DIARDIGALLUS PRÆLATUS, Bonap.

Siamese Fire-back.

Phasianus crawfurdii, Gray in Griff. edit. of Cuvier's Anim. King., vol. viii. p. 27?

Diardigallus fasciolatus, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxvii. p. 115.—Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxvii. p. 40.

It is through the exertions of Sir Robert Schomburgk, Her Majesty's Consul-General for Siam, that I am enabled to give a figure of this fine bird in the 'Birds of Asia.' The facts connected with the case may be briefly told. On inspecting the large collection of drawings at the East India House, I noticed one of a bird I had never seen, and which was said to have been made by Finlayson in Siam, forty years ago. I immediately solicited permission to take a tracing of the drawing, which tracing I forwarded to Sir Robert Schomburgk, with a letter directing his attention to the subject, and pointing out the desirability, if possible, of procuring a specimen. With the usual energy which actuates this gentleman whenever science is to be benefited, he gave immediate attention to the matter; and by the returning mail informed me that he had seen a living specimen in a Siamese menagerie, and that it would be forwarded to me by the next mail. The specimen arrived in due course; and from it the accompanying figure was taken. Almost simultaneously Mr. Blyth wrote to England, describing the bird from examples which had lately arrived in Calcutta, and mentioning that he had given it the name of Diardigallus fasciolatus, which specific appellation must, however, give place to that of prælatus, previously proposed by the late Prince Charles Bonaparte for specimens contained in the Leyden Museum. In Griffith's edition of Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom' there is the description of a bird, taken from a drawing in the possession of Mr. Crawfurd, after whom the bird was called Phasianus Crawfurdii by Dr. Gray. This drawing I once considered to be a representation of the female of the bird here figured; and if such should prove to be the case, then the specific names of prælatus of Bonaparte and fasciolatus of Blyth must both give place to Dr. Gray's appellation Crawfurdii. Mr. Sclater, however, thinks it doubtful if the bird described in Griffith's edition of the 'Animal Kingdom' be the female of this species, as the specimens in the Leyden Collection, said to be females of the bird here figured, are different from the drawing: time and the acquisition of other specimens can alone determine the question; and Sir Robert Schomburgk will doubtless set the matter at rest with the same promptitude that characterized his acquisition and despatch of the male.

With regard to the particular part of Siam inhabited by this bird, Sir Robert has sent me the following note:—

"Learning some time since that there were some fine living animals and birds at a Wat, or Siamese temple, I went to look at them, and was particularly struck with a fine Pheasant, which, on inquiry, I was told came 'from the upper country,'—the usual answer to every question respecting the habitats of living animals or birds. About a week later comes your letter enclosing a drawing of the very bird I had seen in the Wat. Of course I sent forthwith the price demanded, and procured it. The poor thing was so gentle, I felt great compunction to kill it; for the sake of science, however, it was stifled, but I told my servant to do it in the most gentle manner. The bird having been kept in a domesticated state, I did not wonder when its owner told me that, in lieu of cereals, it had been fed upon the fry of fishes, prawns, and shrimps. I am not able to tell you much about its habits or its habitat. Some say it comes from the upper country, others that it frequents the regions near the coast. There is no doubt that it is a great rarity at Bangkok, which it would not be did it frequent the coast. I have not seen this Pheasant in the King's Collection, which I certainly should have done had it been there; for, as he usually receives me in the saloon near the Aviary, I could not have failed to notice it. With the nice drawing you have sent me in my possession, I think I shall be able to get some further information as to the habits of the bird; meanwhile I forward the specimen without