PHASIANUS REEVESII, J. E. Gray.

Reeves's Pheasant.

Phasianus Reevesii, J. E. Gray in Griff. Anim. Kingd., vol. iii. p. 25.—Id. Hardw. Ind. Zool., vol. i. pl. 39.—G. R. Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 497, Phasianus, sp. 6.—Sclat. in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1863, p. 117.—J. E. Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part v. Gallinæ, p. 28.

Barred-tailed Pheasant, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. pl. cxxiv*.

Phasianus veneratus, Temm. Pl. Col. 485.—Jard. Nat. Lib., vol. xiv. pl. xvi.

Syrmaticus Reevesii, Wagl. in Isis, 1832, p. 1229.—G. R. Gray, Cat. of Gen. and Subgen. of Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 104.—Bonap. Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. Sci., tom. xlii. séance du 12 mai 1856.

- superbus, Strickl. in Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., 1841, vol. vii. p. 36.

Considerable confusion respecting the nomenclature of this remarkable species has been occasioned by the late M. Temminck having in his 'Histoire Naturelle Générale des Pigeons et des Gallinacés' assigned its two lengthened tail-feathers to the old *Phasianus superbus* of Linnæus, an error which he subsequently corrected when describing and figuring the bird in his 'Planches Coloriées' as *P. veneratus*. In the interval between the publication of the two works above mentioned, Dr. J. E. Gray named it *Phasianus Reevesii*, in honour of the late Mr. John Reeves, a gentleman ardently attached to natural science, who, during his many years' residence in China, contributed so largely to our knowledge of the productions of that highly interesting country; and this name it is now by common consent allowed to retain, on the score of priority to that of *veneratus*.

The error of M. Temminck was adopted by Dr. Latham; and hence, while the description of the Barred-tailed Pheasant in his 'General History of Birds,' vol. viii. p. 196, has reference to the old *P. superbus*, some of his remarks apply to the present species. It is probable that the bird did not escape the notice of the celebrated traveller Marco Polo, since he states "There be plenty of Feysants and very great for 1 of them is as big as 2 of ours with Tayles of eygth, 9 and ten spannes long from the Kingdom of Erguyl or Arguill, the W. side of Tartary"; but I question if he ever saw more than the central tail-feathers, which, being held in high estimation by the Chinese, were deemed suitable presents to foreigners, and hence these feathers found their way to Europe many years before the entire bird; the time however arrived when, through the instrumentality of Mr. Reeves, we were favoured with the sight of the skin of a perfect male (which, as above mentioned, Dr. Gray dedicated to him), and some years later of a female.

To him we are also indebted for the introduction of the first living bird into Europe, a fine male specimen having been imported by him about the year 1831. The son of this gentleman, Mr. John R. Reeves, brought over a female in 1838; "and the pair," says Mr. Tegetmeier, in the 'Field' for June 7, 1867, "were living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society at the same time; but the male being unfortunately an aged bird, they did not breed." The next living example that reached this country was a fine male, received direct from China by John Kelk, Esq., in 1862, and which roamed in perfect liberty and in excellent health for two successive years among other pheasants at his seat, Stanmore Priory, near Edgware.

Out of evil comes good; and thus war, with all its horrors, is the precursor of extended knowledge. The productions of the vast empire of China were but the other day so little known to the man of science that it was only by surmise, by grotesque drawings, and the receipt of remarkable feathers of birds that he formed any idea of its ornithology; the late war, however, has placed Europeans and the inhabitants of the "celestial empire" upon a different footing; and we now not only get skins of this fine pheasant, but living examples in considerable numbers—so abundantly, in fact, that at this moment (May 1868) the bird is being successfully bred in more than one menagerie both in England and on the continent.

"The successful introduction of the living birds now in this country," says Mr. Tegetmeier, in the No. of the 'Field' above referred to, "is owing to the combined efforts of Mr. John J. Stone and Mr. Walter H. Medhurst, H. M. Consul at Hankow. For several years past Mr. Stone had made continuous efforts to obtain this and other new pheasants from Northern China, with no satisfactory result, until the valuable aid of Mr. Medhurst was obtained; and it is mainly due to that gentleman's thorough knowledge of the natives of China and of their language that the true habitat of this bird was ascertained and its introduction accomplished. Mr. Medhurst employed an experienced Chinaman to proceed into the interior for the express purpose of collecting this and other rare pheasants, of which coloured drawings had been supplied for his guidance. The first three lots obtained, with a single exception, all died before they reached England. The fourth was obtained in the direction of Syechney, about thirty days' journey from Hankow; and of these, seven