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2. NOTE ON THE EGG OF THE PIPING CROW OR MAGPIE OF NEW SOUTH WALES (*GYMNORHINA TIBICEN*). BY GEORGE BENNETT, M.D., F.Z.S.

It is not uncommon for eggs of the same species of bird to vary so much both in form and colour, as to cause doubts to arise in the minds of ornithologists as to the possibility of their being produced by the same species. This has been well exemplified in the case of the Red-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaëton phœnicurus*) more particularly, as well as in others. On examining a number of eggs of the Piping Crow (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), at Sydney, N. S. Wales, I was surprised to observe in how many instances they differed, both with respect to their form as well as in the markings of colour, so as to appear to belong to distinct species, although those differing so much both in form and colour were procured from the nest of the same bird.

The eggs I had so recently an opportunity of carefully examining were collected by two zealous young naturalists, Mr. Edward Ramsey and Mr. Henry Norton. The former gentleman has sent me his notes on the eggs of the Australian Magpie, from which I have collected the following information. He states that "the Piping Crow (*G. tibicen*) lays eggs differing from one another in the same nest, both in form and colour; some being long and others round, and the coloured spots varying very much. On August 25th, 1860," he says, "the first Magpie's eggs were taken this season. I have six varieties of the eggs of this bird; and so much do they differ from each other, that, had I not taken them from the nest, I could not have believed they were the eggs of the same bird. All the young birds I have taken from the nest have had the breast of a dull-brown colour; and a young bird brought home from the nest in 1859 is now (1860) changing the plumage of the breast from the dull-brown colour to black."

3. NOTE ON THE GENUS *BASILORNIS*.  
BY G. R. GRAY, F.L.S., ETC.

The genus *Basilornis* was established some years back by the late Prof. Temminck on a bird from Celebes. Since then Mr. Wallace has met with another species in his wanderings in Ceram. As there exists some confusion with regard to these two species, I have thought it right to address to the Society a few remarks on them, with a view of pointing out their distinctive characters. They are easily distinguished from one another by the form of their crests. That of Celebes possesses a short, compressed, keel-like crest, which extends from the culmen to behind the head, and is composed entirely of scale-like and convex feathers; whilst that of Ceram has an occipital, erect and elongated crest, which, when viewed sideways, assumes somewhat of a subtriangular form, and is composed of truncated, rather broad and lax plumes. It also differs in having the nostrils exposed and a naked space round each eye. In the species of Celebes



the nostrils are covered by the frontal plumes, and there is scarcely any naked space round the eyes.

Wagler in 1827 described a bird from Java (?) under the name of *Pastor corythaix*, the characters of which agree with the Ceram and not the Celebes species, with which it has been confounded by Pr. Bonaparte and other writers.

The specific characters of the two species are subjoined—viz.

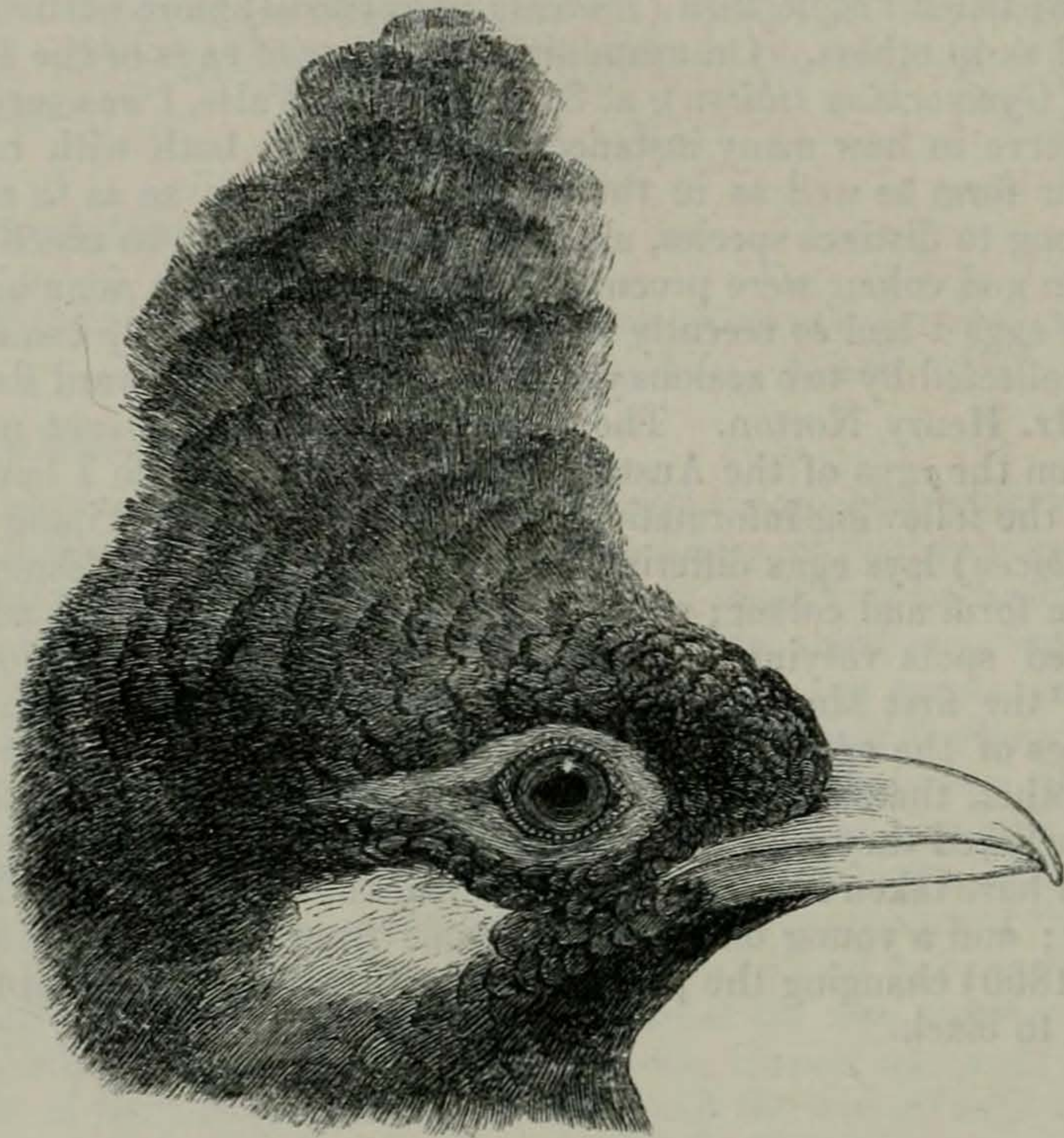


Fig. 1.

**BASILORNIS CORYTHAIX** (fig. 1).

Top of the head rich glossy purplish black ; crest bronzy black ; nape, back, and beneath the body glossy chalybeous ; wings fuscous, paler at the base of the inner web ; tail bronzy black, with the outer feathers black with green edges ; spot below each eye, a patch on each side of breast, and some scattered hairs on the throat, white.

*Pastor corythaix*, Wagl. Syst. Av.

*Basilornis corythaix*, Pr. B. Consp. Av. p. 420.

*Heterornis corythaix*, G. R. Gray, Gen. of B. ii. p. 335.

*Hab.* Ceram (*Wallace*).

**BASILORNIS CELEBENSIS** (fig. 2).

Head rich glossy steel black ; crest rich glossy purplish black ; back, breast, and abdomen chalybeous ; quills fuscous black ; tail bronzy black, with the outer feathers greenish black ; a spot beneath



each eye, and a patch on each side of breast, white, partly tipped with buff; throat with some scattered white plumes, hair-like at base and dilated at the tip of each; nape and upper part of back furnished with a few scattered buff plumes.

*Basilornis celebensis*, Temm. MS.

*Basilornis corythaix*, p., Pr. B. Consp. Av. p. 420 (descrip.).

*Hab.* Celebes (Menado, Makassar) (*Wallace*).

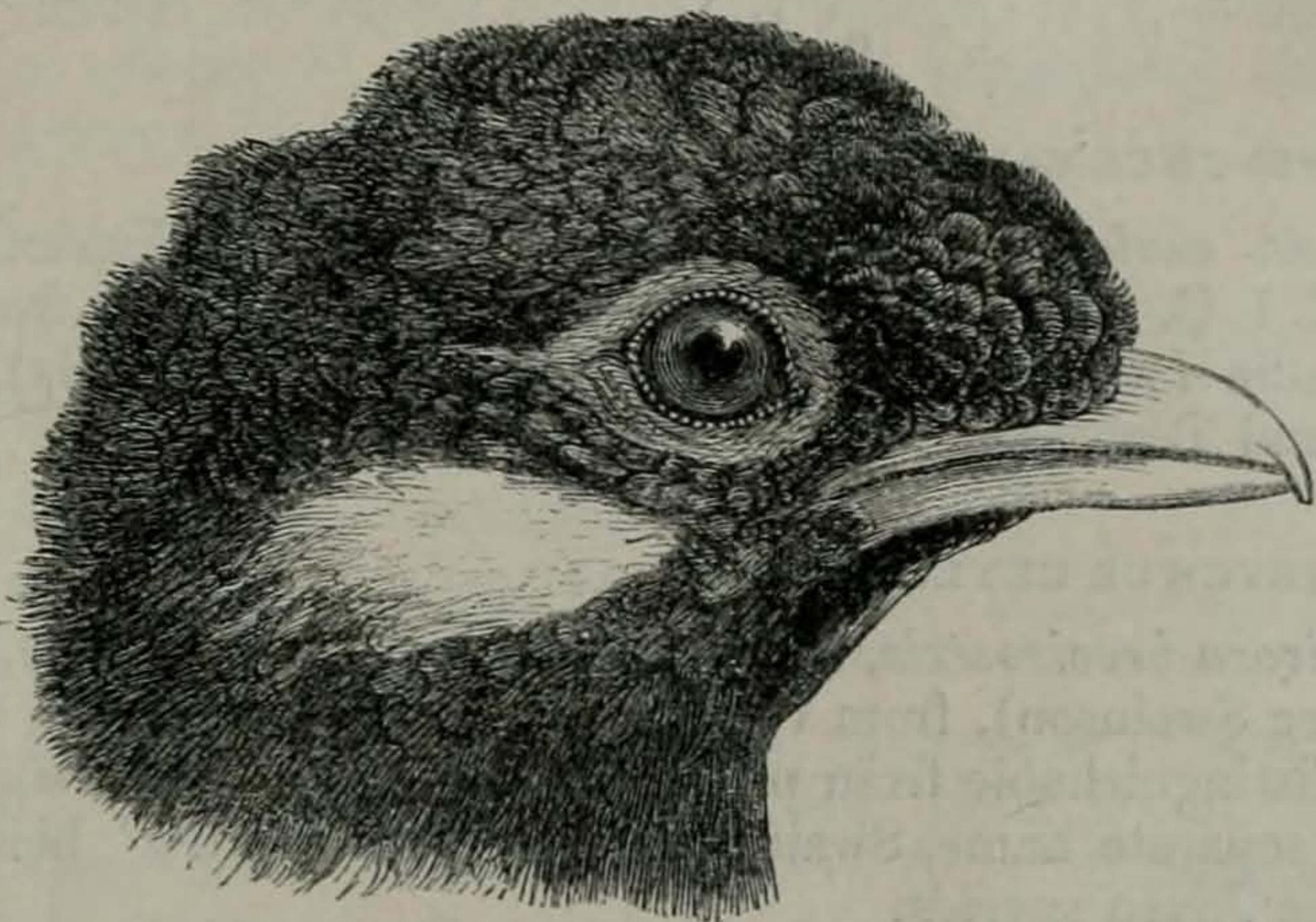


Fig. 2.

4. ON A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS COPSYCHUS FROM BORNEO. BY P. L. SCLATER, M.A., PH.D., SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY.

COPSYCHUS SUAVIS.

*Nigro-sericea, alis extus fuscescentioribus; abdomine saturate castaneo; dorso imo et caudæ rectricibus lateralibus candidis, harum quatuor mediis et proximæ utrinque pogonio interiore nigris: rostro nigro, pedibus pallide fuscis.*

Long. tota 9·0, alæ 4·0, caudæ 4·5.

*Hab.* In Borneo meridionali.

*Obs.* Affinis *Copsychus macrurus*, sed statura majore, cauda brevior et rectricum pictura diversus.

I have selected two examples of this pretty species of *Copsychus* out of a small collection of bird skins from Banjermassing in Southern Borneo, now in the hands of Mr. S. Stevens. Its nearest ally is that well-known beautiful songster the *Copsychus macrurus* of India, from which, however, it is readily distinguished by its larger size, shorter tail, and the three lateral rectrices, as well as the outer web of the next pair, being wholly of a pure white. There are, however, blackish edgings at the base of the inner web of the second and third pair in one of the specimens, which I take to be a male. In the other, which is probably the female, these are absent, and the three