CALOPHASIS ELLIOTI.

Elliot's Pheasant.

Phasianus Ellioti, Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1872, p. 550.
Calophasis Ellioti, Elliot, Monogr. Phasian. ii. pl. 13 bis (1873).

If there has been one bird which has more than any other puzzled ornithologists lately, it is the remarkable and beautiful species figured in the accompanying Plate; and it must strike every one with surprise that so showy a bird should have remained so long undiscovered. Still so it is; and it has been left to Mr. Swinhoe, during his last trip to China, to discover and send to England fine skins of this abnormal Pheasant. To say that it is a true Pheasant would be wrong; for although it exhibits the general form of a *Phasianus*, its plumage partakes of the characters of several other members of the family, as has been pointed out by Mr. Elliot in the account of the species transcribed below. In fact the bird is (if such a thing were possible) a medley of two or three forms together, which one could have imagined to have been produced by their constant interbreeding. We must, however, regard it as a true species, and one of which both Mr. Swinhoe and Mr. Elliot, who have done so much to increase our knowledge of the Pheasants, may well be proud—the former as the describer of, and the latter in having his name attached to, so fine a bird.

I cannot do better than reproduce the account which Mr. Elliot has lately published in his Monograph; and I do so the more willingly as the rarity of the last-mentioned work renders it probable that many of my readers have not had the opportunity of perusing the original account.

"This magnificent species, upon which Mr. Swinhoe has done me the honour of bestowing my name, is one of the most interesting, as it is also one of the most recent, novelties which that zealous and indefatigable naturalist has made known to science. It is a native of the mountain-range that lies behind Ningpo, in the Chinese province of Che-Kiang, where it represents, to a certain extent, such Pheasants as *Phasianus torquatus*, which inhabit the great tract lying between the hilly regions and the sea. On discovering this beautiful bird my friend immediately notified me of his good fortune, sending at the same time one of the feathers from the back, by which I was enabled to perceive that the species was entirely unknown in Europe."

"In his paper read lately before the Zoological Society of London, in which this and some other birds are described, Mr. Swinhoe writes of this Pheasant as follows:—

"'From the mountainous region of this province (Che-Kiang) I have procured a truly beauteous Pheasant, perhaps the loveliest of that lovely group. It is smaller than *P. torquatus*, and has comparatively shorter wings and longer tail. The colouring of its head and tail recall *P. Reevesii*, its coppery back and breast the *P. Sœmmeringii* of Japan, and the glowing maroon on its scapulars the *Euplocamus Swinhoii* of Formosa; but its curiously marked lower back and its white-barred wing are suggested by no other species of this family to my knowledge, and its white underparts no other true Pheasant possesses."

"'Its mate is a smaller bird, and in coloration more of a Grouse than a Pheasant; but in her black under-neck, and in the marks of her lateral rectrices, she shows her relationship to her lord. Possessed of so many striking characters, it would be easy to find an appropriate name for so marked a species; but on glancing down the list of Pheasants I find that not one bears the name of Elliot; and it strikes me it would be wrong to allow his magnificent work on the group to close without the figure of a bird dedicated to himself: I therefore propose to name this firstfruits of my researches in this province *Phasianus Ellioti*.'"

"Desiring, equally with myself, that this new species should be illustrated in this work, Mr. Swinhoe at once forwarded to his agent in London the male and female, which he had with much difficulty been able to procure; and soon after their arrival they came into my possession, in perfect condition, making a most valuable addition to my collection of these beautiful birds.

"Although Mr. Swinhoe has placed this species in the genus *Phasianus* among the true Pheasants, I am unable to agree with him (after carefully examining the specimens) in deeming that to be its correct position. In many points it resembles the true Pheasants; but in many more this new form differs entirely from them. The head of the male resembles somewhat those of the true Pheasants, although I doubt if the naked skin would ever expand into the large conspicuous wattles which form such a striking mode of adornment in the members of the genus *Phasianus*; while the bill is smaller, and the nostrils are only partially covered by a scale. One of the most remarkable differences perceptible is in the structure and form of the feathers on the lower part of the rump. In all true Pheasants these are long, loose, split, and of a hairy-like texture, very dense, and they almost, if not entirely, conceal the upper tail-coverts. Now the present species exhibits