

OTIDIPHAPS CERVICALIS, *Ramsay*.

Grey-naped Otidiphaps.

Otidiphaps nobilis, var. *cervicalis*, Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. New S. Wales, iv. p. 420.—Sclater & Salvin, Ibis, 1881, p. 179.

Otidiphaps cervicalis, Ramsay, loc. cit. *errata*.

Otidiphaps regalis, Salvin & Godman, Ibis, 1880, p. 364, pl. xi.

THIS beautiful species of Ground-pigeon represents in South-eastern New Guinea the *Otidiphaps nobilis* of the north-western part of the island. It differs in the green colour of the rump and upper tail-coverts, in the absence of an occipital crest, and more especially in having the conspicuous grey neck-band from which the species derives its specific name. Mr. Ramsay described the species from specimens obtained by Mr. A. Goldie on the Goldie river in the interior of South-eastern New Guinea. From the same collector Messrs. Salvin and Godman received the specimens from which they drew up their description of *O. regalis*; and it seems a great pity that some notice was not given before the despatch of the specimens to England to the effect that they had already been deposited with Mr. Ramsay for the purpose of description. In this way science would have been saved the unnecessary synonymy consequent upon the simultaneous description of these novelties from South-eastern New Guinea by naturalists in England and Australia. Great difficulty is caused, moreover, in deciding as to which name should take precedence; for in the present instance the name of *Otidiphaps regalis* was published in July 1880, and yet in January 1881 the editors of 'The Ibis' had been unable to find in this country a single copy of Part iv. of the 'Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales,' although Mr. Ramsay's paper containing the description of his *O. cervicalis* was read before that Society on the 31st of December, 1879. It is therefore extremely probable that Messrs. Salvin and Godman actually published their description first.

Mr. Goldie informed Mr. Ramsay that these Pigeons were obtained by him only with great difficulty, in the dense scrubs far inland; they were always on the ground, and in habits resembled the *Goura*. In the notes which have accompanied a recent collection of Mr. Goldie's from the Astrolabe range in South-eastern New Guinea, in which he sends several fine specimens of both sexes, we find the following observations on the *Otidiphaps*. "Native name *Keo*. Eyes red. This ground-bird is found only inland, and in high country. It has a long plaintive note when calling, which, when imitated, brings it toward one; and it then stalks to and fro with tail erect and spread, challenging the intruder. When disturbed he will fly into low trees and bushes, but is quickly away again. The nest is composed of a few twigs scraped together at the foot of a low tree in a sequestered place." The egg, which is also forwarded by Mr. Goldie, is, as might be expected, pure white.

The figure in the Plate represents the bird about the natural size, and is drawn from a specimen in my own collection.

[R. B. S.]