CERIORNIS BLYTHII, Jerd.

Blyth's Horned Pheasant.

Ceriornis Temmincki, Jerd. Ibis, 1870, p. 147.

"In October last" (1869), says Mr. Sclater, "Dr. T. C. Jerdon, the well-known Indian naturalist, addressed to me a letter from Shillong, a new sanitarium on the Khasya Hills in Upper Assam, stating that he had obtained from the hill-ranges in the neighbourhood of Suddya a skin of a Tragopan (*Ceriornis*), distinct from either of the well-known Indian species, but which he believed might be *C. Temminckii* of China, and had seen a living example of an Impeyan from the same hills, which he regarded as probably new to science, and proposed to call *Lophophorus Sclateri*.

"In a subsequent communication, received through Dr. J. Anderson, our excellent correspondent and honorary agent at Calcutta, Dr. Jerdon informed me that, in the interests of the Society, he had begged of Major Montagu, of the Bengal Staff Corps, the fortunate possessor of the new Impeyan, the living bird in question, as also a living example of the so-called *Ceriornis Temminckii*, in the same gentleman's possession, and had forwarded them to Calcutta to Dr. Anderson for transmission to the Society. Dr. Jerdon likewise stated that, since he last wrote, having had an opportunity of consulting authorities, he had convinced himself that the *Ceriornis* was distinct from *C. Temminckii*, and, in a notice sent to the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,' had proposed to call it *Ceriornis Blythii*.

"It is to Major Montagu, therefore, that the Society are primarily indebted for these two splendid birds, which reached us in safety on the 12th inst., though our best thanks are likewise due to Dr. Jerdon and Dr. Anderson for their kind assistance in the matter, and to Mr. William Jamrach, who most liberally undertook to convey them home, under his personal care, and has delivered them to us in excellent condition.

"Amongst the described species of the genus it most nearly resembles C. Caboti, being below mesially of a nearly uniform colour, somewhat as in that species, and not distinctly ocellated as the three other members of the genus. It is, however, to be recognized at first sight by the splendid golden yellow of the naked face and throat."

Mr. Elliot, speaking of this species in his 'Monograph of the Phasianidæ,' says "The individual above referred to is now (June 1870) in the Gardens, Regent's Park, and is in a very healthy condition. It is quite tame, and appears to have become reconciled to its captivity. In the same enclosure a female of C. Temminckii has been placed; and his manner of paying his addresses to his new companion is very interesting. When approaching her, he lowers all the feathers which are on the side nearest to her, almost hiding his legs, showing to the greatest advantage the beautiful markings of his plumage, and the admirable manner in which the various colours blend into one another. The tail is widely spread at the same time, and lowered towards the ground; and in this way making the best display of his beautiful plumage, he walks slowly round the hen, who, at least while I was watching them, appeared perfectly indifferent to the attractive creature who was endeavouring to arrest her attention."

In a communication to 'The Ibis' for 1870, Dr. Jerdon states that this bird is found on the hill-ranges of Upper Assam towards the head of the valley, descending, it is asserted, occasionally to a rather low level. It is called "Sún-súria" by the natives, which means the "Golden bird."

Unfortunately this fine bird did not grace the Society's menagerie for any lengthened period, but, dying in its finest state of plumage, I was thereby enabled to make perfect the accompanying representation. I for one hail with great pleasure the discovery of this valuable acquisition, which makes one wonder if there be any more species yet to be found of this beautiful form, and also of the equally beautiful genus Lophophorus, of which two new ones have lately become known to us, viz. Lophophorus L'Huysii and L. Sclateri.

Inasmuch as a verbal description of the colouring and of the form and arrangement of the markings of Blyth's Horned Pheasant, however minute and accurate, must necessarily fail of conveying an adequate idea of its appearance, I shall not attempt to describe them, but refer my readers to the accompanying Plate, in which they are accurately displayed from the living example above mentioned.

The principal figure is nearly of the size of life. The very reduced figure in the background is supposed to represent what the female will be like.