FAIRY BLUEBIRDS

Family IRENIDÆ

THERE has been some discussion on the proper position of this family, which Kloss and others still maintain should not be separated from the true bulbuls, family *Pycnonotidæ*. It is true that the long hairs springing from the nape ally *Irena* to that family, but this is outweighed by the fact that the sexes are markedly different, and that there seems to be a distinct juvenile plumage in which the bird is streaked—though this fact is not well established. Nestlings, moulting birds, and specimens in spirit are appealed for in order to settle the point.

Irena puella cyanea

The Malayan Fairy Bluebird

Malay Name.—Murai gajah.

Description.—*Male.*—Brilliant turquoise-blue above, more silvery on the fore part of the crown, the feathers with an enamelled surface. Forehead, frontal plumes, sides of the head, wing, tail, above and below, and the under surface—except the under tail coverts, which are turquoise-blue—glossy velvety black.

Female.—Dull verditer-green, with a bluish cast, with the lores blackish brown. Primaries and secondaries, brownish, the secondaries like the back on the outer web. Young males are like the females at first, and acquire the mature plumage in part by a gradual moult, and in part by a direct colour change. Total length, in both sexes, 10 to 10·5 in.

Fairly common on most hills up to about 3000 ft., and occasionally as high as 4000 ft., but local and largely dependent on the fruiting of certain trees, chiefly species of *Ficus*. Mr Chasen has recently obtained the bird near the summit of Penang Hill, 2700 ft., and Mr Seimund found it numerous on Gunong Kledang, 2600 ft.

Note.—In Volume I. there is an unfortunate misprint in the fourth line of the description of the adult male, which, instead of " Crown and mantle, black," should read, " Crown and mantle, back," it should also be added that the under surface, except the under tail coverts, which are turquoise-blue, is glossy velvety black.

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