THAUMALEA AMHERSTIÆ.

Lady Amherst's Pheasant.

Phasianus Amherstiæ, Leadb. in Linn. Trans., vol. xvi. p. 129.

Thaumalea Amherstiæ, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 497, Thaumalea, sp. 2, pl. cxxv.—Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 24.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 246.—Sclat. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1863, p. 117.

This very remarkable member of the *Phasianidæ* was brought under the notice of the scientific world for the first time in 1828 by the late Mr. Benjamin Leadbeater, who, in a paper read by him at the meeting of the Linnean Society of London on the 2nd of December of that year, stated that "the return of His Excellency the Right Honourable Earl Amherst from India has made us acquainted with one of the most splendid examples of the genus *Phasianus* that has been submitted to the notice of ornithologists for many years past.

"Two males of this new and beautiful species came originally from the mountains at Cochin China, and were presented by the King of Ava to Sir Archibald Campbell, who gave them to the Countess Amherst. Her ladyship retained them in her possession about two years, and ultimately succeeded in bringing them both to England alive; but they only survived the voyage a few weeks.

"I propose the name of *Phasianus Amherstiæ* for this valuable addition to our catalogue, as a tribute due to the distinguished lady to whom ornithologists are indebted for the knowledge of this new species.

"The general character of this bird and the arrangement of its plumage are very similar to those of the well-known Golden Pheasant."

When Lady Amherst brought home the two examples from which Mr. Leadbeater's characters were taken, nothing certain was known of their history, of the locality whence they came, or of the country of which they were natives; and the time which has since elapsed has not enabled us to acquire this very desirable information. It is now, however, believed that the bird is an inhabitant of the Chinese province of Yunnan and the adjoining region of Tibet. It was seen by the preceding extract from the sixteenth volume of the 'Transactions of the Linnean Society' how Lady Amherst became possessed of her two specimens: one of them, I believe, is still in the possession of her family, the other, which was presented to Mr. Leadbeater by Lady Amherst, passed into the possession of the late Earl of Derby, and now forms part of the fine collection bequeathed by his lordship to the town of Liverpool; it is from this specimen that my figure was taken, and I am much indebted to the Trustees of the Derby Museum for their kindness in permitting me to make a drawing of it. Mr. B. H. Hodgson, formerly the British resident in Nepaul, and so well known for his devotion to natural history, obtained two specimens which had been brought into the Napaulese territory, from some distant country to the eastwards; they are now in the British Museum, and two more have, I believe, been sent to Paris. The six specimens enumerated, all of which are males, are probably all that have yet been collected. It would give me great pleasure to see a female of this fine bird, and every ornithologist would be truly gratified by the arrival of any information respecting the part of the celestial empire in which it dwells, and any details as to its habits. The bird would, doubtless, be as easily kept in our aviaries as its near ally the Golden Pheasant; and it is my ardent wish to see it thus located before I leave this lower world for the higher and brighter one, which is the end of our hopes and desires.

Irides white; naked skin surrounding the eyes light verditer-blue; feathers of the crown green; crest crimson; pendent tippet white, each feather tipped with a narrow, crescentic, dark green band, with an interior edging of a lighter tint and a straight band of the same kind about three-eighths of an inch from the tip; neck, back, shoulders, chest, and wing-coverts beautiful metallic green, each feather tipped with a broad zone of velvety black; primaries dark brown, with lighter shafts and white edgings; greater wing-coverts and secondaries bluish black; breast and belly white; thighs and under tail-coverts mottled dark brown and white; legs light blue; feathers of the rump brown at the base, green in the middle, and the exposed portion bright saffron-yellow; tail-coverts brown at the base, barred with green and white in the middle, and ending in scarlet; two broad middle tail-feathers olive-grey, crossed with curved bars of green about three-quarters of an inch apart, between which a series of oblique wavy lines of a blackish brown; the remaining feathers have the inner web narrow and mottled black and white, the outer web with curved brownish green bars, about three-quarters of an inch apart, on a ground the inner portion of which is greyish white, the outer light chestnut-brown.

The figure of the bird is about two-thirds of the natural size. The accompanying ferns are the two varieties of the *Pteris quadriaurita—argyrea* and *tricolor*. The beautiful butterfly is the *Papilio Paris*.