EUPLOCAMUS SWINHOII, *Gould.*

Swinhoe's Fireback.

Euplocamus Swinhoii, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1862, p. 284.—Sclat. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1863, p. 119.—Swinh. in Ibis, 1863, p. 401.

Few of Her Majesty's Consuls have more assiduously availed themselves of the opportunities afforded them of collecting the birds of the distant regions in which they have been located than Mr. Swinhoe; and fewer still have shown greater acumen in discriminating and pointing out the distinctions which separate nearly allied species. It is but a just tribute, then, to the merits of this gentleman, that so remarkable and beautiful a bird as the one here figured should be named in his honour. The discovery of a small Warbler, or a new species of Finch, would not be destitute of interest; but how much more important is the acquisition of a highly ornamental addition to the *Gallinaceæ*! The two specimens, male and female, collected by Mr. Swinhoe in the little-known Island of Formosa are now in the British Museum, and are well worthy of the inspection, not only of the ornithologist, but of every lover of nature.

In size, this new bird is somewhat smaller than the Common Silver Pheasant (*Gennæus nychthemerus*), which it resembles in its red wattles and in the form of its tail; while in its strong legs and the scaly, stiff feathers of the lower part of its back it more closely assimilates to the members of the genus *Euplocamus*, and with that group I have accordingly associated it.

After stating that the true Pheasant inhabiting the Island of Formosa is identical with the Chinese *Phasianus torquatus*, Mr. Swinhoe says:—

"I was informed by my hunters that a second species of Pheasant, which was denominated by the Chinese colonists *Wá-koë*, was found in the interior mountains; that it was a true jungle-bird, frequenting the wild hill-ranges of the aborigines, and rarely descending to the lower hills that border on the Chinese territory; and that in the evening and early morning the male was in the habit of showing himself on an exposed branch, or roof of a savage's hut, uttering his crowing, defiant note, while he strutted and threw up his tail like a rooster. I offered rewards and encouraged my men to do their utmost to procure me specimens of this bird, and I was so far successful that I managed to obtain a pair; but, in my trip to the interior, it was in vain that I sought to get a view of it in its native haunts, and to make acquaintance with it in a state of nature.

"The female was brought to me on the 1st of April, soon after it was shot,—the heat of the weather compelling the hunters to skin it before they could reach me. It was, however, quite fresh enough to enable me to note the tints of the soft parts."

The male has the forehead black, gradually blending into the snowy white lanceolate plumes which form a slight crest, and continue in a narrow line down the nape of the neck; back snowy white, offering a strong contrast to the narrow black line with which it is bounded on each side, and the rich fiery chestnut of the scapularies; lower part of the back, rump, and upper tail-coverts intense velvety black, broadly margined with shining steel or bluish black, these scale-like feathers gradually becoming of a larger size and of a more uniform black as they approach the tail-feathers; wings blackish brown, the greater and lesser coverts fringed with green; two centre tail-feathers snow-white, the remainder black; the somewhat elongated feathers of the chest and flanks black, with shining blue reflexions; thighs and under tail-coverts dull black; sides of the face wattled to an extent seldom seen even among Gallinaceous birds, in front extending to the nostrils, while posteriorly it terminates in a point near the occiput; a large lappet hangs down over each cheek, and a more pointed one rises, in the form of a horn, high above the crown, the whole being of the finest crimson, and covered with papillæ, as in the *Gennæus nychthemerus*; legs bright pink-vermilion; soles a light, dirty ochreous; toes the same, patched with blackish.

The female offers a strong contrast to the male, from there being no appearance of a crest, and in the entire plumage being reddish or orange-brown, particularly the under surface; when examined in detail, however, many different but harmonizing tints are seen on the various parts of the body; on the back of the neck, mantle, scapularies, and lesser wing-coverts, the freckled brown feathers have lanceolate or spearhead-shaped markings surrounded with black down their centres, while the rump and upper tail-coverts are more uniformly and more finely freckled with orange and dark brown; primaries alternately barred on both surfaces with chestnut and dark brown; secondaries dark brown, conspicuously barred with ochre-yellow; throat brownish grey; chest orange-brown, each feather with two crescentic markings of dark brown; centre of the abdomen and thighs orange-brown, slightly freckled with darker brown; two centre tail-feathers dark brown, obscurely barred with buff; lateral tail-feathers nearly uniform deep chestnut; naked patch on cheek red.

The Plate represents the male and female, the former about two-thirds of the natural size.