ACTINODURA EGERTONI, Gould.

Egerton's Actinodura.

Actinodura Egertoni, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part iv. 1836, p. 18.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 84.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 226, Actinodura, sp. 1.—Fras. Zool. Typ., pl. 40.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc., Calcutta, p. 98.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 373.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 212.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 52.

Leiocincla plumosa, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xii. p. 953; vol. xiv. p. 600. Ixops rufifrons, Hodgs. M.S.

Alcurus Nipalensis, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., p. 83.

Rumnio-pho of the Lepchins. (Jerdon.)

Examples of the elegant Actinodura Egertoni have for many years graced the collections of this country, to which they were transmitted by Mr. Hodgson, Griffiths, and others. For the specimens of this and some other species of birds in my own cabinet I am indebted to the kindness of Edward Vernon Harcourt, Esq., who, I believe, received them from Sikhim. It is much to be regretted that our Indian travellers have given us no account of the habits and economy of this bird further than that which we find in a general note on several allied genera by Mr. Hodgson. That it is very wren-like in its actions, and that it frequents dense and humid mountain-forests, there can be little doubt; neither, I presume, can there be any question as to its food consisting of insects and their larvæ, procured either on the ground or among the leafy branches of the trees; Mr. Jerdon, however, states that it also feeds on fruits. The plumage of the two sexes is very similar, but the female is somewhat smaller than the male.

It gave me great pleasure to assist in perpetuating the fame of a gentleman, who has devoted a long life to the study of nature, by naming this bird in his honour; but without such a testimony on my part it will be readily admitted that Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton will ever rank among the most eminent scientific men of our age for his many valuable papers on fossil fishes and various geological subjects.

"This bird," says Mr. Jerdon, "is found from Nepal to the hill-ranges of Assam and Sylhet. It is very common near Darjeeling, at an altitude of from three to six thousand feet or more, associates in small flocks, wanders from tree to tree, carefully examines the foliage and branches, never descends to the ground, and feeds both on fruit and insects, more especially the latter.

"Horsfield gives Afghanistan as a locality in which it is found; but I have no doubt that Griffiths's specimens were from the Khasia hills, where I noticed that it was far from rare."

Feathers surrounding the base of the bill deep brownish red; crest and nape grey; upper surface light rufous brown; wing-coverts bright rufous; primaries and secondaries rufous at the base and dark brown for the remainder of their length; the three first primaries narrowly margined externally with silvery white, and the remainder of the primaries and the secondaries regularly barred on their outer webs with greyish white; two central tail-feathers rufous, the remainder brown, faintly barred with black near the extremity and narrowly tipped with white; under surface deep sandy buff, with the exception of the centre of the abdomen, which is white; irides brown; bill light horn-colour; legs pale brown.

The figures are of the size of life. The plant is the Rhododendron camelliæflorum.