POLYPLECTRON CHINQUIS.

Assam Peacock-Pheasant.

Pavo tibetanus, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 294, pl. xxviii. A. fig. 2?—Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 26. no. 2 β?—Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 731?—Bonn. and Vieill. Ency. Méth., Orn., part i. p. 179, pl. 83. fig. 3.—Cuv. Règn. Anim., 1829, tom. i. p. 474.

Le Chinquis, Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. ii. p. 365; Pl. Enl., 492, 493.

Thibet Peacock, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. iv. p. 675.—Shaw, Nat. Misc., pl. 441.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. p. 120. Polyplectron chinquis, Temm. Hist. Nat. des Pig. et des Gall., tom. ii. p. 363, tom. iii. p. 675.—Id. Pl. Col., 539.

—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 241.—Sclat. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1863, p. 124.
—Swinh. ibid., p. 307.

— thibetanus, Bonap. Compt. Rend de l'Acad. Sci., 1856, p. 878.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 495.

- albo-ocellatum, Cuv.

—— lineatum, Gray and Hardw. Ill. Ind. Zool., pl. 38.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 495.
—— cyclospilum, P. atelospilum, et P. enicospilum, G. R. Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part v. Gallinæ, pp. 23, 24?

— thibetanum, Elliot, Mon. of Phas., pl. .

Diplectron bicalcaratus, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 203.

On reference to my account of the *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*, it will be seen that I regard the synonymy of that species and of the bird here represented as being in a state of inextricable confusion, and believe it impossible to determine with certainty to which of the two best-known species of this form the descriptions and even the names given by the older authors are referable—and that I there stated my intention to retain the above name for the bird from Malasia, or the Malayan Peacock-Pheasant, and to employ Temminck's term of *chinquis* for the Assam and Sylhet species (*i. e.* the one here figured), which may or may not be the *Pavo tibetanus* of Brisson, Linnæus, and Gmelin; but I quite agree with Mr. Sclater that, if it be, the name ought not to be retained, since, as might be supposed, the bird is not an inhabitant of that cold northern region.

Few and slight indeed are the notices on record of this species; by far the most interesting is comprised in the following extract from Ornithognomon's "Game-Birds of India," published in 'The Field' newspaper:—

"This bird inhabits the great southern branch of the Himalaya, which passes through Burma, where the range is called the Yomadoung, or Backbone mountains, through Tenasserim. Blyth, in his 'Catalogue of the Birds in the Asiatic Society's Museum,' gives Sylhut, in Eastern Bengal, as a habitat; and it is said to be found in all the mountainous parts of Assam. It is also met with in the eastern parts of Chittagong, and in all the inland hills of Arakan.

"I have never shot this bird, and, indeed, only once came upon it, in a narrow path leading along a ridge about 3000 feet above the sea, in the mountains on the British side of the Thoungyen river, which separates Tenasserim from Yahan in Siam. It started so suddenly, having apparently been dusting itself in the path, and shot so rapidly through the jungle down the kud, that, had it not left two or three of its feathers behind, I should not have known what bird I had flushed. I am not aware of any English sportsman having ever bagged one of these birds; and, indeed, it frequents such inaccessible places as effectually to defy approach. These mountains in the tropics rise to a height of six or eight thousand feet above the sea, and from six thousand feet downwards are clothed with such a dense mass of trees, thickets, underwood, bamboos, and thorny rattans, all bound together by creepers and tangle, that it would be an hour's labour to cut one's way through a hundred yards of such stuff. Add to this, there is not a square foot of level ground anywhere off the pathway, and the sides of these hills are so steep that walking along them is most difficult. The feet slide down the greasy soil, ever moist with the drippings of the trees and decayed vegetation, and the explorer finds himself brought up in a mass of thorny tangle, or, while plunging knee-deep through a slough of rotting leaves, trips headlong over one of the thousands of prostrate logs and trunks which, buried under fallen foliage, lie concealed from the eye of the most vigilant." The writer then gives a vivid description of the many other dangers to which the explorer is exposed from venomous insects of various kinds and the deadly miasma engendered in such localities, and proceeds to say that, "if, undeterred by all these obstacles, the sportsman forces his way down the steep incline, the lower he descends the more oppressive grows the atmosphere; and the heat at the bottom, if he can reach so far, is almost stifling. The air, which, keen and