PITTA ARQUATA, Gould.

Necklaced Pitta.

Pitta (Phænicocichla) arquata, Gould in Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., 4th ser. vol. vii. p. 340.—Gray, Hand-list of Birds, pt. iii. p. 344. sp. 4370°.

The beautiful group of birds of which the present is an example comprises numerous species which are widely spread over the warmer portions of the Old World, particularly India, China, Malasia, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, the smaller islands of the Indian Archipelago, New Guinea, and Australia, while a solitary one inhabits Africa. All the members of this limited family are gaily attired, the richness of their hues forming a great contrast to the inelegance of their appearance and the unsymmetrical character of their contour. Nearly every group of highly coloured birds resorts to the outermost parts of the forest or the sunny glades of the interior, where they may be seen and admired; the Pittas, on the contrary, being shy, solitary, and recluse in their habits, frequent the most rugged and stony portions of the scrub, and must be sought for to be found, generally among moss, covered stones, and tangled herbage. As already remarked, some of the species tenant continents, others large islands, and others, again, smaller islands, some of which have their own peculiar species not found elsewhere.

This new bird is somewhat allied to the *Pitta granatina* of Temminck and the *P. concinna* of Eyton. If there be any difference in size, it is perhaps a trifle smaller than either of those species; but is at once distinguished from both by its very remarkable colouring, which in some respects resembles that of the *P. erythrogastra* of Temminck.

The specimen figured is supposed with some probability to be a female; if so, the male, when discovered, will prove to be a still more lovely bird. The fine specimen from which the accompanying figures were taken was received from Borneo by Mr. Cutter, from whom I purchased it, and is now in my own collection.

Forehead, lores, and throat reddish buff; crown, nape, and breast rich rusty red; over, but posterior to the eye a lovely stripe of blue, as in *Pitta granatina*; a broken tooth-like bar of the same hue across the breast, separating the rich rusty red of the chest from the deep scarlet of the abdomen; upper surface of the body and scapularies brownish olive-green; primaries and secondaries brown, tinged with green; the secondaries are also tipped with splendid blue, but not so conspicuously as in *P. granatina*; tail blue, tinged with olive; legs and bill black.

The figures are of the size of life.