

ROCK PTARMIGAN.

Lagopus rupestris, *Leach*.

WE are indebted to the kindness of the Earl of Derby for a drawing of a bird in His Lordship's collection which has been considered by some as identical with the *Lagopus rupestris* of North America; while on the other hand several of the best ornithologists have after a minute examination been induced to consider that this, and the other birds killed in Scotland in the orange-coloured dress here represented, are nothing more than the females of the Common Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*) in the plumage of spring and summer, during which period of the year, as abundance of examples testify, both sexes of that bird have the plumage strongly marked with rufous and brown; the male, however, has the colouring much more grey, the rufous markings being principally on the neck and breast, where it sometimes approaches to black. Should this prove to be the case, our figure will not be destitute of interest, as it will exhibit the female Ptarmigan in a state of plumage not usually seen; but until this matter is finally cleared up we have thought it best to figure the bird under the specific title of *rupestris*. The drawing above mentioned, and the figure recently published by T. C. Eyton, Esq., in his continuation of Bewick's British Birds, were both taken from the same specimen. In conclusion, we ourselves question whether any of the American Grouse can be referred with certainty to those of the European continent, for on comparison they always present differences which, although minute, are nevertheless constant.

The whole of the wings are white; the tail black; all the remainder of the plumage rich orange brown, numerous marked and barred with blackish brown, but least so on the belly and flanks; bill and claws black.

Our figure is of the natural size.