PTERORHINUS DAVIDI, Swinh.

Père David's Pterorhinus.

Pterorhinus Davidi, Swinh. in Ibis, 1868, p. 61.

Some time during the year 1869, Mr. Swinhoe placed in my hands a skin of the bird which forms the subject of the accompanying drawing, and stated that it was an inhabitant of China and that he had dedicated it to the Abbé Armand David, a gentleman who with much credit to himself has paid great attention to the ornithology of that part of the "Celestial Empire" in which he is located; and it affords me much pleasure to extend the scientific reputation of this worthy French priest by giving a representation, in the present work, of the highly curious bird named in his honour.

I have, of course, nothing to communicate of my own knowledge respecting Père David's Pterorhinus, and must therefore avail myself of what has been placed on record by Mr. Swinhoe in 'The Ibis' for 1868, p. 60, which I append below. The bird appears to me to be a Crateropine form, the habits and economy of which will probably assimilate to those of some of the species of that group which frequent the low forests and brushy coverts of the sterile portions of India; but this is merely a surmise, and one which may not prove to be correct.

"On the 25th of June, 1867," says Mr. Swinhoe, "I received a letter from the Abbé David, enclosing two bird-skins. The Abbé writes:—'Je profite de l'obligeance de M. Conolly pour vous envoyer deux peaux d'oiseaux; c'est tout ce que j'ai maintenant de disponible. Votre *Pomatorhinus stridulus* est fort abondant et sédentaire dans nos montagnes, de même l'autre oiseau que je vous envoie et dont je vous prierais de me faire savoir le nom. Ce dernier habite les mêmes localités que le *Pomatorhinus* et en a les mêmes habitudes.'

"These two birds were quite distinct from any thing Chinese that I had seen before; and I wrote to the worthy priest for permission to describe them. M. David's permission, dated Peking, 31 July, 1867, I received on the 4th of September. The so-called *Pomatorhinus* belongs, in my opinion, to the *Timaliinæ*. At a first glance you might pronounce it to be a plain-coloured *Pomatorhinus*; but on second inspection you notice its *feathered and bristled nostrils*. Hence, what should it be a member of but a new genus? which I propose to style *Pterorhinus*.

"The type of this genus in the shape of the bill approaches *Pomatorhinus*; in the clothing of its nostrils it is an exaggerated *Garrulax*; in the sober uniformity of its coloration it resembles *Malacocercus*, and in the comparative slenderness of its legs and feet exceeds *Leucodiopterum*."

In some notes with which Mr. Swinhoe has recently favoured me, he says:—

"This species forms a connecting link between the plain-coloured Crateropodinæ of Africa and the curved-billed Pomatorhini of Asia. It was discovered among the hills near Peking, by the Abbé Armand David (after whom I have named it), Missionary of the Lazarist Mission, and is noted in his 'Catalogue of Chinese Birds' as Pomatorhinus stridulus, with the remark that 'it is common and resident in our mountains; cries and sings at all seasons.' On my visit to the mountains, in the autumn of 1868, I noticed that these birds had many of the habits of the South-China Song-Thrush, wandering in small parties from bush to bush on the sides of the hills, hiding among the leaves and chattering to each other, a male occasionally isolating himself and pouring forth a well-sustained song."

The following is Mr. Swinhoe's description of this rare species:-

General plumage amber-brown; the downy or basal half of each feather bluish grey, a short superciliary mark of brownish white passes over each eye, and some of the frontal feathers are edged with the same colour; cheeks and under neck pale; abdomen, tibiæ, and under tail-coverts deep umber; a ring on the tarsal edge of the tibial feathers whitish; chin black, giving out divergent black vibrissæ; near the symphysis of the lower jaw a few small whitish feathers occur, and below the black chin-spot the feathers are inclined to whitish grey; quills brown, edged with greyish white; tail umber-brown, on the two middle feathers deepening towards their tips, where faint cross bars appear; the other rectrices blackish brown; bill (in the dried specimen) pale ochreous yellow, brownish on the upper mandible, except at its edges; legs and claws (of the same specimen) liver-brown. On the ticket was inscribed in pencil "12 April, 1867; Pekin, fem. adult." Iris clear brown.

The figure is of the natural size.