird was left unnoticed by the judge, who thought possibly that it was a made-up creature, the movements of which were regulated by clock-work. Whether or not, "Pinto" will not be sent there again, for he was very much upset by the whole affair, and especially by the rude gaze, and ruder remarks of such an unwonted number of strangers; and for a long time after his return home would not come out of his cage, or allow himself to be touched by anyone.

As a rule, there is very little use in sending a new bird to a Show, for most of the Judges have long since fallen into a groove, and resent the obtrusion upon their notice of anything to which they are unaccustomed, either by passing it over in contemptuous silence, their favourite method; or by making an award, incommensurate with the value and merit of the intruder they find themselves reluctantly compelled to mention.

"Pinto" is very fond of drinking, and always has recourse to his cup after a meal of dry seed, bread, or biscuit; but he does not take much at a time, a couple of mouthfuls or so, and yet at the "Zoo" it is the custom to keep his relations without water, which must be a great privation to them, and have a tendency to shorten their lives; although we are glad to say that since we first noticed the fact in these pages there has been a marked change for the better in this respect in the "Parrot House."

He also likes to sprinkle himself well over with water occasionally and makes at such times a tremendous fuss, but we have never observed him actually enter the bath; the fact being that in their native land, where the dews are heavy, these birds get wet enough while flying about in the early morning among the trees, to renew the gloss of their plumage; for which reason others wash themselves several times a day, in countries where the dew-fall is not as excessive as it is in tropical and sub-tropical America.

Fruit forms a considerable proportion of the diet of Brazilian Parrots in their wild state, and should always be supplied to such of these birds as are kept in captivity. "Pinto", for instance, is extremely fond of a piece of apple or pear, of a few grapes or nuts, or even a piece of boiled potato or carrot; but at the same time another bird, that has not been accustomed to such dainties, must be cautiously supplied with them, lest he should get a surfeit by over-eating himself.

When "Pinto" flies down on the table during dinner, as he sometimes does, he always makes a grab at the meat on the nearest plate, and if he can secure a morsel devours it with gusto; rolling his tongue

about as if he thoroughly enjoyed the *bonne bouche*, over which he actually smacks his lips; if the latter term can be applied to the sides of his horny mandibles. At the same time he is not in a general way allowed to have meat, which we believe to be very injurious to these birds, causing them to moult at all seasons, and even sometimes to pluck out their own feathers and disfigure themselves. In fact we look upon this partiality of our pet as an evidence on his part of depraved taste, and have strictly forbidden him the luxury he undoubtedly covets; and which may have been, most likely was, forced upon him in the first instance by a former injudicious owner or attendant.

Since he has been in our possession, "Pinto" has always enjoyed the rudest health; when he first arrived from Manchester he had a cold in his head that caused us a little uneasiness, but it soon passed off, and he has never ailed anything since. Last summer we turned him out into the aviary, thinking the change would be beneficial, but he seemed so thoroughly miserable there, that we soon took him in again, and allowed him instead the range of the house, which he now enjoys.

He has quite recently developed a curious taste for sitting at the bottom of the cage and grubbing among the sand and splinters of wood, making the while a curious noise not unlike that of a hen whose chickens have just come out of their shells, which, according to Mr. Dutton's observations, would tend to prove that the bird is, after all, a female! a supposition that receives support from the fact that the top of "Pinto's" head is dark grey, while that of the "pair" at the "Zoo" is white.

As already observed, the feathery coating of the Hawk-headed Parrots is decidedly thin, and the birds are moreover quite destitute of the inner covering of down, that enables our native birds to successfully resist the inclemency of our winters, and this is particularly observable on the sides under the wings, which are almost naked; nor is this a peculiarity of an individual specimen, but is the normal condition of the species, from which it is fair to conclude that these birds are chilly and could not readily be housed out of doors in this country.

"Pinto" indeed is so fond of warmth that if, as we have occasionally done, he is let out of the cage in the morning, before we are up; he will fly on to the bed, and make his way under the bed-clothes to our side, when he will nestle down as close as he can and purr and chuckle in evident enjoyment of the congenial warmth.

He, for we cannot make up our mind to use the feminine pronoun in this bird's regard, is very ticklesome, and if touched under the

wing with the tip of the finger almost laughs; at any rate wriggles about and contorts himself after the manner of a human being in a similar predicament; making at the same time a little remonstrant noise that sounds uncommonly like the familiar contraction "Don't!" but nevertheless evincing a keen appreciation of the fun, and retaliating on his tormentor by playfully nibbling the attacking finger.

From indications we have observed we feel sure this bird would willingly pair if it had a mate, and although we have been promised one, we do not see much sign of its arrival, and fear that poor "Pinto" is doomed to linger out a life of single blessedness (?) without a chance of helping to perpetuate the species.

Another observation we have made tending to confirm the opinion already expressed that "Pinto" is a lady, is that "she" does not appear at all disposed to make up to any of the fellow captives that occupy the same room, as male Parrots generally do; for instance, it utterly rejected the advances of a female Ring-necked Parrakeet, takes no notice of a Plumhead male, or of "Pilate", except to fly at the latter when it alights on the cage, and generally resenting the approach of its congeners.

Taking, however, "Pinto" for all in all, we have no hesitation in saying that he, she, or it is one of the most delightful and amusing birds we have ever kept, and, we feel assured, this species only requires to be better known to be appreciated as it deserves.

Quite recently "Pinto" has developed a new accomplishment, and, as we write, is whistling "bonnily", as a Scotchman would say. In fact we can place no limit to the development of his talents, seeing that he has learned so much during the two years he has been in our possession, and picks up a new trick almost every day.

Since writing the above we have acquired another bird of this species, which is even more droll and interesting than "Pinto", which it surpasses in linguistic attainments, possessing a repertoire that would do credit to any Grey Parrot; it is also full of tricks, rolls on its back and tosses a pebble about with its feet; stands on its head in a corner of the cage; cries "Hark!" and holds up one foot to call attention; quite confirming the impression we had already formed as to the intelligence and tractability of the Hawk-headed Parrots.

PILEATED PARRAKEET.

Psittacus pileatus, GOULD.

SYNONYMS: *Platycercus pileatus*; *P. spurius*.

FRENCH: *Platycerque à bonnet rouge*.

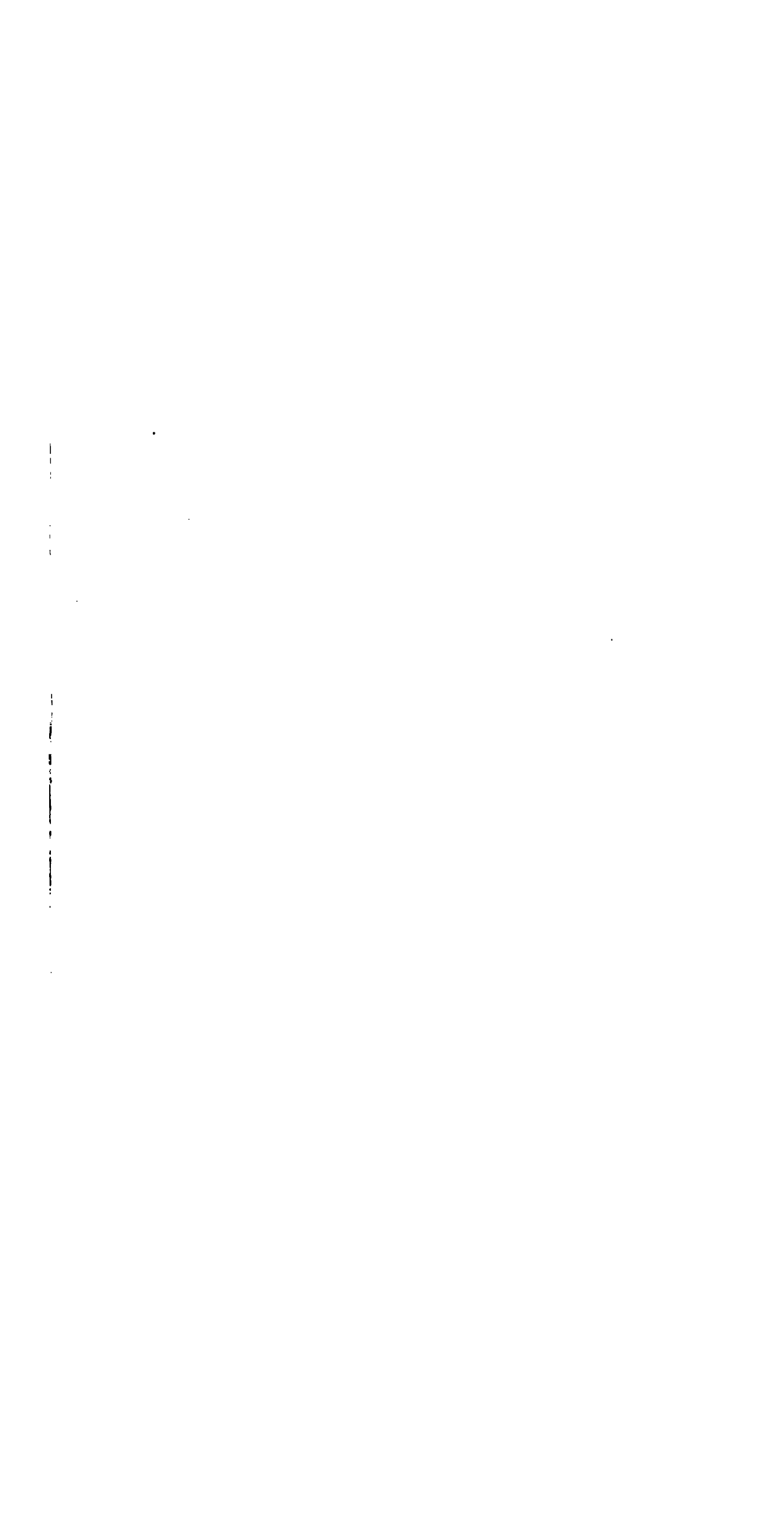
PRE-EMINENTLY distinguished among its peers by the harmonious and varied tintings of its plumage, the Pileated Parrakeet is no less to be recommended to the notice of amateurs for its gentle and loveable disposition, its inoffensive habits, and the softness and sweetness of its notes—it never screams or screeches, but warbles delightfully in a low and pleasing tone—than for the charm of its personal appearance; which, though not showy, is extremely attractive and neat.

A native of the sparsely-timbered ranges of Western Australia, the Ruby-capped Parrakeet was first described and figured by the late John Gould, F.R.S., the author, *inter alia*, of that magnificent work, *The Birds of Australia*, of which a single copy is now worth about £300; and well worth it, too, in our estimation and that of many people.

“Pilate”, contracted from pileated, has been in the writer’s possession for several years, and is believed to be the only specimen of its species now living in this country, where, until recently, a second was to be seen at the “Zoo”, but has gone over to the majority; while a few young ones, in immature plumage, that were imported during the summer (1885) by the late Anton H. Jamrach, are believed to have all died soon after leaving his hands.

The present writer is, unacquainted with the early history of the lovely bird of which Mr. Lydon has so admirably drawn the portrait for the present work, for it was purchased at a little suburban bird-shop, of which the owner had obtained it from a boy in the neighbourhood; to whom it had been made a present by a friend, who was reported to have brought it from Australia.

It was then adult, and perhaps two years old, in splendid condition,





PILEATED PARRAKEET.



and very tame and gentle. It soon grew reconciled to its new home and surroundings, but after awhile, whether it pined for its late ungrateful master, or the change of diet did not agree with it, for the dealer was unable to say to what food the bird had been accustomed, before passing into his possession; it grew sick and weak, and seemed as if it must certainly die.

Careful nursing, however, soon brought it round, and in the course of a week or two "Richard was himself again", while a sojourn in a large out-door aviary during the summer months so improved its appearance, and invigorated its frame; that, at the present time it is able to fly a dozen times or more round the room, without losing breath. It is rather sensitive to cold, and a small eater, preferring canary seed, but taking a little maize and hemp now and then. Of fruit it is extremely fond, but if given a lump of sugar, it proceeds at once to drop it into its water-tin, into which it also dips every piece of crust, or biscuit, or even boiled potato, that may be given to it.

When it perceives anything on the table that it fancies, it comes close up to the wires, stretches out its head, and raising its tail to the level of its back, flaps its wings quickly; without, however, opening them out, and emits a series of little calls, that sound something like "chee chu chu" rapidly repeated; but so far, although it answers to its name, "Pilate", by the above-described call, it has never attempted to speak, or even to imitate any kind of domestic noise, as most of its congeners are in the habit of doing.

It is amazingly fond of whittling, and if not supplied with a log of soft wood on which to exercise its long and sharp upper mandible, soon cuts a perch to pieces, or picks holes in the wall; in default of other material, it will even nibble the bars of its cage, but it is always supplied with timber, which it converts into minute chips in a very short space of time.

Eating little, and always, or nearly always, dry food, it is a very clean bird, bathes frequently, and takes great care of its beautiful plumage, which is in as perfect condition as if it enjoyed entire liberty; which it might do but for one objection, namely, the havoc it makes with wood of every description; picture-frames, backs of chairs, and especially the top of an over-mantle, of which it seems to be particularly fond; it has quite a passion for overhawling a desk, or box, lifting up the covers of the little receptacles for pens, etc., and pulling out and scattering the contents on all sides. Pencils and penholders it seems to have an extreme liking for, and will even try to pull them from one's fingers, when they are speedily broken, or cut rather, into pieces, if the bird is allowed to have its way.

"Pilate" and the Hawk-headed Parrot, already described, often have a battle royal when the former alights softly on the top of the cage usually occupied by the latter; but when both are out together they are very good friends, and like to explore each other's dwelling, occasionally making an exchange; "Pilate" taking possession of "Pinto's" abode, and the latter ensconcing himself in the cage ordinarily occupied by the former. All the same, the Pileated Parrakeet is a decidedly timid bird, and when in the aviary would surrender its place at the seed-box to the smallest of the inmates, without even an attempt at resistance.

Mr. Lydon's beautiful plate renders a detailed description of the Pileated Parrakeet unnecessary; it will be sufficient to observe that the green of the back and wings and the purple of the breast appear to change into various shades of the same colours, according to the light in which the bird is seen. The same remark holds good, though in a less degree, of the ruby-coloured cap, from which this Parrakeet takes its name, the golden green cheeks and the grey blue under surface of the tail. This appendage is about eight inches in length, and consists of twelve feathers, of which the central pair are the longest and dark green; the next pair are about half an inch shorter than the first, and are pale blue tipped with white; an arrangement of colour that also obtains with the third pair, which are about half an inch shorter than the second; the rest of the tail feathers are without white tips, and very much shorter than the others, the sixth or outside pair not being more than two inches long.

The beak is long and narrow, of a dull blue, lighter at the tip, and so formed that the horn-coloured tongue can always be seen. The eyes are hazel, and the legs and feet grey.

Although strong on the wing, and an excellent flyer, the Pileated Parrakeet has long legs, and is very active on the ground, where it passes a considerable portion of its time, walking freely, and running with as much nimbleness as the Grass Parrakeets; to which it seems to bear, in the opinion of the present writer, more affinity than to the Broadtails (*Platycerci*), with which it is usually classed.

Gould observes that it feeds mainly on the ground, probably on the seeds of the indigenous grasses.

The sexes are very much alike in respect of colour, and general appearance, but the adult male has a dull red shade on the rump, which in the female is yellowish green.

The plumage of the young is all of a dull green, but the cap and cheek patches are already defined, and the change to the adult habit is speedily effected. Little is known of these birds in their wild state

but it is reasonable to conclude, that they are not as hardy as many of their congeners in captivity.

Owing to the scarcity of the Pileated Parrakeet in its native country, and the rarity with which it is imported into this, a good specimen commands a high price in the bird-market, and the young ones, already referred to, were readily disposed of on arrival, at prices varying from £3 to £5 each.

Incredible as it may appear, this rare and beautiful bird has been twice exhibited at the Crystal Palace Bird Show, without attracting the attention of the Judges, who awarded the prize on one occasion to an indifferent specimen of Pennant's Parrakeet, and on the other to something else; truly a casting of pearls before swine, which shall not occur again; the fact being, that the majority of people do not know a good bird when they see one. In palliation, however, of the conduct of the Palace authorities, it may be here incidentally mentioned, that the light is anything but good at the Bird Shows that are held there every year.

Dr. Russ, of Berlin, who passes for an authority, does not even mention the Pileated Parrakeet, which, as far as the writer of these remarks is aware, has previously been described by Gould alone. True, an anonymous contributor to the *Boys Own Annual*, just mentions it, and calls it *Platycercus spurius*, but affirms it to resemble Barnard's Broad-tail, which is certainly a wide stretch of imagination, as readers will have an opportunity of judging for themselves; when the latter handsome bird is reached in the course of the present volume.

In concluding this brief sketch, it will be sufficient to say that the subject of it is one of the most desirable birds to make a pet of. Elegant of shape and of beautiful plumage, it has the further advantage of not being in the least noisy; it is very tame and gentle, and, once it has become acclimatised, fairly hardy, providing that extremes of cold are avoided. It is very friendly and sociable, and may safely be kept with even the tiniest Waxbills, without the least fear of its doing them an injury.

On the other hand, it will not learn to speak, and cannot be classed with "The talking Parrots", like many of its congeners; it is rather expensive, too, and when first imported, delicate. It is an inveterate cutter and clipper of wood, a very Gladstone in the matter of timber, if not in any other respect; and cannot, consequently, be kept in a conservatory, or even in an out-door aviary planted with trees and shrubs.

It seems invidious, however, to take leave of so charming a bird with words of dispraise, and we therefore repeat that among desirable

pets, the Pileated Parrakeet, in our opinion, occupies a very high place indeed.

That it is not noisy in the least degree, and is extremely beautiful, without being gaudy or "loud" in colour, is surely enough to recommend a most delightful creature to the favourable notice of connoisseurs. It is much to be regretted that so few of these eminently desirable birds should be imported, and that their treatment should be so little understood; that when one arrives, it as often as not, is lost through ignorance of the proper way to manage it on the part of its owner.

The death of the young birds, brought up from the nest by hand, that were received by the late A. H. Jamrach may be attributed, without doubt, to the insanitary condition of their surroundings during the voyage; for on their arrival at his place of business, that well-known dealer, much to be regretted by amateurs, assured us they were in a deplorably filthy state, and although he at once attended to them, and placed them in more comfortable quarters than the poor creatures had occupied for weeks; they all, as far as we are aware, ultimately died.

Should another of these birds ever pass into the hands of the writer, he would keep it very warm in the first instance, gradually lowering the temperature as the bird became acclimatised; would not permit it to wash except in tepid water, which he would also supply for drinking purposes, and would feed on oats and bread-sop, gradually weaning to canary seed; by which means he believes he would be more successful than he was in the last instance, when one of these very charming birds came into his possession; and thus secure a mate for "Pilate".





BAUER'S PARAKEET.

BAUER'S PARRAKEET.

Psittacus Zonarius.

SYNONYMS: *Psittacus viridis*, (!) *Platycercus Baueri*, *P. cyanomelas*,
P. zonarius, etc.

FRENCH: *Perruche de Bauer*. GERMAN: *Der Ringsittich*.

THIS handsome Broadtail has a number of aliases, and is called, amongst other appellations, The Port Lincoln Parrakeet, the Zoned Barnardius and other equally fanciful designations; by Gould it is named Bauer's Parakeet, and this designation we have thought it best to adopt in these pages, as in addition to the authority of the author of "The Birds of Australia", that of Vigors and Horsfield may be cited in support of it.

It is a trifle larger than the Rosella, but not as large as Pennant's Broadtail. The plate gives a good idea of the colouring, which we need not stop to particularise; merely remarking that it bears a great resemblance to another species of the same sub-family, the *Platycercus semitorquatus* of Gould; from which, however, it is readily distinguished by the red circle above the upper mandible in the latter species.

In captivity this Parrakeet has, in our experience, but little to recommend it to the notice of amateurs; for in a cage it is dull and listless, and is not to be trusted in the aviary with companions weaker and more defenceless than itself. It never learns to speak, as far as the writer of these pages is aware, and though its voice is not often exerted to its utmost power, the bird takes fits of screaming now and then.

In a large aviary, however, this disagreeable trait in its character is not so noticeable as it must be in the house, and if it has no companions it can bully, even to death, Bauer will get on very well in an out-door aviary of large size; in which, needless to remark, it would not permit any tree or shrub to live very long, seeing that it is as great a whittler as the rest of its family.

M. Alfred Rousse, of Fontenay-le-Comte, reports a brood in 1884, from an acclimatised pair of these birds, but we are not aware that his success in this respect has been repeated elsewhere; for these Parakeets are not common even in their native land, South Western Australia, and are very seldom imported; so that they command a high price in the market, and are bought by amateurs at from £3 to £4 a pair.

The female is not quite as large as her mate, is duller in colouring than he is, and has the head smaller and somewhat more flattened; otherwise the sexes are indistinguishable.

Like most of the Broadtails, the Bauer is hardy and a frugal feeder, preferring Canary-seed, but eating hemp and oats, which last should always be offered to it when first imported, as it is usually fed on them during the voyage, and an abrupt change of diet is often productive of disastrous consequences.

If it is desired to breed these birds in captivity, a healthy acclimatised pair of adult birds should be selected, and a properly constructed out-door aviary, of not less than ten feet by six, set apart for their special use; or, if it be desired to associate them with others of their congeners, these should be of size to cope successfully with the Bauers, which, as we have said, are tyrannically disposed towards weaker subjects than themselves; but in this case the area of the enclosure should be proportionately greater.

The Bauer breeds in the hollow branches, technically "spouts", of the gum trees in its native Valleys, and a decaying log, or an artificially constructed wooden nest must be supplied for domestic purposes in the aviary; when the birds being of an inquisitive turn will soon commence to explore the new article of furniture, and probably end by making the use of it for which it was placed in their abode.

If the floor of the open portion of the aviary can be laid down with grass, it will not only add materially to the appearance of the place, but tend to the comfort and amusement, and consequently the health of the inmates; which, it must be remembered, are ground Parakeets; that is to say, seek, in their wild state, the greater part of their food among the growing grasses of their native land, upon the seeds of which they mainly subsist.

It is said that they also eat the larvæ of the white ant, so common in decaying logs in the Australian bush, and this is by no means improbable; but in captivity these birds, and their congeners, with one or two exceptions, do extremely well without insect food, at least for some generations; for, ultimately, all aviary bred Parakeets, of whatever species, appear to degenerate, and it is just possible that this de-

ficiency in the matter of animal food may be at the bottom of the vexatious deterioration in size, stamina and appearance, that is so very noticeable among the more easily obtained species of Australian Parrakeets; whether Grass Parrakeets, Broadtails, or New Zealand Concinni: so that amateurs who find their stock degenerating, might try and recuperate it by a liberal supply of insect food.

Bauer's and Barnard's Parrakeets are not unfrequently confounded, not only with each other, but with a third congener commonly called the Australian Ring-necked Parrakeet, *Platycercus semitorquatus*, but only by persons who are unacquainted with the birds themselves, which differ most materially from each other in general appearance.

It is probable that we shall treat of *Semitorquatus* during the course of this work, if not in the present volume; but its place will depend upon how soon we are able to obtain a living specimen, as an acquaintance, if only of a few weeks' duration, with a bird, is worth all that one could read about it in a year, and re-produce at second-hand; a determination that will account for the somewhat erratic course of description that we have adopted in these volumes, where no scientific arrangement is attempted, but a chronological order adopted instead. Our plan may not be without some inconvenience, but it has this merit, at all events, to recommend it to our readers, we are personally acquainted with the birds we write about; or, if in a few instances we should be unable to obtain living specimens of species necessary for the completion of the work, the account will be taken from reliable sources.

The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton sends the following account of Bauer's or the Port Lincoln Parrakeet.

I HAVE not kept this bird myself, but as I have a friend who has one, I wrote for an account of it, which I subjoin:—

"Polly has led too respectable a life to have any story attached to her." (This is not quite the case, for I myself let out Polly once, who immediately showed the usual disposition of all long-tailed Parrakeets to stray; and was eventually found, having taken up with but mediocre company at some distance.—*F.G.D.*) "Her disposition is exceedingly sweet; emphatically it may be said of her that her bark is worse than her bite. Only once has the latter made the least impression, and that under circumstances of great aggravation—the former would have finished Job's patience, without any need of his friends' intervention; and almost daily upsets the temper of the whole family. It is not so

much loud or shrill as simply exasperating. Her whistle is very pret and she evidently has a good ear for music, as she picked up the *There's nae luck about the house*, on her own account, during her voya from Australia; but in that respect her career has been a blight one—not having fallen into the possession of a whistling family.

She eats anything that is given her, and I grieve to say is anythi but a teetotaller; she drank up with avidity and no bad results spoonful of whiskey, which was given her once as an experiment.

Only twice has her health given any cause for uneasiness, and th warmth brought her round at once. No care is ever taken of h and it is only lately we have even thought of covering her up night, and then only for fear of cats. Her cleanliness, alas! leav much to be desired. She abhors washing, and only expresses a wi for a tub about twice a year, and then evidently bitterly repents in shivering sulkiness. She undoubtedly thrives under the no t system, and we have left off trying to force it on her.

I can think of no other particulars respecting her. She is a d little engaging creature, and shows her discrimination by thorough objecting to children. During her quiet moments, to know her is love her—in her more demonstrative hours, she might be usefu viewed as a heavy cross in life.

Since forwarding the above I saw a very charming Port Linc exhibited in the last Crystal Palace Show (1886). It whistled a tu said a word or two, and seemed most anxious to court the notice every one. It gave me a very high idea of the attractiveness of P Lincolns as pets."

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GREAT SALMON-, OR ROSE-, OR
RED-CRESTED COCKATOO.

Psittacus Moluccensis, KHL.

SYNONYMS: *Cacatua Moluccensis*, GML.; *C. rosacea*, VLL.;
C. erythrolophus, LSS.; *C. rubro-cristata*, FNSCH.; *Plyctolophus*
rosaceus, LZ.; *P. Moluccensis*, LNG.

GERMAN: *Der rothgehäubte oder Moluckenkakadu*, RSS.

FRENCH: *Cacatois à huppe rouge*, BFFN.

WE cordially agree with Dr. Russ that this fine bird, we might go further and say this magnificent bird, is among the handsomest of them all (*gehört zu den schönsten unter allen*); for although not so brilliantly attired as the Macaws, nor so fluent a talker as the Grey Parrots and some of the Amazons, it possesses a quiet beauty that is all its own, and will often learn to talk with astonishing fluency. It has but one drawback that we know of, namely, it is not always sufficiently careful in the exercise of its particularly sonorous voice.

To hear one of these birds repeating in a vastly exaggerated key the triumphant and self-congratulatory cackle of a domestic fowl, that has just fulfilled the chief object of her existence, laying an egg, is simply to abhor it ("hate" is much too mild an expression); but to listen to it as it whispers, with depressed head and uplifted crest, in the softest and sweetest of feminine tones, "Oh! you pretty, pretty Cockey, how I love you", or some such phrase, is equally to adore it; for here again the common verb "to love" is wanting in adequate power to fully describe the feeling inspired in the mind of the hearer and beholder, by the charming voice and no less charming gesture of the bird; as it whispers in gentlest voice, and presents its head to be rubbed with the most bewitching confidence.

Perhaps, however, on the whole it is better to make the creature's acquaintance for the first time when it is in the former mood, for the sudden discovery that the beautiful possessor of that entrancing voice can transform itself at will into a shrieking fiend, is almost too distressing to be borne with equanimity; and the latter phase of its character comes like a pleasant surprise upon the owner, who had only known his acquisition by its demonical yells, and had already meditated the wringing of its neck, notwithstanding the beauty of its coat, in the fear that he himself might be rendered stone deaf, or at least be summoned by one of his neighbours as a public nuisance.

Yes, the great Moluccan Cockatoo has its drawbacks we admit; but what a truly magnificent creature it is when in perfect plumage, and how gentle and loveable it can be when kindly treated and made much of.

Surpassing in size of body the largest of the Macaws, and covered with feathers that remind one of childhood in the country and raspberries and cream, it is no wonder this monarch of the Cockatoo race has had admirers from the earliest date of its importation into Europe, almost a couple of centuries ago, as well as enemies that cannot say a good word for it, and in whose eyes its merits are outweighed by its faults; which very often, if not always, are the result of wrong treatment and ignorance of its habits and requirements.

As we have said, it is a large bird, measuring seventeen or eighteen inches in length, of which the tail occupies about six; the wings are each about a foot long, and very powerful, so that the bird when wild has great capacity for flight; often soaring at such an elevation that it is invisible to the naked eye, although its piercing cries are distinctly audible, as it flies to and fro between its feeding and its sleeping grounds.

White, tinged with pale rose red, is the prevailing colour of the plumage, which in a perfect specimen is powdered copiously with a substance resembling French chalk in appearance, that adds a wonderful lustre to the coat. The crest, which is about six inches in length, lies down the back of the head and upper part of the neck, and is scarcely noticed until the bird, getting excited from whatever cause, lifts it up and displays not only the length and width of the plumes that compose it, but their beautiful ruddy orange tint. The side tail feathers have their inner webs a pale primrose yellow, from base to centre, the remaining portion, as well as the central pair, being white. The beak is bluish black, the circle of the eyes pearl grey, and the eyes themselves deep hazel, although some individuals have them of a darker shade than others, and these may be the males. Dr. Karl

Russ describes the eyes as black, or dark brown (*schwarz bis dunkelbraun*), which is also our experience as regards them.

Though natives of the Moluccas, principally of the Island of Ceram, these grand birds are not in the least delicate, but, on the contrary, are perhaps among the hardiest of the members of the great family to which they belong; for if turned out during the summer they endure the cold of our winters with perfect impunity, and gain in loveliness of feathering what they may lose in tameness and docility; though a tame Moluccan Cockatoo, that is permitted to range a wood at its free will, never becomes very wild, and will always return to its cage for food; although it will occasionally stray to a great distance, and not perhaps be seen or heard of for a day or two, when it will return "as hungry as a hunter", just as the disconsolate owner is beginning to fancy that his pet is lost; but of that catastrophe there is no fear, unless some felon sportsman should chance to see and shoot a bird he cannot but know to be a domestic one, and belonging to a neighbour, if not a friend. If left alone, the Moluccan Cockatoo, when tired of rambling, especially if hungry, will always return to his cage, for he is gifted, among his many desirable qualities, with a strong homing instinct, and has never been known to lose his way when foraging abroad.

From among a multitude of anecdotes relating to this species, we select the following for reproduction in these pages; premising that the information thus given, was elicited by the annexed query that appeared in *The Bazaar* for January 26th., 1887.—"Can any reader tell me anything about the 'Large White Demon Cockatoo'?" to which an anonymous correspondent thus replied:—

"I do not know its age, but it must be ten years since my sister-in-law went to a bazaar in Calcutta, to buy a gift for a brother just starting by train. This bird has the most fascinating way of whispering confidentially, 'Pretty Cocky!', and the dealer seeing my sister taken by it, of course told her that it was the most splendid talker in Calcutta, with strings of sentences and the power of speedily learning anything, and named a high price, which was paid, and the bird changed hands, but has never learned anything else.

"In its feathered and clean days it was a very lovely bird. I used to wash it with soap and water, and then it was all of a faint bluish pink; but I was advised not to wet it, and have not done so for more than a year, so that it looks rather dirty now, and has for some time been plucking out its feathers. I sometimes think it has insects, but have never seen any.

"At times it is exceedingly fierce. I have seen it keep seven men

armed with spades and long brooms, in a corner. It is extraordinarily fond of children, and perfectly safe with the youngest infant. It is generally most civil to visitors, but working men it cannot abide (on the watch-dog principle, I suppose); and if one of them lifts a hammer, or kneels down to do any work, it utters its warning cry of 'Coquey! Coquey!' and flies at their heels; and when it has hurt or terrified its victim, flies away shrieking, as if itself in agony or pain, and then goes about limping to make me believe that it has been kicked.

"I notice that the bird fights on other grounds, especially when it has chosen a corner as its own, which it defends against all comers, flying out at intruders, and appearing to immensely enjoy their discomfiture, though it is the only member of the household that does so. However, the instant I say 'enough!' and hold out my hand, it is quiet; for it likes to be petted, but not for very long, as it is equally fond of a change of occupation. It is frightful on furniture, window frames, and paper, anything, in a word, that can be destroyed.

"It used always to live in the open air in India, and drive about on my brother's carriage, and in Scotland drove with me regularly when I went out, simply holding on to the back of the pony-chaise, and wild with delight. In the East it lived in the trees; but here, in a tiny garden, in the middle of a town, it is too destructive, and too great a temptation to thieves. It has been stolen twice, but nearly bit the man's hand off on one occasion, and then flew, shrieking, to me in triumph.

"It is afraid of chickens, or indeed of any bird whatever. It lives mainly in a small cage, and, when tired of that, in a barrel with paper in it, where it is very fond of burrowing, and where it lays its eggs, of which it deposits about three in the course of a year. It delights to fly out of the barrel at the maids, or anyone else who comes near, and seems greatly to enjoy their screaming and running away.

"I am not aware whether Cockatoos of this species (the Red-crested Moluccan) have been bred in England; but if anyone who has a male bird of the same kind would kindly lend it to me, I would be glad to try the experiment, and take the greatest care of the loan; especially as I understand that the care and rearing of young ones has the effect of preventing feather-eaters from destroying their own plumage.

"On reading over what I had written, I am shocked to find what a one-sided character I have given of my dear but not faultless bird; but some people are so timid as regards Parrots that it is only right to warn them against wickedness; and yet that is not the word, for it is pure fun and mischief—*méchante* as opposed to *mauvaise*.

“You will be interested to hear how my bird once saved an infant’s life, by enabling one that was totally inexperienced in the matter to wean another. In fact it is a bird one might write a book about.” Our correspondent, however, furnishes no details of this interesting experiment, but proceeds: “It (the Cockatoo) was devoted to its barrel the first year, and its ways were most curious. It hid its egg deep down in the paper, which was all bitten up into minute scraps; then it did not sit as ordinary birds do on their eggs, but laid sideways and rolled about. The last two years it took no notice of its eggs whatever.”

The above interesting letter elicited several replies, and offers of mates for the lady’s Cockatoo, but nothing came of it, and the Moluccan lives a life of single blessedness to the present day; which is a pity certainly, but cannot be helped. We did think of giving her a trial, but reflection as to the risk incurred decided us finally to abandon the notion too; for after all it was doubtful if such a bird would have agreed with a mate, as happened in the case of another correspondent, who once introduced two of these birds to each other; when, although they were an undoubted pair, they immediately commenced to fight so furiously, that one of them must have been killed if the owner had not interfered and separated them—a by no means easy task, during which he was severely bitten.

Again, Parrots may be very kind to people and children in their own house, and when transferred to a strange place may fiercely attack everyone, child or adult, that comes near them; so, as we have said, every negotiation fell through, and the idea of breeding Moluccan Cockatoos in captivity, is for the present in abeyance.

As might be expected, these birds live to a great age. Dr. Russ relates, on the authority of Herr Dusek, of Vienna, that a Moluccan Cockatoo, which had lived twenty-one years in the aviary of the Princess Schwartzenberg, was then placed with a male, and soon afterwards laid an egg!

A dealer of Berlin, F. Schmidt, acquired one of these birds, which had been in the possession of one family, handed down from father to son, for nearly one hundred years; and it afterwards lived with him for nineteen years more, and then died, not from old age, but from an accident that befel it.

As happens with most of the Parrot family, the males are the best speakers; the females only learning to say a word or two, which they repeat in a softer tone than their mates, although they can scream, or yell rather, in quite as loud a key.

In this country the Moluccan Cockatoo appears to command a higher

price than it does in Germany, where Dr. Russ quotes the price at from thirty to one hundred and fifty marks; but we never knew of one here that has been offered, except by a private person ignorant of its value, for less than £5 or £6, and more frequently the latter price than the former.

When excited, or when shrieking for its own amusement, and the torture of sensitive ears, its trumpet-like note of "tertinguè, tertinguè", the Moluccan Cockatoo stands on tip-toes, elevates its beautiful crest, spreads its wings, and puffs out every feather on its body; so that it becomes a most alarming-looking object, though one of exceeding beauty. A very tame bird of this species, however, will very seldom shriek, and will trot after its master or mistress all over the house like a pet dog; which sagacious animal it can also compete with as a household guard.

Not far from where we live is one of these birds, that has been in the possession of the family that own it for quite a number of years. It is kept, for the most part, chained to a stand; which, by the way, is a much better method of keeping a large Cockatoo than confining it in a cage. It is very tame, and a good talker; one of the expressions it most affects being the interrogation, "Who are you? What do you want?" uttered in the most human-like of tones. It is usually kept in the breakfast-room, which is on the ground floor, and looks out on the common. One night, or rather early one morning, the master and mistress of the house were roused by the shrieks of the Cockatoo, which kept on calling out "Who are you? What do you want?" in the loudest and most excited manner.

"I am sure, my dear, there are thieves downstairs!" said the lady. "Nonsense!" exclaimed the gentleman, impatiently; "it's the cat more likely." However, as the noise continued, he thought he had better go and see what was the matter, if only for the sake of quieting the bird; and arming himself with some weapon and a light, proceeded downstairs, cautiously, to the breakfast-room, where he found the Cockatoo with every feather literally standing on end from excitement, and the window open!

Nothing was missing, however, for the thieves, or thief, had been so thoroughly alarmed by the bird that they, or he, had evidently not even entered the room, but had fled at the first challenge, leaving the sash raised. The gentleman shut and bolted the window, praised his good guard, gave it a tit-bit, and went back to bed, feeling thankful that he was the owner of so sensible and valuable a creature.

It is to be hoped that at no very distant date, some amateur may have the gratification of seeing a brood of these birds reared in his

aviary, for eggs are of frequent occurrence, even in the case of solitary females; and the process of egg production, appears to be unattended with the pain and danger that accompany it in the case of the smaller Cockatoos.

A correspondent, who possesses a fine specimen of the Moluccan Cockatoo, writes as follows respecting her pet:—"My bird has no history; his chief merits are his beautiful plumage and his affectionate ways; he is no talker, but a great thief, and delights in stealing things off the table, if we pretend not to see him. His chief amusement is dancing in the funniest way, and executing steps like a young lady, with his beak in the air."

From the foregoing account we incline rather to the belief that the bird is a female, for the males are more loquacious (we are now speaking of Moluccan Cockatoos), and not, as a rule, so tame as this bird appears to be; and in a subsequent communication from its owner, that lady says: "My red-crested bird has densely black eyes, all over alike, with no discernible pupil; but I begin to think *he* is a lady, for he is so remarkably polite and affectionate lately to our Yellow-crested Cockatoo, which is decidedly a male. It is very funny to see the other offering kisses to him across the room. I put the stands close together to-day, but the Yellow-crest showed signs of fight, and snapped at his admirer!"

*The Hon. and Rev. F. G. Dutton's account of the Great
Salmon-crested Cockatoo (Cacatua Moluccensis).*

THIS, according to my experience, is the most charming of all the Cockatoos, and very much to be recommended to any one who can let them fly loose. Taken as a species, they are the best talkers amongst the Cockatoos; but I must admit I never kept a Goffin. When a Lemon-crest is a good talker, he beats the Salmon-crest; but taking numbers imported into consideration, you find a greater proportion of Salmon-crests talk than of Lemon-crests. He is also the gentlest of all the Cockatoos, and the most certain.

The first I ever had did not talk, but he had great character. I don't think he was altogether wise, for he took the greatest possible dislike to me, who was prepared to be very fond of him, and was devoted to a friend of mine, who decidedly disliked him. In fact his devotion was so great that I tried to persuade my friend to accept him; but in vain. As I could not get over his hatred of myself, I parted with him.

The next I had was gentle and good-tempered with every one. The

Salmon-crests are not at all treacherous, and that is more than can be said for Lemon-crests. If they hate you, they hate you; but if they are good-tempered, they never think of biting. Any one might pet my second bird. He used to be allowed to fly loose, and formed a beautiful sight flying at an enormous height in the air. He always stayed out three days, and then came home to feed. He loved to splash about in the wet boughs after a shower.

The third I had I bought cheap as a confirmed feather-picker. I rather hoped to cure him; but finding I could not, parted with him again. Perhaps while I am on the subject of feather-picking, I may give a hint or two to amateurs. Feather-picking comes from two causes. One is from improper conditions of life, either as to diet or cleanliness. This is when the bird pulls out its feathers, and tears its flesh. It is the most distressing kind to see, but much the most curable. Restore the bird to health, and he will probably give up the habit.

The other cause is *ennui*. The bird is a restless active bird, and he gets bored. He learns to pick his feathers by way of distraction. You can only cure this kind by continually occupying his attention; and as this is next to impossible, it is not very likely that this kind of feather-picking will be cured.

There is also a third trick Parrots have, and that is *nibbling* their feathers. This is pure *trick*, just like a child's biting its nails. You can make the child understand it mustn't, and you can tie up its hands in gloves; but you can neither make the Parrot understand, nor muffle its feathers. As with diseases, so with tricks: an ounce of prevention is worth pounds of cure. See that a bird has plenty of firewood to make matches of *before* it begins to pluck itself.

The Salmon-crest has with all his charms two or three drawbacks, which prevent his being suited for cage life. His screams are more than any one who is not stone deaf can endure, and *I never knew* one which was quite broken of screaming. Then they have a *very* strong smell, which renders them quite unfitted for a living room, though they might do for a hall. Though they come from the Moluccas, they appear to be very hardy. Their best place is certainly at liberty. They are not destructive to trees like the Macaws, and make quite as beautiful an object flying about. Their price is unvarying. All dealers charge £5 a picce for them.

END OF VOL. III.



