THAUMALEA PICTA.

Golden Pheasant.

Phasianus pictus, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 272.—Id. Gmel. Edit., tom. i. p. 743.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 630.—Shaw, Mus. Lev., p. 206, pl. 50.—Pall. Zoog. Ross.-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 86.—Temm. Man. d'Orn., 2nde édit., tom. i. p. xc.—Id. Hist. Nat. Gén. des Pig. et Gall., tom. ii. p. 341, et vol. iii. p. 671.—Benn. Gard. and Menag. Zool. Soc. del. Birds, p. 59.

——— *sanguineus*, Klein, Aves, 114. 3.

——— *aureus Sinensis*, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 271.

Faisan doré de la Chine, Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. ii. p. 355.—Id. Pl. Enl. 217.

Painted, or Gold Pheasant, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. iv. p. 717.—Edw. Nat. Hist., of Birds, pl. 68, male, pl. 69, low. fig., female.

——— *Pheasant*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. p. 194.

Thaumalea picta, Wagl., Isis, 1832.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 497, *Thaumalea*, sp. 1.—Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 24.—Sclat. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1863, p. 117.—Schrenck, Vög. des Amur-landes, p. 521.

Chrysolophus pictus, Gray, Ill. Ind. Zool. pl.

Epomis picta, Hodgs.

Although this beautiful bird has been a denizen of our aviaries for upwards of a hundred years, we know no more of its history or of the districts of China it inhabits than we did when the illustrious Swede characterized it as *Phasianus pictus*; and what Latham wrote respecting it half a century ago is all that can be said about it at the present day.

It is reported to frequent the northern rather than the southern portion of China. Mr. Sclater gives as its habitat "Southern Daüria and the eastern part of the Desert of Mongolia, advancing in summer sometimes up to the Amoor; also the provinces of Kansú and Sechuen, in the interior of China, whence, Mr. Swinhoe informs us, living examples are brought into Canton for sale."

Latham says, "The native place of this beautiful species is China, where it is called *Kinki* or *Kinkee*, which signifies Gold-flower Fowl, or Wrought Fowl. As it is a hardy bird, attempts have been made to naturalize it in our climate, and many pairs have been turned out for this purpose, but, it is to be lamented, without success, the birds having in every instance been shot by some greedy and improvident sportsman, and we do not know of its breeding at large anywhere in Europe. It bears confinement well, and there breeds freely; hence any further importation from its native country seems needless. The flavour of its flesh is reported to exceed that of our species. The sexes are said to be subject to considerable change of appearance, and Edwards mentions that the females of some kept by Lady Essex in the space of six years gradually gained the male feathers; and we have been informed that it is not unusual for the hens, when about four or five years old, to be neglected by the cocks and gradually to gain the plumage of the other sex."

The head of the male is ornamented with a silky crest of fine amber-yellow feathers, those at the back of the head and neck being much prolonged, square at the ends, and of a rich orange-red, with a transverse narrow bar of blackish blue at the tip; at the will of the bird, these feathers are capable of being raised and brought forward, so as nearly to meet at the front of the neck; the feathers of the upper half of the back are of a dark glossy green, bordered at their rounded tips with a narrow band of velvety black; lower part of the back and rump rich wax-yellow; wing-coverts mottled dark brown and chestnut; greater coverts and spurious wing blackish brown with deep buff shafts and a line of the same hue along the margin of the outer web; primaries dark brown, with a broad band of pale buff along the basal two-thirds of the outer web, beyond which the apical portion of the shaft becomes of the same tint; secondaries dark brown, mottled with chestnut on their outer margins; tertiaries deep rich blue; cheeks flesh-coloured, sparingly clothed with feathers of the same tint; throat light orange-brown, all the under surface intense scarlet; upper tail-coverts long, narrow, of a rich crimson, and falling down on each side of the tail; two centre tail-feathers deep or blackish brown, mottled with numerous irregularly shaped blotches of buffy brown arranged in a series of diagonal rows; the remaining tail-feathers crossed diagonally with alternate wavy bands of dark and buffy brown, which become deeper in colour and less diagonal as the feathers recede from the centre; all the tail-feathers of a light buff at their extremities; irides orange; bill yellow at the tip, horny at the base; feet pale yellow.

The female is rusty brown, barred on the head, neck, and back with very dark brown, which markings become much smaller and irregular on the lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts, where the lighter hue becomes freckled with dark brown; wings dark brown, banded with reddish buff; under surface yellowish buff, banded on the neck with narrow, and on the flanks with broad, bands of blackish brown; tail crossed by alternate and irregular diagonal bands of black and greyish buff, which are broad and conspicuous on the central feathers, but become narrower and more regular on the lateral ones; irides hazel; feet like those of the male, but somewhat paler.

The accompanying Plate, in which the figures are about two-thirds of the natural size, will give a good idea of the great difference in the colouring of the sexes.