

January 23, 1844.

William Horton Lloyd, Esq., in the Chair.

A communication was read from Major Harris, lately on an embassy to Shoa, in Southern Abyssinia, containing his observations on the natural history and zoology of that country, accompanied with an extended list of its Mammalia, Aves, Reptilia, &c., with their native names.

Dr. Templeton's memoir on some varieties of the Monkeys of Ceylon was then read:—

“The *Cercopithecus pileatus* (‘Menageries,’ *M. sinicus*, F. Cuv.) is the common small monkey of every part of the western and southern maritime provinces of Ceylon. It is readily distinguished from the Toque by the light tan hue of the face and the black margin of the lower lip. The male is more robust and not so playful as the female; both are easily tamed, and retain their gentleness and familiarity in old age. The figure in the ‘Histoire des Mammifères’ represents the animal much too stout, the tail rather short, the distinction of colour of the back and abdomen marked by a too well-defined line, and the hairs on the crown of the head not sufficiently copious, long or divergent. In other respects the figure is good. In that excellent little work the ‘Menageries,’ page 308, are these words: ‘with the long hair of the head standing erect, like an upright crest.’ This, applied to our animal, I have difficulty in comprehending; the hair on the head of the adult males and females being flattened down, strikingly divergent from a small central part, and in some instances slightly separated down the middle; but anything like an upright crest I have never yet seen. There are some slight distinctions of sex and age which it may be proper to note, remarking at the same time that the peculiarities, though obvious enough in the majority, are by no means constant, but shade into each other, especially in the domesticated animals. The adult male, as I have above remarked, has the hair of the crown flattened down, equally divergent in all directions, of the same colour and appearance as that of the back; that is, rather long, mouse-coloured close to the skin, yellowish brown, or in strong sunlight golden with a shade of chestnut, at the tips. The face is light tan-coloured, with scattered black hairs: along the eyebrows a few stiff black hairs projecting straight forwards, and above these, and beneath the crowning tuft, a dark band of hair; the space about the ears whitish, ears fuliginous; lower lip with a broad black margin; conjunctiva black. Iris reddish brown, pupil black. Anterior surface of the trunk and inner side of the limbs pale. The hands are strong, fuliginous; the dorsum thinly

covered with hairs, like those of the back. Tail thickish at the root, mouse-coloured, not diminishing to a point; apex light brown or grey; callosities tan-coloured, with the hair for about an inch surrounding them fuliginous; penis trilobed. The female has the legs and arms of a redder tint, the inside of the upper arms and broad patches of the chest and belly indigo-blue, and the band across the forehead not usually dark, but of an orange-yellow. In the immature the hair of the crown is not much flattened down or so diverging, the face more old-fashioned and exquisitely comical, the tail nearly naked, and the cheeks, palms, soles and callosities, pale pinkish. I have nothing to add to the admirable description of the habits of the genus given in 'Menageries.' This and the Toque should unquestionably be separated from all other 'Macaques.'

"The *Loris gracilis* is very common in the lower country of the south and east of Ceylon. Mr. Baird's account leaves little to be said about it, as its timorousness and nocturnal habits afford little opportunity for watching it. I have had them several times, but have never been able to keep them for more than a few months; they soon begin to pine away and die. Their food consisted of very ripe plantains, rice, and such insects as abounded in the apartment. The last I had slept nearly all day with the nose resting against the lower part of the belly, as represented in the sketch; about dusk, if the room was perfectly quiet, it ventured about, crawling along the rails of the chairs with a very gentle movement, occupying nearly one-third of a minute in closing its hands on the parts of the furniture it grasped in succession, and moving its head from side to side with much grave deliberation; but when a spider or other insect came within its reach, its clutch at it was quick as lightning, and with equal rapidity it was conveyed to the mouth, so that I could only guess at what it had seized from knowing that insects abounded in the room. It was perfectly conscious of being watched, as I have occasionally detected it moving with considerable rapidity, but instantly assuming its ordinary slow movement when my eyes were directed towards it. It would not tolerate the familiarities which are mentioned by Mr. Baird; and Capt. Geale, 90th Light Infantry, remarked to me that it seemed particularly anxious to avoid having its hinder extremities touched, which is certainly the case. I never saw it search for 'Pediculi' among its hair, nor could ever detect any on its body after death. When approached it retired along the stick placed slantingly in the corner for its use, or along the back of the chairs with the usual deliberate movement, its great goggle eyes fixed immoveably on your face, or hands if held towards it, and with every expression of extreme fear. Its mouth appears so small and so little distensible, at least when alive, that I cannot imagine it capable of biting anything except it be of very small size; yet the natives universally assert that it destroys peacocks in the jungle, seizing them by the neck, which it clutches with such tenacity that the bird soon falls exhausted to the ground off its perch, or in its sudden flight attempting to escape its persecutor; and further, that having devoured the brains it leaves the rest of the body untouched. The

sketch* is a good one, taken from life; but it must be remarked that the white streak between the eyes often extends a little backwards, gradually disappearing about the level of the ears. The hair is very singular when the animal is alive; it resembles very soft close-packed wool, somewhat curled and arranged in little tufts, as the hair on the scalp of the negro, but extremely delicate; it soon loses this appearance after death if much handled, as is always the case in removing the skin.

“There are no other species of *Stenopidae* in Ceylon.”

Mr. Mitchell, on the part of Mr. Gould, communicated to the Society a new species of *Psophodes*, which he described as *Psophodes nigrogularis*.

Also an additional example of the genus *Amadina*, perhaps the loveliest of the tribe yet discovered, remarkable for the great beauty and singularity of the hues with which it is adorned, the breast being crossed by a broad band of lilac, a colour so rarely found in birds, that he does not recollect any example of the same tint. Mr. Gould has hitherto seldom adopted the practice of many naturalists, of naming new species from individuals connected with science; in this instance he has been induced to depart from his usual course, in order to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of the late Mrs. Gould, who assisted him so zealously and with such talent in his ornithological pursuits. For this bird, of most graceful form and delicate colour, he proposes the name of *Amadina Gouldiæ*.

PSOPHODES NIGROGULARIS. *Psoph. corpore superiore olivaceo; inferiore cinereo apud latera fusciscente, abdomine medio albo; cauda pallide olivaceo-fusca, rectricibus quatuor externis apicem versus nigro vittatis, apicibus albis; gula nigerrima, strigâ alba ab angulo mandibulæ inferioris tendente modo nigro inclusa.*

Plumage of the upper surface olive; under surface ashy, passing into brown on the flanks and white on the centre of the abdomen; primaries brown; tail light olive-brown, the four lateral feathers crossed near the extremity with a band of black, and tipped with white; throat deep black, with a stripe of white from the angle of the lower mandible, just within the black; bill dark horn-colour; irides dark brown; feet dark horn-colour.

Total length, $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; bill, $\frac{7}{8}$; wing, $3\frac{1}{2}$; tail, $4\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $1\frac{1}{2}$.

Hab. Western Australia.

This bird has all the characters of the *Psophodes crepitans* in the short and concave form of its wings and the rounded form of the tail, but differs in the absence or very slight development of the crest.

AMADINA GOULDIÆ. *Am. fronte, loris plumis auricularibus, et gula splendide nigris; notâ ab oculis circum occiput et per latera colli tendente, ex æruginè viridi, gradatim cum flavido-viridi corporis superioris se commiscente; fasciâ per pectus lata, lucide lilacino-purpureâ; corpore inferiore cerino.*

* The published figures give no idea of the animal; they all represent the snout much too long, the eyes too small, and the face not sufficiently broad and flat.

Male.—Forehead, lores, ear-coverts and throat deep velvety-black; from behind the eye, round the occiput, and down the sides of the neck, a mark of verdigris-green, gradually blending into the yellowish green of the upper surface and wings; across the breast a broad band of shining lilac-purple, below which all the under surface is shining wax-yellow; bill flesh-white at the base, tipped with blood-red at the point; feet fleshy.

Young Female.—Head grey; upper surface light olive; under surface pale buff; chin white; primaries and tail brown; irides dark brown.

Total length, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches; bill, $\frac{3}{8}$; wing, $2\frac{1}{2}$; tail, $1\frac{1}{4}$; tarsi, $\frac{5}{8}$.

Hab. North-eastern portion of Australia.

Remarks.—The young of this species killed by Mr. Gilbert had the gape on each side ornamented with three excrescences about the size of the head of a moderate-sized pin, the upper and lower of which were of a bright indigo-blue, and the middle one of a very pale yellow, and on the roof of the mouth five small spots of purple, forming a crescent across to each angle of the gape.